

**STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE
PREMIER OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE MR CASSEL MATHALE TO
THE FOURTH DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURE, LEBOWAKGOMO**

21 February 2013

Honourable Speaker Mr. Rudolph Phala

Honourable Deputy Speaker Manana Joyce Mashamba

Honourable Members of the Legislature and NCOP

Members of the Executive Council;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Speaker Antonio Eugenio Mabai of Gaza Province in Mozambique
and his delegation

Consul Sgayoyo Charles Magongo from the Consulate of the
Kingdom of Swaziland.

The Judge of the Limpopo High Court – Honourable Justice Khami
Makhafola.

The Judge President of the Northern Gauteng High Courts –
Honourable Justice Dunstan Mlambo.

And other members of the Judiciary;

Executive Mayors and Mayors of local municipalities;

Commissioner of Police; Lieutenant General Simon Mpembe

Director General Mme Rachel Molepo-Modipa and Heads of
Departments;

Leaders of Opposition Parties;

Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders Kgoshi Dikgale

Our Esteemed Majesties and Royal Highnesses

Former MPs and MPLs

Provincial Secretary of the ANC Cde Soviet Kgomo Lekganyane;
Stalwarts and Veterans of our struggle;
Leaders of Chapter Nine and Ten Institutions;
Leadership of various religious formations;
Leadership of Labour and Business;
Youth, women, community leaders and media representatives;
Distinguished guests;
Comrades, ladies and gentlemen

Honourable Speaker

We have assembled in this august House on this day of the official opening of our fourth democratically elected Provincial Legislature to present the State of the Province address and to outline the Programme of Action going forward as we accelerate the provision of services to our people.

A hundred years ago, on the 19th of June 1913, the indigenous people of our country found themselves not only slaves, but foreigners in the land of their forefathers. We are opening this parliament of our people at the time when our country is marking 100 years of the passing of the 1913 Land Act that served as a foundation upon which apartheid policies were based.

The forerunner to the 1913 Land Act was the Glen Grey Act of 1894, which was introduced to do away with communal land rights. Africans

were forced off their land and traditional leaders were undermined with some dethroned for resisting the Act.

The 1913 Land Act was used to further undermine the authority and intelligence of our ancestors by mainly seizing their valuable land and banning them from entering certain areas. Communities were forcefully removed from their homes in a ruthless manner that humanity has never seen.

During the State of the Nation Address, President Jacob Zuma indicated the effect of 1913 Land Act and how the indigenous people of this country were forcefully and inhumanly dispossessed of their land. Redressing this requires amicable solutions adopted within the ambit of the Constitution and the law. We cannot deny that the land question remains a highly emotive matter in this country and deserve immediate solutions.

A sizable number of communities in the province have already been given back their land. We want to congratulate all the communities that have benefited from this land restitution programme. Although some communities have already benefited, we are aware that there are still some communities whose land claims have not yet been resolved. The new approach announced by the President that the principle of 'just and equitable' for compensation will be pursued instead of the 'willing buyer, willing seller' principle is a revolutionary move that will aid in our efforts of land restitution.

There is no other best method to mark and remember our forefathers who were forcefully removed from their land than to amend the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994 to give our people who missed the 1998 December deadline more time to claim their land back.

Therefore, we are urging our traditional leaders, communities and all affected persons not to miss this rare opportunity. Our efforts to assist communities that have already been given back their land will continue through the post-settlement support initiative. We want every piece of land which is currently contributing to our job security and creating jobs to continue on that path.

We must use the land restitution programme not only to redeem our people's pride, but also to introduce them into commercial farming whilst at the same time ensuring the sustainability of our food security programme.

We have taken a deliberate decision to revive agricultural colleges to build agricultural technical skills which will support and promote our subsistence and commercial farmers in the province. The two agricultural colleges in the province, Tompi Seleka and Madzivhandila, should be repositioned such that they provide adequate skills for commercial farming. The colleges should continue to collaborate with institutions for higher learning to provide technical support to our communities, including emerging farmers.

These colleges will operate as community institutions of agriculture and technology which will also focus on community development, rural development, ICT and human capital development.

We have delivered tractors to various centers in our five districts to stimulate food production in the rural communities. This is a scheme that is aimed at eradicating extreme poverty and hunger as part of the United Nation's eight Millennium Development Goals. We have a committed team of one thousand two hundred (1200) extension officers stationed in all districts and service centers to give advisory support to small scale farmers and households on sustainable poverty alleviation, household food security and other reliable information. These interventions will assist in strengthening the implementation of the Rural Development Programme.

