

**REMARKS BY THE PREMIER, HON. R.M MTSHWENI-TSIPANE ON
THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE MPUMALANGA
PROVINCIAL HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND
KHOI-SAN LEADERS**

DATE: 19 APRIL 2023

VENUE: CHAMBER, MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

SALUTATIONS

Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders and Khoi-San Leaders, Kgoshi Lameck Mokoena;

Your Majesties, Ingwenyama Makhosoke II and Ingwenyama Mabhoko III, in absentia;

Chairperson of the National House of Traditional Leaders, Kgosi Milton Seatlholo, Rapulana;

Deputy Chairperson of the Provincial House, Inkosi TM Yende;

MEC for COGTA, Hon. MJ Msibi and Members of the Executive Council present;

Executive Members of the Provincial House, Chairpersons of the Local Houses;

Our revered Traditional Leaders, Amakhosi / Magoshi;

Abo-Ndlunkhulu and Izinduna;

Director-General, Mr Makhukhu Mampuru;

Senior Management of the Department of COGTA, led by the
Head of the Department, Mr Samukelo Ngubane;

Compatriots and fellow citizens, Sanibonani,
Lothjani, Dumelang, Avuxeni!

1. Chairperson, my profound appreciation to you and the Executive for inviting me to address this sitting today. Please allow me first to congratulate all newly elected members, as we mark the 6th term of the house. We are confident that you will steer this house towards the realization of its set objectives, of preserving our rich anthropological history, heritage and national identity as citizens of this diverse country.

2. We note with appreciation your re-election as Chairperson. This suggest the high trust level that abo-Ndabezitha have in your leadership. I find a striking balance between your re-election and Bob Marley's observation. The late Reggae artist once stated, and I quote: "***Don't live for your presence to be noticed, but for your absence to be felt***", close quote.

3. Undoubtedly, you made your absence felt more than your presence. **[On a lighter note]**, we hope, in this 6th term, you will juxtapose, and make your presence felt more than your absence.

4. As we welcome the leadership, equally, we appreciate the previous Executive, led by **Inkhosi SG Ngomane, [Mshika]** as Chairperson, and the Deputy, **Ikosi CM Mahlangu [Mntungwa lomuhle]**. We hold them in high esteem for the role they played of steering the 5th term of the house. Undoubtedly, they too, emulated their predecessors, by laying a strong foundation, in which this 6th term shall stand on, and confronted contemporary challenges.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

5. Chairperson, like all well-wishers in the province and around the country, we were optimistic about a good start to the 6th term, until the precious lives of our own were cut short.

6. We are enjoined by the pain of losing **Hhosi Clyde Mnisi** of the **Mnisi Traditional Council** in **Islington**, Bushbuckridge, who lost his life, when he suffered an attack from unknown assassins. Our pain was further aggravated by the death of his widow, **Charlene**, who at the time of her mourning, was also attacked, leaving behind their children as orphans.

7. We call upon the Provincial Commissioner, and the team of police investigators to leave no stone unturned in a quest to apprehend the assassins. We are confident that it is just a matter of time, before they are apprehended, based on the intensity of the investigation.

8. We wish to convey our heartfelt condolences to the Mnisi Traditional Council and House. May I request the House, through your permission Chairperson, to observe a moment of silent, in their honour. ***(May their souls rest in peace).***

9. Chairperson, you are taking office at a time when we are seized with the task of rebuilding our economy, to eradicate many challenges. These include the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the energy supply crisis.

10. Through the jobs massification programme that I announced in the State of the Province Address (SOPA) in February this year, we will respond definitively to the unacceptably high rate of unemployment in the Province.

11. We recognize that our rural areas are in short supply of economic activities, like urban areas, leaving communities in the jurisdiction of Amakhosi, to bear the brunt of the triple effects of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

12. The ***Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan***, is among the many aggressive initiatives we are implementing to give effect to the jobs massification programme. The plan prioritises the roll-out of infrastructure programmes, green economy initiatives, industrialisation through localization, employment stimulus, tourism and agriculture/agro-processing, amongst others.

