

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA AND THE
PRESENTATION OF THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT HIS EXCELLENCY MR PAUL MASHATILE AT
THE 6TH LIMPOPO INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

15 OCTOBER 2026

Programme Director,
Your Excellency, the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Paul
Shipokosa Mashatile,
Members of the Executive Council,
Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality, Her Worship Cllr Mamedupi Teffo
Acting Executive Mayor of Polokwane Municipality, His Worship Cllr Joosuf Pemma
Distinguished Business Leaders, Investors and Partners,
Magoshi a rena,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is our delight to welcome the Deputy President once again to the heartbeat of our
continent's northern frontier - the vibrant province of Limpopo - as we convene the 6th
Limpopo Investment Conference.

Your Excellency, Mr Deputy President, we deeply appreciate the steadfast, unwavering
support we have consistently received from the Presidency since the very inception of
this conference. Your presence here today is a powerful affirmation of the national
government's commitment to sub-national industrialisation and equitable economic
growth.

There were moments, Your Excellency, when the sheer magnitude of our socio-
economic challenges tested our resolve. The understandable impatience of our people
- faced with the heavy burden of rising unemployment and sluggish economic
opportunities - weighed heavily upon us. There were times when the summit felt like an
uphill battle against insurmountable odds. But determination, grit and visionary
partnership won the day.

Today, we proudly trace the profound cumulative impact of this initiative over time. For
the past four years, Limpopo has consistently ranked among the top three provinces in
South Africa for job creation. While our unemployment rate, currently standing at 33%,
remains a formidable challenge that we are waging a relentless war against - with a firm
target to bring it below 20% by the end of this administration - we are deeply encouraged
by the trajectory.

We are convinced that the path we have chosen is the correct one. We see this in our
rising economic contribution to the national GDP. We see it in the steady retreat of
poverty, which has plummeted from 60% a decade ago to approximately 40% today.

Furthermore, Your Excellency, silent yet profound milestones tell the true story of these investments. Limpopo now leads the nation in urbanised housing development, leads in households sustaining themselves through agricultural produce and boasts over 95% electricity access across our province.

Yet, we harbour no illusions. These monumental strides would be incomplete without addressing our remaining structural bottlenecks - specifically, the urgent need for enhanced road infrastructure and sustainable water security.

We firmly believe that the investment pledges made today will serve as vital catalysts in closing this gap, cementing enduring partnerships with private enterprise to scale our economy to new heights.

Limpopo is resolutely positioning itself as South Africa's premier investment destination. Our primary imperative this year is crystal clear: to move decisively and unhesitatingly from investment pledges to tangible, on-the-ground implementation.

Our province overflows with untapped economic potential. We are blessed with a rich, diversified mineral resource base, exceptionally fertile agricultural land, a strategic geographic location linking South Africa to the broader SADC region, and world-class tourism assets.

Through our two flagship Special Economic Zones - the Musina-Makhado SEZ and the Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ - we are determined to convert these intrinsic advantages into accelerated economic growth, aggressive industrialisation and sustainable jobs for our people.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my singular honour and supreme privilege to present to you our Keynote Speaker for today.

His Excellency, Deputy President Paul Shipokosa Mashatile, is a seasoned, visionary leader whose roots are deeply embedded in our nation's liberation struggle as a former anti-apartheid activist within the United Democratic Front. He boasts a distinguished, exemplary career spanning local, provincial and national spheres of government.

He is a former Premier and MEC in Gauteng. Elected as the Treasurer-General of the African National Congress in 2017, he answered the call to return to state executive office in March 2023 when he was sworn in as the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa.

In this esteemed national role, he serves as the Leader of Government Business in Parliament, drives national human resource development to bridge critical skills shortages.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in rising to welcome and receive a tried-and-tested servant of the people, a champion of development and our esteemed Keynote

Speaker: His Excellency, the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Paul Shipokosa Mashatile.

I thank you.