Last year during our State of the Province Address to this august House, we announced the establishment of the Provincial Food Park that will ensure that together with the private sector we confront hunger. The Food Park is now operating and sixty (60) agencies are assisting the Park to distribute food to more than five thousand beneficiaries.

Honourable Speaker

Last year during our State of the Province Address, we made a pledge to continue improving our Grade 12 results as part of enabling our learners to pursue their dreams. We are more than pleased to

report that the 2012 matric class has done it. Even more important is the fact that our rural schools are still the best in producing good Science and Mathematics results.

The best three learners in Mathematics and Science in the country are from our province. Limpopo grade 12 learners have scooped fifteen of the twenty seven best positions recognised at national level.

We want to again congratulate Ngoanapedi Mmadikgetho Komane, the top 2012 Grade 12 learner in the entire country, from Glen Cowie Secondary School in the Sekhukhune District. She has proved beyond any doubt the capacity of our rural schools to produce best and quality results. She obtained 100% in Mathematics, 100% in Physical Science and 100% in Accounting. **Ngwana ka, o re dirile batho! You have put Limpopo Province on the map of academic excellence.**

We call upon all learners to emulate Mmadikgetho's great achievements. We are saying to all our learners: It is doable and we know you can do it. We encourage the matric class of 2013 to work harder and strive for excellence like their predecessors boMmadikgeto le bo Mukhethwa Murodovha.

These achievements are a living testimony to the fact that despite other challenges facing many of our rural schools, we are registering remarkable progress in improving the standard of learning and teaching across our province.

We are also seizing this moment to express our profound words of appreciation to Mbilwi Secondary School in Vhembe district for successfully sustaining the culture of excellence by producing quality matric pass rate. Mbilwi continues to serve as a shining example, not only to schools in the province, but to all schools across our country. We want to call upon all schools to entrench the culture of excellence in learning and teaching.

Honourable Speaker

Once again this year, our educators have proven that they are committed to the course of teaching and producing good results. We want to once again take this opportunity to thank our educators who guided and assisted learners during their studies, even under difficult and testing conditions. The dedications and achievements of this league of teachers must inspire us to invest in every effort in providing services to our people.

Honourable Speaker

Limpopo ndi tshisima tsha pfunzo, Limpopo ndi tshisima tsha Mathematics and Science. This is why the best teacher in the country in Mathematics and Science comes from this province, the Limpopo Province. That best teacher in the Mathematics and Science in the country is none other than Mr. Nkhangwe Nemudzivhadi from

Thengwe High School in the Vhembe District. Vho-Nemudzivhadi won the National Teachers Award: Kader Asmal Excellence Award. **Ro livhuha Vho-Nemudzivhadi.**

We would also like to congratulate Mr. Mmipe Mokgehle from Toronto Primary School in the Capricorn District for winning the Lifetime Achievement Award. **Re a leboga Tlou!**

The great contribution that is played by school governing bodies, parents, communities and other role players in bringing about these improved results in our matric examinations and preparing all learners for challenging moments ahead cannot remain unrecognised. We are motivated and humbled by their contribution and we urge them to continue with their exemplary good work.

We are grateful to the MEC for Education Mr. Namane Dickson Masemola for providing leadership to the department. Tau, your sterling leadership continues to produce improved results. You have now improved Grade 12 results by 18% since 2009.

We want to thank you for your resilience in dealing with challenges confronting education in the province. Your tenacious approach in dealing with the Learner Teacher Support Material in the previous year has assisted us in putting the challenges we were facing behind us.

We must all be firm believers in the value of education as the best route to socio-economic advancement. We will continue with the work of creating conducive environments for learning and teaching in our schools.

Honourable Speaker;

Our country's quest to remedy the injustices of the past through strategies aimed at faster economic growth, lower unemployment and poverty alleviation has been an on-going process since the advent of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

Subsequent strategies and interventions, as espoused in the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR), Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (AsgiSA) and the New Growth Path outline the economic policy discourse that defines how economic development should be approached in the province.

In order to achieve the goals of accelerated economic growth and halving unemployment, there has to be a concerted effort to target employment growth and economic development that will serve as the principal driving force for accelerated and sustainable shared growth, hence the alignment of the Limpopo Employment Growth and Development Plan (LEGDP) with the National Development Plan.

In pursuance of enhancing economic development we are collaborating with the Department of Trade and Industry on its

programme of establishing Special Economic Zones. The Department of Trade and Industry released its draft Special Economic Zones Policy and Bill during 2012 and invited all provinces to submit proposals for the establishment of these Special Economic Zones. We are happy to report to this august House that we are the only province to receive provisional approval for two Special Economic Zones.