13. The construction of major infrastructure projects, such as the Skywalk in Graskop, seeks to unlock the much-needed jobs, in the tourism sector. Construction has started on site, and once it is completed, the Skywalk will reposition our province as a tourist destination of choice, for communities within its vicinity, to benefit through economic spin offs.

14. Our Parks rejuvenation programme, seeks to improve and enhance the state of our Parks, and to uplift communities living adjacent to these Parks. Most of them are in areas, under the jurisdiction of bo-Ndabezitha. Part of the scope, is to install directional and welcome signage, in areas such as the Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains, the UNESCO World Heritage Site. We envisage completion during the course of the current financial year.

15. We equally share the same agony with the rest of the country, due to load-shedding. Ironically, our province is home of the energy grid, considering the power stations that are housed here. For this reason we

have adopted a hands-on-deck approach, to ensure that we reap the fruits of the country's energy transition.

16. The development of Phase 1 of the Just Transition Plan, to transit to low carbon economy that is sustainable and inclusive, has been finalized. This gives us the momentum to finalize Phase 2 of the plan, which includes the establishment of the Mpumalanga Just Transition Working group, to coordinate all sector Departments, Industries, Local Municipalities including funding agencies.

17. The ***Special Economic Zone***, remains key in our commitment to expand the agricultural value chain in the province. The location of the SOE in Nkomazi, will not only unlock the desirable jobs for communities within the various Traditional Councils around Nkomazi, it will also contribute towards sustainable food production.

18. The financial support of Youth owned Enterprizes, has gained momentum, as we strive to flatten the high youth unemployment rate. Through the Premier's Youth Development Fund, we have supported **97 youth-owned businesses across the province**, to the tune of **R140 million** since inception.

19. **R92.3 million** has also been disbursed in the current financial year, in support of **36 youth enterprizes**, across the 17 local municipalities. The

supported sectors are in mining, agriculture, manufacturing, transport and logistics.

20. In this era of high youth unemployment rate, the Premier's Youth Development Fund, is a game-changer, to circumvent the status quo, of the 54.6 % of youth unemployment rate in Quarter 1 of 2022, in terms of the expanded definition.

21. In our strongest conviction, we view this as a building block, as we march towards 2024. Our target is to reduce the unemployment youth rate to 25%, against the target of 6% nationally, in line with the 2030 National Development Plan.

22. We recognize the role of Amakhosi in development initiatives and as the most authoritative voice of our communities in rural areas. As such, we pledge to work with you, ***Bo-Ndabezitha*** to rebuild resilient communities in a province that will leave no one behind.

SUPPORT FOR TRADITIONAL LEADERS

23. Chairperson, according to the Constitution , South Africa is one sovereign state founded on values such as human dignity, equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom.

24. It provides for the establishment of one sovereign state, a common South African citizenship and a democratic system of government committed to achieving equality between men and women and people of all races.

25. The following senior traditional leaders were appointed by the royal families and issued certificates of recognition:

- **Ikosi Sipho Sydney Mahlangu of the Ndzundza Mabusa Traditional Council;**
- **Hosi Abednigo Nxumalo of Amashangana Traditional Council**
- **Inkhosi Misisizwe Sandile Mnisi of the Mantjolo Traditional Council;**
- **Inkhosi Khuzulwandle Nhlanhla Malaza of the Mandlamakhulu Traditional Council;**
- **Inkhosi Peter Richard Nkosi of the Ebutsini Traditional Council**
- **Kgosigadi Clara Bontle Mashile of the Mashilane Traditional Council.**

26. Their recognition is in terms of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act 3 of 2019, following a submission made by the royal families in accordance with their customary law of succession.

27. We are committed to providing traditional leaders with the resources they require to better serve their communities. This support is aimed at

providing infrastructure development and enhancement of Traditional Council offices in order to provide services to traditional communities in a conducive working environment.

TOOLS OF TRADE

28. Chairperson, in light of the I made a commitment to renovate eight (8) traditional council offices and construct twelve (12) in the province.

29. The department of COGTA finalized all the appointments of the contractors and project managers and is already on site to ensure that these offices are in a state of habitability.

