



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE PROVINCIAL COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

MODJADJI TVET COLLEGE HALL, GREATER LETABA MUNICIPALITY

08 OCTOBER 2026

Programme Director, MEC for Social Development, Ms Florence Radzilani

MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, Ms Constance Kupa-Mabuza

His Worship the Executive Mayor of Mopani District Municipality, Cllr Dagma
Mamanyoha

Her Worship the Mayor of Greater Letaba Local Municipality, Cllr Rosina
Ramalatso

Other Executive Mayors and Mayors in attendance

Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders,
Hosi Penni Ngove

The Modjadji Royal House

Traditional Leaders and Dikgoro tsa rena

The South African Police Services

Our elders, mothers, fathers and grandparents,

Distinguished guests,

Thobela! Avuxeni! Ndi Matsheloni! Silotshile! Good Morning!

Today, we gather under the banner of a profound and timely theme: *“The Age of Longevity: Rethinking Systems for Longer Lives.”*

In English this sounds a lot complicated, yet in our African languages it reminds us that *Mahlako a maswa a ema ka a matala or Matanzu maswa a tikwa nga Malala* or even deeper in Xitsonga: *Ku tlula ka mhala swi letela n’wana wa le ndzeni.*

We are indeed in the age of longevity wherein the younger generation learns how to navigate life and gains wisdom by mirroring, obeying and following the example of the elders who came before them.

Ga re lebelele mo magare a rena. Re phela nako e telele. Kalafo e tšwetše pele; tlhokomelo ya tša maphelo ya setšhaba e ile ya kaonefala. Eupša ge re dutše re keteka mpho ya bophelo bjo botelele, re swanetše go ipotšiša dipotšišo tša motheo tša mehla ya rena.

Re diriša bjang lebaka le le letelele la bophelo go aga setšhaba seo se šireletšago batšofadi ba rena le go diriša tsebo ya bona le bohlale? Re boloka bjang mokero wa tšhireletšo ya tša leago o tiile e le gore batšofadi ba rena ba ikwe ba šireletšegile, ba šireletšegile e bile ba ratwa? Le gona ke ditshepedišo dife tšeo di diegišago dikatlego tšeo re di fihleletšego go fihla ga bjale, le gona re ka di fenya bjang go ageng naga e nago le bokgoni le yeo e hlabologago?

To our elders: you are not just the recipients of our care; you are the architects of our society. You are the custodians of our history, the guardians of our values and the primary anchors of our households. In many of our communities, when the storms of life rage, it is grandmother and grandfather who step into the breach, raising orphaned and vulnerable children on modest pensions and boundless love.

Ke ka fao boikgafo bja rena go lena bo ka se be bja sehla. E ka se lekanyetšwe go tiragalo ya ngwaga le ngwaga ya almanaka goba boitšhidullo bja lepokisi la go swaya. Go rena ka Mmušong wa Profense ya Limpopo, tšhireletšo, maphelo le seriti sa batho ba bagolo ke maikarabelo ao a tšwelago pele, a makgethwa.

Just weeks ago, on the 22nd of September, we gathered at Ga-Molepo in the Polokwane Municipality to mark World Alzheimer's Awareness Day. We did so because we recognise that caring for our elders means confronting the realities of ageing head-on—from dementia and Alzheimer's to chronic health conditions, mobility challenges, and social isolation. Through our departments of Health and Social Development, we are bringing health screenings, dementia awareness and support services directly to our communities.

Hambi swi ri tano, hi fanele hi langutana ni ntiyiso lowu vavaka. Loko manana wa malembe ya 82 hi vukhale emugangeni wa Xikukwani, eGiyani, a hlaseriwa hi tihanyi a tlhela a dlayiwa ekaya leri a faneleke ku hlayiseka swinene—hi ku hlundzukisa, ku hehliwa leswaku hi mavoko ya nyama na

ngati ya yena n’wini—swi handzula xivumbeko xa mahanyelo ya vaaki va hina.

Let me be unequivocal: abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against older persons have no place in Limpopo. Family matters must never be used as a veil to conceal criminality. Elder abuse is a crime and it will be met with the full might of the law.

We call upon our police, our traditional leaders, our community structures, and every citizen to be vigilant. Protecting our elders is everybody’s business. Government alone cannot eradicate elder abuse; we need a society-wide moral revival.

To build a truly capable developmental state, we must dismantle the systems that delay our progress. Bureaucratic red tape, fragmented services between departments and poor infrastructure delivery slow down the tangible improvements our people deserve.

Ri khou fhindula nga u vhumba tshumisano yo khwaṭhaho kha Mutakalo, Mveledziso ya Matshilisano, Mafhungo a Muno, SASSA na mimasipala yapo u vhona uri vhaaluwa vha nga swikelela magavhelo a matshilisano, ṭhogomelo ya mutakalo na tshumelo dza tshitshavha nga tshirunzi nahone vhuleme vhu sa ṭodei.

Across all five districts of Limpopo, our outreach programmes are reaching thousands of citizens, taking government directly to the villages and townships where our elders reside. Furthermore, our commemoration today

serves as a vital stepping stone as we prepare our elders to participate in the National Active Ageing Programme in Bloemfontein later this month. We want you to remain active, healthy, connected and full of life.

Our elders carry the living memory of our land. Their wisdom is an irreplaceable library of our heritage. If we fail to protect them, we fail ourselves.

A re ageng Limpopo moo maphelo a matelele a kopanago ka tlhompho ye e tseneletšego, malokwa a polokego a tiilego, le tšhireletšo ye e sa šišinyegego. A re hlompheng bomme le botate ba rena e sego ka mantšu fela, eupša ka setšhaba seo se hlatselago, letšatši le lengwe le le lengwe, gore ba a tšeelwa godimo.

I thank you.