The first Special Economic Zone will be in Musina and it will be a huge benefit to the people of this province due to its strategic geographic location as the entry port to the rest of Africa, especially SADC. This economic zone will focus on logistics and the beneficiation of coal.

The second Special Economic Zone will be in Greater Tubatse Municipality and it will explore the possibilities in the Platinum Group Metals value chain. There is currently a feasibility study underway with support from Anglo Platinum which seeks to establish a hydrogen fuel cell industry in the province. The project will have several benefits including the possibility of providing a reliable source of electricity to communities in Limpopo that are currently connected to the electricity grid of Eskom. The establishment of the hydrogen fuel cell industry will also create an additional demand for platinum.

What is more interesting and encouraging is the fact that work has already begun to institutionalise these two Special Economic Zones. In Tubatse, this includes the Department of Science and Technology,

the private sector and our two universities in the province. In Musina, negotiations have started with Transnet and the land owners in order to ensure that we maximise the full potential of this mineral rich area.

It is our firm view that these two Special Economic Zones will add the necessary impetus to the development of the identified Growth Points of Greater Tubatse and Musina/Makhado.

We can today announce that De Beers, which is now a member of the Anglo-American group, will invest handsomely to build and operate a new underground mine beneath the open pit Venetia mine in Limpopo. When completed, the new Venetia Underground Mine will replace the open pit as South Africa's largest diamond mine and extend the life of the resource until 2042.

This is a long term commitment to the future of South Africa and the largest by De Beers anywhere in the world. This is a strong sign of confidence in the South African diamond and mining industry.

The construction phase of the Venetia Underground Mine will create up to 1 000 new jobs, the majority of which will come from the local area. It is also important to state that the vast majority of all equipment and services will be sourced in our country and more than three thousand jobs will be created.

Honourable Speaker

It is generally accepted that SMME development is one of the key job drivers in any economy. The other challenge that can be addressed by SMME development is the major challenge of youth unemployment. In this regard, the Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship (SAGE) programme was launched in 2012, with Limpopo being the proud host of the national competition. In 2013 the focus will be on the implementation of these programmes. The programme focuses on identifying the necessary skills among young people to ensure the development of successful entrepreneurs.

The amalgamation of economic development agencies into a single agency within the province came to a successful conclusion in 2012 with the establishment of the Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA). The amalgamation saw the convergence of four entities, namely: Trade and Investment Limpopo (TIL), Limpopo Economic Development Enterprise (LIMDEV), Limpopo Business Support Agency (LIBSA) and Limpopo Agricultural Development Corporation (LADC) into a single agency.

The process of amalgamation was based on the realisation that there are many entities in the business of developing the economy which results in duplication of functions. LEDA will now also effectively maximise the resources to the benefit of the people of our province. The costs of running various entities, all with the aim of building the economy of the province, will be reduced. Most importantly, LEDA will seek to support a more coherent system of economic delivery in the

province and is well-positioned to play the role as the implementing agent for the LEGDP.

Honourable Speaker

Limpopo is endowed with a significant amount of natural resources and biodiversity which provides a number of ecosystem services with a number of direct and indirect benefits to human welfare. Our recognition of this wealth is reflected in the three development priorities embedded in our LEGDP which highlight mining, tourism and agriculture as the economic development sectors.

We, however, recognise the numerous environmental challenges that we are confronted with in ensuring that the path to sustainable development and green economy are not unduly obstructed.

There is a need for collective effort in conserving our ecological environment. We need to address land degradation through land use options that do not undermine the role of ecosystems in providing the much needed services like water, clean air and food. We need to continue to promote sustainability in all aspects of development, especially in the mining sector.

The state of our rivers and wetlands is concerning and this has implications to water quality and quantity, development and livelihoods. Limpopo, being one of the drier provinces, needs functional and well-preserved catchments, wetlands and healthy

rivers to provide water to the people and thus supporting socio-economic development.

Of further concern is the unsustainable exploitation of fauna and flora and wildlife crime explicitly expressed through sophisticated and violent rhino poaching activities as well as the loss of endangered cycad species.

The plight of the rhino is widely known and remains a serious conservation concern and challenge for the country and this province in particular. Various initiatives have been taken and are bearing fruit in combating this wildlife crime. A number of arrests have been made in Limpopo and the implementation of alternative prevention measures is assisting in deterring potential rhino poaching activities. The province ascribes these successes to men and women who have dedicated their lives to fight this unfortunate scourge. These men and women are considered among the many national patriots that are playing their part in different spheres aimed at protecting the treasured and iconic rhino species.