30. Chairperson, in the 2023/24 financial year, the Department has prioritized completing the construction of the 14 traditional council we committed to last year.

31. 22 traditional council offices will be constructed and 18 traditional council offices will be renovated. I must add Chairperson, that offices cannot be constructed and be left empty without furniture. To this end, additional resources have been budgeted for the procurement of furniture for all the previous and current constructed offices.

32. We are equally concerned, and we will take action against some rogue illegal groupings that are abruptly halting government projects by hijacking and claiming some entitlements to be appointed or justified ransom be paid by the contractors.

33. It has been reported that some contractors are hijacked, while a Site Storage Container containing construction materials has been burned down. These are clear acts of thuggery and hooliganism right in the face of Traditional Leaders and communities that are being denied advanced quality services by the government.

34. We are saying enough is enough (*sekwanele*). Thorough investigations are being commissioned against these perpetrators and those who assist them in their dirty work. We must all work together to put an end to these heinous crimes.

ADMINISTRATION OF GRANTS AND CULTURAL GRANTS

35. Bo-Ndabezitha, it is Government's responsibility to ensure that Amakhosi are afforded the resources to enable them to perform their duties successfully.

36. This is why this Administration has added R153 million over the 2023 MTEF to support the work of AmaKhosi.

37. This includes , among other, setting aside R80 million for the remainder of this MTSF to aid the work of Amakhosi. R23 million has been set aside in this current financial year for the disbursement of grants to traditional councils. This will increase to R24 million in the 2024/2025 financial year and R25 million in the 2025/2026 financial year.

38. R15 million has been set aside for the procurement of furniture for all traditional councils in this current financial year.

39. Furthermore, R12 million has been set aside for Ummemmo during this current financial year.

RECONSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS

40. Chairperson Section 63(4) of the TKLA states that all tribal authorities and traditional councils must be reconstituted within two years from the commencement of the Act. This means that the reconstitution process should have been completed by 31st of March 2023, in accordance with the provisions of Sections 16 (2) and (5) of the Act.

41. Chairperson, it is now public knowledge that Amakhosi in the province and National have taken a stance to halt the project until their demands

are met. Please note that the province and the National Department of COGTA are working tirelessly to find amicable solutions to resolve the issues raised by Amakhosi.

42. We believe that by working together, both Amakhosi and Government will amicably resolve these issues. Hence we have again prioritised this project in the 2023/24 financial year as this is a legislative mandate and imperative which must be adhered to by all provinces with traditional communities in the country to constitutionally establish Traditional Councils.

43. We are also in the process of appointing two committees: an Ad-Hoc committee that will resolve land-related issues and an investigative committee that will focus on traditional leadership disputes and claims in Mpumalanga province in terms of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, 2019 (Act No. 3 of 2019).

44. Chairperson and Bo-Ndabezitha as the province continues to implement the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act No. 3 of 2019, which came into effect in April 2021, the project on the reconstitution of traditional councils has advanced. The Minister is reconsidering the issues around the formula and other impediments as were raised to allow for the smooth process to continue.

INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED WORK WITH GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE

45. Chairperson, it is very crucial for government and traditional leaders to work together to successfully deliver services to our traditional communities. We denounce working in silos and promote efficacy in the deployment of resources to achieve greater impact.

46. Our Province has ensured that we incorporate uBukhosi in all efforts to alleviate socio-economic challenges we are confronted with.

47. A prime example is our efforts to ensure food security in the Province. The Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs will provide each traditional homestead with a 30m x 10m greenhouse tunnel, equipped with 280 climate smart agriculture boxes for controlled climate and water efficient food gardening. In addition vegetables produced, will be procured directly from the traditional households for our school government nutrition programme for additional income.

48. I would also like to encourage traditional leaders to participate in municipal affairs, as provided for in Section 81 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Amendment Act (Act 3 of 2021) and the Traditional and Khoi San Leadership Act of 2019.

49. Chairperson, the Municipal Structures Act requires that the three Local Houses of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders in the province select Senior Traditional Leaders to participate in municipal council sittings.

