

**ADDRESS BY MEC SEAPARO SEKOATI ON BEHALF OF THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE EPWP 4<sup>TH</sup> PHASE, FRIDAY 06 SEPTEMBER 2019, MAKHADO SHOWGROUND.**

Programme Director;

Dr Monica Mochadi, our MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure;

Other MECs present today;

Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Executive Mayor Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr Dowelani Nenguda;

Mayor of Makhado Local Municipality, Cllr Ntshaveni Munyai;

Leaders of Tradional Authorities present;

Councillors from our various Municiplaities

HOD for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Mr Seroka;

Senior Management in government;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of the Premier of our Province, Ntate Chupu Mathabatha I wish to send my gratitude to you all for joining us in this important launch of the 4<sup>th</sup> Phase of our Expanded Public Works Programme.

Let me also thank MEC, Dr Mochadi for guiding this processes in such an immaculate way towards this launch and I have no doubt that with your equally committed, strong and supportive team, Limpopo will once more lead the rest of the country in the implementation of the Extended Public Works Programme.

Programme Director today is “Casual Day”, a day dedicated to support people with disability. As we join in these noble courses, let us make sure that the care and support of people living with disability is an everyday act.

Probably MEC and Mayors, our biggest challenge as Limpopo is to find innovative ways of incorporating opportunities for people living with disabilities within our Extended Public Works Programmes.

On the occasion of the launch of this programme in May 2004, ironically here in Limpopo in the village of Sikhunyani in Giyani,

former President Thabo Mbeki indicated the centrality of this programme in creating basic employment and the provisioning of basic skills and job training for our people.

President Mbeki said, I quote: “The Expanded Public Works Programme is a nation-wide programme that aims to draw significant numbers of the unemployed into productive employment.

Through this programme, we want workers to gain skills while they are employed and increase their capacity to continue working elsewhere once they leave the programme.

It is a comprehensive inter-governmental, people-centred programme developed to fulfil the overwhelming trust and confidence the masses of our people have placed in their government, that we should work together, in partnership, to create a better life for all”.

I am happy that as Limpopo we continue to realise this expectation in our daily work as well as ensuring that across all our functionaries in both the two Spheres of our government, we integrate EPWP.

Programme Director Ladies & Gentlemen, on this event of the launch of the 4<sup>th</sup> Phase, maybe it is prudent to remind ourselves that even before the conceptualisation of the EPW Programme, the people of Limpopo had already initiated a successful labour-intensive roads programme called Gundo Lashu (a Tshivenda word for “our victory”).

Therefore, it is a blessing in disguise and an honour that today we are launching the Programme’s 4<sup>th</sup> Phase in the beautiful town of Makhado which bears a very powerful name connected to our liberation history.

We are really happy to be hosted in this rich and attractive town because our presence here indeed reaffirms “our victory”.

The central focus of the Extended Public Works Programme is about job opportunities for our people.

The EPWP creates work opportunities in four sectors, namely: Infrastructure, non-State, Environment and Culture; and Social sectors.

This is done by:

- increasing the labour intensity of government-funded infrastructure projects;
- creating work opportunities through the Non-Profit Organisation's programmes and Community Work programmes;
- creating work opportunities in public environment and culture programmes; and
- creating work opportunities in public social programmes.

Therefore, as part of implementation in these sectors, the government will put more emphasis on rehabilitation and maintenance of aging road infrastructure, especially those that connects the major economic towns of the Province

Experience has proven that EPWP can be very effective if well managed and implemented.

For an example, during the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase of EPWP, Limpopo created over 1 million job opportunities.

I am therefore equally confident Mayor Ntshaveni Munyai that this Municipality, working together with the District Municipality, and the Department of Public Works will ensure that the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the EPWP is a resounding success in Vhembe.

We want to see more young people of this region participating massively in this program. We also want to see women of Makhado and those of Vhembe Region in general participating in this Programme.... Make it their victory!!

Programme Director, by making this 4<sup>th</sup> edition to succeed, we will be realising the some of the objectives set out in the National Development Plan as a Province.

These objectives are about providing work opportunities and income support to the poor and unemployed people through the labour-intensive delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to our Nation's development.

The success of EPWP also restores the dignity of our people, in particular mothers and fathers who are then enabled to provide the basic necessities for their families. So as their spending also contribute in stimulating local economies.

As the NDP aims to achieve, the success of this 4<sup>th</sup> Phase will immensely contribute to government's multi-faceted approach of dealing with the inherited triple challenges of inequality, unemployment, and poverty.

Through this 4<sup>th</sup> Phase we are launching today, as Limpopo we target to create over 475 000 EPWP jobs in a period of 5 years.

A huge chunk of these opportunities is expected to go to young people and women.

I must of course stress the point that the phase we are launching today, builds on the successes of the previous phases of this programme.

Through the Department of Public Works, we have indeed worked hard to ensure the challenges and risks identified in the previous phases are addressed to ensure that this phase does not only become a resounding success but is implemented without let or deterrence.

We know that EPWP is not a panacea to all our socio-economic challenges, however, it remains one of the most viable vehicles used by government to address them.

Of importance is the fact that beyond providing work opportunities for the youth and women of our province in particular, this programme plays a critical role in skilling and providing our people with on-the-job-experience.

The implementation of this programme will mostly be felt by our local people who will be employed, some of them for the first time in their lives, because they too, will enjoy the privilege and dignity that comes with being able to put food on their tables.

We can therefore say with absolute certainty that the people of our Province will harvest a lot of socio-economic spin-offs from the implementation of this 4<sup>th</sup> Phase of EPWP.

Ladies & Gentlemen, it would be inconceivable of me to conclude my address today without joining the multitudes of peace loving South Africans, Africans, and other patriots of the world in condemning the rampant violence meted against our fellow Africans.

No amount of social distress should course us to turn against each other, and I must hasten to commend the people of Limpopo for your continued love and support to all foreign nationals, in particular our brothers and sisters from Zimbabwe.

In the same vein, I wish to denounce the brutal violence meted against women and children in many corners of our beautiful land.

I make a clarion call to all fellow men to rise and be counted amongst those who says: NOT IN MY NAME.

Let all men, young and old, rise to protect our women, children and the vulnerable. We must indeed snip these behaviour from its roots before its poison bedevil our society.

Programme Director, as I conclude, let me state that the government remain committed to the creation of decent employment through inclusive economic growth by building an efficient, competitive and responsive economic infrastructure network.

Let us all work together in this struggle to create jobs and end poverty and inequality.

The future of Limpopo is in our hands, we can only pull at different directions at our collective peril.

MEC, Dr Mochadi, as President Ramaphosa would say, a si khaulezeni..... Let us work together to create jobs and grow Limpopo.

Ndo Levhuwa...

Na Khensa...

Ke a Leboga...