Honourable Speaker

We would like to acknowledge the dedicated officials of LEDET who are committed to protecting the endangered rhino species in our province. Our sincere and deepest condolences go to the bereaved family of one of the department's committed rangers, Mr. Mulalo Nemakhavhani, who tragically lost his life in his line of duty trying to

protect this endangered species at one of our provincial nature reserves.

Government will continue to address the plight of rhino which is widely known and acknowledged as a serious conservation concern and economic crime affecting the country and the province. Priority will be given to harnessing the existing partnership with security and other agencies as well as the improvement in investigation, intelligence and information gathering and management.

Given the increasing developments and mining activities in the province, various forms of pollution, including solid waste, chemicals and air quality will require special focus in the following financial years. The potential effect of climate change on livelihoods cannot be undermined because it has serious implications for agriculture, health and infrastructure.

Our work in conserving the ecological environment will add value to our efforts to address the socio-economic challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. We have no choice but to follow the Green Economy path. The work in Green Economy and Climate Change will continue as part of the provincial strategic intervention towards sustainable development and a transition to a low-carbon society, fostering innovation in green products and service development.

We are making steady progress in transforming the professional hunting industry. Limpopo currently contributes the highest revenue in respect of the professional hunting industry in the country. This multimillion rand industry needs to be protected and broadened to realise its job creation initiatives even in its secondary industries. The issue of transformation and active participation of previously disadvantaged groups in the industry needs to be strengthened. We are happy to announce that we made history in 2012 by providing leopard hunting quotas only to professional outfitters that have partnered with Black professional hunters. Twenty trained Black professional hunters who never had opportunities to practice their trade have already benefitted from this intervention.

Honourable Speaker

The development and installation of bulk infrastructure in Lephalale is well on schedule and a professional team has been appointed to develop a Community Residential Unit that will assist in meeting the growing demand for a new township in that area. Lephalale is one of our special growth points and therefore, services must be made available if we are to realise our resolve of developing it into a city.

Honourable Speaker

The creation of job opportunities for our people is a pressing obligation that must be achieved. It is only through job opportunities

that our people can live with confidence to face their tomorrow and pursue their respective dreams.

According to Statistics South Africa our province was the highest in terms of job creation in the last financial year. In this financial year, our province is still the highest, having increased its job creation by 6.5% whilst the second province is at 5.1%. While we appreciate the efforts made in job creation, we acknowledge that more still needs to be done.

Honourable Speaker

The 2011 Census Report indicates that we are registering good and noticeable progress in increasing the number of households with access to clean running water, sanitation facilities and electricity. Although we have made progress, we are aware that more still needs to be done in ensuring the provision of basic services to our people.

As government, we have agreed that the provision of water through truck water tanks must never be used as a permanent measure, but must be a temporary arrangement which should be replaced by taps that will sustainably produce clean running water for our people.

Honourable Speaker

In the 2012 State of the Province Address we made a pledge to our people that we would demolish single-sex hostel structures and build

modern family residential units as part of restoring the pride of our people. We further reported that Phase One of the Seshego Community Residential Units has been completed and handed over to beneficiaries and that the second and final phase of the project was about to be completed. It is our pleasure to announce that the second phase has also been completed.

We continue to provide low cost housing to the deserving communities of our province. Our Cooperative governance, with the support of our municipalities and traditional authorities, has been the pinnacle of our integrated approach to deliver services to Limpopo citizens. More than eight thousand low cost houses were built by the end of December 2012. We remain committed to continue with this provisioning of quality houses to our people in our quest to restore their dignity and pride.

Honourable Speaker

In the previous financial year our province experienced floods in Maruleng. Resources from the Disaster Relief Fund were made available to the province to address the aftermath of the floods. These resources were used to repair roads and bridges in the area as well as building the municipal water infrastructure.

The recent floods in Vhembe and Mopani left many of our people homeless and also destroyed bridges, roads, schools and other public buildings. Some of the affected bridges and roads link

communities to important economic centres and, therefore, they must be rebuilt as soon as possible. To that end, we are working together with national government to repair and rebuild damaged infrastructure in the affected areas.

Honourable Speaker

There is marked improvement in the management of HIV and AIDS in the province. We have increased the number of antiretroviral treatment (ART) sites to 493 by the end of December 2012. The total number of patients registered on the ART programme has substantially increased in this financial year. We are also pleased by the increased number of pregnant women who test for HIV at our healthcare facilities.

We are continuing to double our efforts of fighting the spread of HIV and AIDS, whilst also curbing the number of new infections. We have made significant strides in increasing the number of facilities which provide comprehensive HIV and AIDS treatment and support in the province.