50. I have taken note that Nkangala and Gert-Sibande districts were already supported towards the selection of senior traditional leaders to participate in both local and district municipal council sittings.

51. We have noted the concerns raised by Amakhosi regarding the amended Section 81, particularly the reduced number of Senior Traditional Leaders to participate in municipal council sittings. We hope this matter shall receive the attention as our Constitutional democracy also warrants a proportional representation for those to be elected in Office, and not necessarily a wholesale representation.

52. We however sincerely appreciate the continuous effort that you put into participation in structures such as Ward Committees and Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). We encourage this kind of cooperation as it helps to bridge the gap between traditional communities and government in adherence to the Intergovernmental Relations Act, 2005 which promotes cooperative governance in service delivery.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES.

53. Chairperson, we have witnessed numerous business investments within the space of communities in rural areas, which are not formally established in line with the relevant legislation and some of them are entirely informal. This has resulted in their exploitation, regarding their upliftment.

54. Bondabezitha, your leadership role, as eyes and ears for your communities, is crucial. We urge you to approach the Department of COGTA in order to facilitate relevant stakeholders for a proper business partnership, whenever potential investment opportunities present themselves.

55. The Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Act 3 of 2019 now protects traditional communities from such ventures. It requires traditional councils to enter into written partnerships or agreements that benefit the community represented by such councils.

56. It further states that the Premier, after consulting with relevant communities, must authorize a partnership agreement in accordance with other local government legislation.

LAND INVASION

57. Chairperson, land invasion remains a serious threat to the development of rural communities. Without due consideration, this perpetuates poverty, inequality and unemployment, that we are fighting. It is disturbing that land, initially and historically demarcated for agricultural purposes and for food security, has been changed to human settlements without proper approval.

58. A collaboration between sector Departments, led by COGTA, the House and SAPS through an MoU, is key to fight this scourge.

THE DEPUTY-PRESIDENT'S VISIT

59. Chairperson, in February 2022 the President of the Republic established an Inter-Ministerial Task Team led by the Deputy President to resolve all matters raised by traditional and Khoi-San leaders and to provide institutional mechanisms to support dialogue, reach consensus and build a social compact among Traditional and Khoi-San leaders, government, and other relevant stakeholders.

60. It is very encouraging to see that the Inter-Ministerial Task Team is gaining traction, particularly on issues relating to communal land policy and that there has been collaboration with Communal Property Associations.

61. The work streams were also established to address issues such as heritage promotion and the Spatial Planning, Land Use and Management Act, or SPLUMA.

62. Proposals on the provision of administration grants to Traditional Councils and the recognition of headmen and headwomen are also under serious consideration. Currently, national Department Traditional Affairs in consultation with Treasury are embarking on the overall costing of the implications for the full scale implementation of the TKLA. This will cover all pressing needs as were raised by Amakhosi.

THE PROVINCIAL INITIATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (PICC)

63. Chairperson, the deaths of initiates is another matter that is gradually reaching epidemic proportions and necessitates our continued collaboration. The Customary Initiation Act, which came into effect in 2021, was developed as part of the effort to address this issue. The Act is intended to protect lives, establish norms and standards, and ensure that initiation occurs in a controlled and safe environment.

64. According to preliminary data, the challenges of illegal initiation schools and initiation casualties remain a major concern. Despite this, thousands of initiates have successfully and safely completed this traditional rite of passage.

65. Chairperson, the establishment of the PICC had a significant impact on the closure of illegal initiation schools and the registration of ingoma initiation schools in accordance with the ***Mpumalanga Ingoma Act, 2011 and the Customary Initiation Act.***

66. Traditional leaders, through their existing structures and working with government, conducted rigorous awareness campaigns and monitoring, helping to ensure that illegal schools were shut down.

67. I am pleased to inform you that the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC) has been established for this financial year and has been gazetted. This committee will serve as an oversight and monitoring body for all relevant structures that practise the custom of initiation.

