KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA AT THE INAUGURATION OF KGOSI RAPHAHLELO MOLOKO BRIAN, GREATER LETABA MUNICIPALITY, MOPANI DISTRICT

27 November 2026

Programme Directors,
The Royal Family and the Proud People of the Raphahlelo Traditional Community
Chairperson of the Limpopo House Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders Hosi Pheni Ngove
Deputy Chairperson of the Limpopo House Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders Kgoshi Rammupudu
Your Royal Highnesses and Esteemed Traditional Leaders present,
Members of the Executive Council and Local Government Leadership,
Executive Mayor of Mopani District Municipality Cllr Dagma Mamanyoha
The Mayor of Greater Letaba Municipality Cllr Rosina Ramalatso
All Councillors Present
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thobela!

They say that history is written in ink, but true heritage is written in the soil, carved into the rings of ancient trees and carried across generations by the relentless spirit of a people.

Long before maps were drawn or modern laws enacted, a migration began. Across the vast plains from Botswana, under the steady guidance of Kgoshi Raphahlelo Moroatona, your people walked until they found their sanctuary—settling first at Bubere at Goeieplaas in Soekmekaar and ultimately planting deep, unbreakable roots right here in the fertile lands of the Mopani District.

From Moroatona to Mahudu, to Lephai I, Machepelele, Moloko Jonas and the steadfast stewardship of Acting Kgoshis Molatelo and Nkei, followed by the long and dedicated reign of the late Kgoshi Raphahlelo Lephai Patrick - and through the protective, nurturing hands of Acting Kgoshigadi Shapo Johanna while our young lion was away sharpening his mind - this throne has weathered every season.

Today, we do not merely install a leader; we witness a seed that was planted centuries ago in Botswana bursting forth into a magnificent, modern tree. Kgoshi Raphahlelo Moloko Brian, you are stepping onto a throne fortified by the blood, sweat and resilience of your forebears. You come from a lineage that knows how to survive, how to endure and how to lead.

The 7th Administration and Traditional Leadership: Walking Side by Side

As the 7th Administration of the Limpopo Provincial Government, we made a solemn covenant: we will not govern over traditional leaders; we will govern with them.

For too long, the partnership between the state and traditional institutions was marred by administrative distance and unresolved historical grievances. We have chosen a different path. We are proud of the concrete strides we have made to work hand in hand with our traditional leaders to solve the problems that affect them directly.

A case in point is the long-standing matter of historical rates owed to traditional authorities. For years, this was a source of frustration. Today, I stand before you to confirm that the payment of interest on those old rates has begun and traditional authorities are finally receiving what is rightfully theirs. And let me assure you, this is only the beginning: other doors and financial streams are being unlocked so that traditional leadership can fully resource its communities.

Kgoshi as an Engine of Economic Development

Kgoshi Raphahlelo, your coronation today coincides with a critical era. You do not sit on this throne merely to preside over ceremonies; you are an economic partner in changing the fortunes of your seven villages - from Soetfontein and Grootfontein to Blinkwater, Bontfontein and Monsterdhoek.

Government has rolled out extensive farmers' support programmes that have captured the imagination of the province. We expect the Raphahlelo Traditional Council to grab this opportunity with both hands. Our land is our bank, our agriculture is our wealth, and our youth must be put to work.

I charge you today, Kgoshi: be closely tied to your subjects. Make sure that your land is used appropriately and productively to feed your families and generate local economies. Prioritise our young people - especially those who are out of school or unable to access tertiary education. Equip them, guide them, and integrate them into agricultural and developmental projects so they do not fall prey to hopelessness.

A Call to Unity and Celebration

To the people of Raphahlelo: today is a day of immense pride and celebration. You have a young, educated and focused leader who has completed his studies and is now ready to dedicate his life to your service.

A Kgoshi is only as strong as the wisdom of his royal council and the unity of his people. Support Kgoshi Raphahlelo. Protect him, guide him with your counsel and walk every step of this journey with him.

May the spirit of your ancestors guide your reign, Kgoshi and may the Raphahlelo Traditional Community flourish under your leadership.

I thank you.