We have doubled our efforts in providing primary healthcare services to the people of this province. We have sustained our performance of providing 24-hour services at primary healthcare facilities, particularly in the rural areas. We have also reduced the response time of our Emergency Medical Services.

Honourable Speaker

The manner in which many of our people are affected by other diseases such as diabetes, malaria and tuberculosis means we must develop new methods in our approach towards fighting these diseases. We have already started encouraging our people to adopt healthy lifestyles. We will continue to emphasise the message that it is through a healthy lifestyle that we can avoid certain diseases whilst at the same time increasing our life expectancy.

While we are appreciating these achievements, it is prudent to acknowledge that we have experienced an inadequate supply of medicines and foodstuffs in some of our health facilities. We have reprioritised funds to address this matter in our efforts to continue to provide quality healthcare services to our people.

Honourable Speaker

Our continued support to our traditional leaders is a confirmation of how we value the institution of traditional authority in the province. We are one of the two provinces that have paid traditional leaders in line with the President's proclamation. Traditional leaders represent our heritage and culture as Africans and we must accord them all the necessary support in their work.

Honourable Speaker

We are intensifying the offensive against crime and we will continue until our people are safe. We are working very hard together with communities to build a crime-free society. We want to congratulate the police for having been able to arrest suspects in the following high profile cases: the murder of three children in Mookgopong, the Groblersdal serial killer, the Watervaal serial rapist case, the murder of a female train driver and other similar crimes. We also want to congratulate communities for working with the police thereby enabling them to arrest the suspects. We strongly condemn violence against women and children.

Honourable Speaker;

We remain committed to fight fraud and corruption. We have appealed to communities to partner with government in the fight against this scourge. We are calling upon those who have evidence of wrongdoing against anyone in the province to make it available to law-enforcement agencies for investigations. The investigation process should be respected by all citizens. The implementation of the anti-fraud and corruption programme in the public service has resulted in the dismissal of 112 officials.

The province continues to resolve anti-fraud and corruption cases reported through the national anti-corruption hotline of the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission report of November 2012 shows that the province is amongst the top three in

resolving the anti-corruption cases reported to their hotline. We remain committed to running an open administration which deals with fraud and corruption decisively.

Honourable Speaker;

We reported last year that five of our provincial departments were placed under section 100 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. We made a commitment to work with the national intervention team and we remain steadfast to this commitment. One of the critical issues highlighted by the intervention team was that there is a need to strengthen the structural capacity of the Provincial Treasury.

We are working together with the National Treasury to strengthen the Provincial Treasury. We have upgraded the post structure of the executive management of the Provincial Treasury to enable it to respond to its mandate adequately.

The fact that we are working together with the National Treasury through the intervention team and there is progress in our work to stabilise our finances undermines any allegation concerning a pending legal challenge against the intervention. As the ANC-led government, we will never take another ANC-led government to court, for that will be against the values and principles of cooperative governance and mostly, counter revolutionary.

Honourable Speaker

We do not only have the appetite to succeed in our endeavor to create a better life for our people but we also possess the tenacity to live and pursue our dreams. We might be experiencing some of the socio-economic difficulties which deny us the opportunity to prosper, but we know better than ever that we will overcome, especially under the African National Congress led government.

Let us remain focused and more determined to build our province and our country whilst also contributing meaningfully to every effort aimed at uplifting humanity as a whole.

We strongly feel it is befitting to extend a word of gratitude to our public servants who continue to render services to our people, at times under difficult conditions. It is through the hard work, dedication and commitment of our public servants that our province has been able to scoop a number of awards at national level in this financial year.

We would also like to congratulate these citizens of our province who distinguished themselves in their respective fields. Mr Moloko Knox Matsapola who is the provincial winner of the Kader Asmal Award, Ms K Edlam : for Provincial Award of The Excellence in Foundation Phase Teaching , Ms Tshimangadzo Ranbuda : Top Entrepreneur in

the Export Market, Rose Manpsho who is Miss Limpopo 2012 and Katie Morgan : Miss Teen Limpopo 2012.

As we open this honourable House, we should all appreciate that anyone who rises before dawn three hundred and sixty five days a year stands in a good position to realise their dream. Our minds must always be dominated by the desire to create and cement our success as people.

Therefore, we should be relentless in chasing our ideas by working very hard to give shape to our tomorrow. We must take care of each other as people and remain loyal to our ancient African principle that: *motho ke motho ka batho*

As the ANC led government, we will continue to work side by side with our communities to ensure our province continues to be prosperous in our quest to provide a better life for all.

Thank you!

Ndaa!

Inkomu!

Re a leboga!

Baie dankie!

