LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH BY THE PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY COMMEMORATION

07 NOVEMBER 2026,

LANGLAGTE MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTRE, GA-MANKGODI VILLAGE, BLOUBERG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, CAPRICORN DISTRICT

Programme Director;
Members of the Executive Council;
Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality;
Mayor of Blouberg Local Municipality;
Members of the Provincial Legislature;
Traditional and Religious Leaders;
Representatives of Government Departments and Civil Society Organisations;
Our Provincial Child Ambassadors and Child Parliamentarians;
Parents, Educators and Caregivers;
Most importantly, our beloved children; Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thobela! Avuxeni! Ndi matsheloni! Good morning!

Coming straight from our democratic local government elections just days ago, we are delighted to join you today as we celebrate National Children's Day 2026 under the powerful theme, "Listen to the Future and For Every Child, Every Right."

We would want to thank the Blouberg Local Municipality and the wonderful people of the Capricorn District for hosting this historic celebration.

We would like to use this moment to express my deepest gratitude to the people of Limpopo. You came out in your massive numbers during the local government elections to cast your votes. The message from the voters was loud, clear and unambiguous: our people want visible, meaningful change in their everyday lives and in the quality of the services they receive from government.

Today, as we gather to celebrate our children, we must understand how these elections and that resounding call connect directly to the spirit of our children, their fundamental rights and their protection. When people vote for better services, safer communities and improved infrastructure, they are voting for a better future for our children.

Section 28 of our Constitution guarantees our children the right to basic nutrition, shelter, healthcare, family care and absolute protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Government at all levels - from our schools and clinics to our social development offices, police stations and municipalities - has a collective responsibility to deliver these rights. But laws and policies

alone are not enough. We must infuse every action of governance with the care and protection that children deserve.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our theme calls upon us to listen to children and give their views meaningful consideration. Children are not just passive recipients of services; they are active rights-holders and true partners in our societal development.

Limpopo is blessed with five extraordinary Provincial Child Ambassadors representing Capricorn, Vhembe, Sekhukhune, Mopani, and Waterberg districts. We are immensely proud of Mr Dymond Kelebone from Senwabarwana right here in Blouberg, who serves as National Speaker of the National Assembly of the Nelson Mandela Children's Parliament! It is a special joy to celebrate him in his home municipality.

We also salute Ms Fundzani Phalandwa, Deputy Speaker of that National Assembly from Vhembe; Ms Lefentse Mashishi from Sekhukhune; Ms Chantelle Mabunda from Mopani; and Ms Zahraa Essop from Waterberg. Their journeys show what children can achieve when given guidance, support, and access to decision-makers.

To make this real, we must move child participation beyond simple commemorative events. I encourage our social workers to involve Child Ambassadors in community outreach and school awareness programmes dealing with bullying, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy.

Furthermore, I urge all our district and local municipalities to include children in Integrated Development Plan (IDP) public participation sessions, using age-appropriate methods so they can help shape the planning and safety of our communities.

As we celebrate our children, we must also confront a painful and shameful reality: the abuse, neglect and violence that some children still face in the very places where they should feel safest.

Let me be crystal clear: there is no place for child abuse in our homes, schools, or communities. No child should ever live in fear. I call upon parents, caregivers, educators, traditional leaders and religious leaders to break the culture of silence. When a child speaks out, we must listen, believe them, protect them, and ensure justice takes its course. Protecting children is our ultimate moral duty.

To our beloved learners: I know this celebration takes place right in the middle of a tense and important examination period. To every learner writing final exams, I say: stay focused, disciplined, and committed to your books. Education is the greatest weapon you have to break the cycle of poverty and build a bright future. Do not let your background or current circumstances limit the size of your dreams. Parents, teachers and guardians - let us wrap our children in love, peace and support so they can succeed. Limpopo believes in you!

We remain deeply concerned about poverty, teenage pregnancy, bullying and neglect. We must protect every child, especially those with disabilities, those in vulnerable households and those living in our deepest rural areas.

To our children: today we celebrate your talents, your laughter and your boundless dreams. Know that you have every right to be safe, to be heard and to grow up in a world free from fear.

To our Child Ambassadors: remember that leadership is service. Use your powerful voices to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Together, let us translate our commitments into practical action, better services, safer streets and unconditional love for every child in Limpopo. Your voices matter. Your rights matter. Your dreams matter.

Happy National Children’s Day 2026!

A re šomeng mmogo go aga bokamoso bjo bokaone bja bana ba rena!

I thank you.