68. The committee will continue conducting awareness campaigns and training workshops for traditional and Khoi-San structures leadership and government officials, supporting them as prescribed by section 15 (1) (a) to 12 of the Customary Initiation Act no. 2 of 2021.

69. Over and above that, they will collaborate with local structures established within the districts where *ingoma* is practiced. The National Department of Traditional Affairs will provide training to the PICC before

any initiation school opens. In consultation with all Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership, the PICC will also create a database for all legal initiation schools in the Mpumalanga Province.

AGRAGIAN REVOLUTION

70. Chairperson, the province is making significant progress in the implementation of agrarian revolution.

71. Some private partners have also shown great interest in the implementation of the program and have pledged to implement agrarian projects especially in rural areas under traditional leadership. Skilling our people is critical for project implementation and market access for the products sourced through this intervention.

72. The Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MPTA) has also partnered with Provincial House of Traditional Leaders on the implementation of Game Farming which also has great potential for job creation and economic development in areas under traditional leadership in the province. Through these programs, the lives of rural people in the province will change for the better.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TKLA

73. Chairperson, government has recently noted the submissions that have been made by Amakhosi to the National House of Traditional and

Khoi-San Leaders regarding proposals to amend various sections of the TKLA. We appreciate the active participation and promotion of the interests of traditional leaders in legislative development.

74. In this regard, we want to assure you, Chairperson and Bo-Ndabezitha that relevant government structures are taking your concerns and proposals into consideration. Lastly, it should be noted that the province is in the process of finalizing the cost of the TKLA. When this exercise is completed and the concerns of Amakhosi are addressed, this Act will be fully implemented by the province.

CULTURAL MORAL REGENERATION

75. Chairperson, the scourge of gender-based violence and femicide shows no signs of waning. As leaders and as people of standing in our communities, we have to play our part. We should make it impossible for perpetrators to live, work and socialize amongst us. We must shape the way boys and girls relate to each other. Let us nurture young men and women who see each other as equals and as partners in development and growth.

76. The Emakhosikati Structure has been reconstituted and will be serving in the next five years. This structure is constantly raising awareness about gender-based violence and femicide in traditional communities and this is done jointly with the Commission for Gender Equality across the three districts.

77. The main objectives are to assist in the intensification of other men's formation in the community, to strengthen men's and boys' capacity to reduce gender-based violence, to raise awareness about gender-based violence, and to strengthen community capacity to condemn it.

78. We would like to extend our gratitude to our social partners for their contribution. With partnerships of this nature, we can do more to improve the plight of our communities.

CONCLUSION

79. Chairperson, we respect the foresight of our fore bearers, led by former President, Nelson Mandela, for the establishment of the house. They were determined to restore the dignity of all Amakhosi/Makgoshi, eroded by the apartheid system of government.

80. A cursory assessment of the role the House, over the past three (3) decades, suggest that the House is on track to achieve the set objectives. These include, but not limited to, represent traditional leadership and their communities and, advance the aspirations of the traditional leadership and their communities, develop, preserve and promote culture and traditions of communities.

81. Our assessment has also proven beyond any doubt that Amakhosi/Makgoshi have been assertive in championing the aspirations of communities in the rural areas, on socio-economic development initiatives. Your imprint in development and service delivery initiatives, is evident in this regard.

82. In this era of our provincial government's jobs massification programme, which I alluded to, in the State of the Province Address, through infrastructure development, agriculture, tourism and the green energy transition, we look forward to a consolidated partnership with you, to achieve these objectives. Communities in rural areas are not second class citizens, and only through a partnership between **Amakhosi/Makgoshi**, can we improve their conditions.

83. The President, His Excellency, Cyril Ramaphosa, was emphatic on this matter, in his address to the National House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders. In his tribute to the late Ikosi Siphon Mahlangu, who championed the agrarian revolution, the President advised us to follow in the steps of Ikosi Mahlangu, by saying, and I quote: 'We should use it (agrarian revolution) as a blueprint for partnering, to deepen socio-economic development in rural communities,' close quote. ***Sithi umoya wakhe, nawo wonkhe Amakhosi angasekho phakathi kwethu, alale ngokuthula.***

Ke a leboga.