

**ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE PREMIER R.M. MTSHWENI-TSIPANE ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> MPUMALANGA HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS**

**Date: 31 July 2019**

**Venue: Chamber, Legislature**

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**Chairperson of the National House of Traditional Leaders, Ikosi SE Mahlangu;**

**Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders, Inkhosi S.G Ngomane;**

**Deputy Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders, Ikosi C.M Mahlangu II;**

**MEC for COGTA, Honourable M.J Msibi;**

**Executive Members of the Provincial House;**

**Chairpersons of the Local Houses in our midst;**

**Delegates from other Provincial Houses;**

**Our revered Traditional Leaders, Amakhosi / Magoshi**

**Abondlunkhulu and Amaduna;**

**Acting Director-General, Mr KM Mohlasedi;**

**The Deputy Director General, Mr M Mgidi;**

**Senior Management of the Department of COGTA, led by the Head of Department, Mr Nyoni;**

**Distinguished Guests, Friends, fellow citizens;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**Lotshani**

1. Chairperson, today marks the end of July, which was declared by our government as the Mandela month. It is a month in which the whole world commemorate with us in South Africa the birth of our first democratic President, Nelson Mandela, born on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July in Mvezo, in the Eastern Cape.
2. We commemorate uTata Mandela for his selfless commitment to the advancement of all people in this glorious land, a commitment executed with consistency from the days of the struggle until the day of his last breath in 2013.
3. We wish to commend the people of Mpumalanga, for heeding the clarion call to emulate uTata Madiba through noble causes for the benefit of the less privileged. We further wish to extend gratitude to ***ubuKhosi ba se Mpisikazi*** for joining hands with the Provincial Government and for playing a leading and central role in the Provincial commemoration of Mandela Day.

4. We further thank ubuKhosi across the Province for embodying the spirit of Ubuntu and ensuring that Mandela day is commemorated across all Traditional Councils in the Province.
  
5. The 67 minutes that have spent renovating schools, assisting in old age homes, assisting in the hospitals and cleaning the streets was an embodiment of the selflessness and Ubuntu that uTata Mandela subscribed to. To all our people, we say *Siyabonga, Realeboga, hikhensile, Ndo levhuwa* and let us remember to make everyday a Mandela day.
  
6. Chairperson, it is no coincidence that this 5<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Sitting of the House is taking place at a time when the whole world is celebrating the life and times of this icon. uTata was an extra-ordinary humble servant who forewent his birth right to serve the people of abaTembu as a Traditional Leader in order to serve all humanity.
  
7. It is indeed an honour to address the sitting of this august House during this period, as one of your subjects.

### ***Role of Amakhosi in community development initiatives***

8. As we commemorate the selfless contribution of Madiba, equally, we draw inspiration from Ingwenyama Makhosoke II yesitjaba samaNdebele for his foresight in advancing the Ndebele language.
9. When Ingwenyama Makhosoke II enrolled students to study the Ndebele language at the University of Venda in 2010, it was as though he knew that the United Nations would declare 2019 as the year of indigenous languages.
10. Ndabezitha your foresight in planting the trees that are now bearing fruits of knowledge and wisdom will always be remembered by future generations of amaNdebele and those who are advocating for the development of indigenous languages.
11. We can see these fruits today through the students who have graduated with Masters' degree and those who are now at PHD level. We call upon other traditional leaders to do their utmost best to promote indigenous languages.
12. Chairperson, we are pleased to note the impact that is being made by the ***Emakhosikati*** structure in the lives of school going girls in rural areas. The structure is constituted by the wives of ***Amakhosi (Bo-Ndlunkhulu)*** from the three Districts.

13. Since its establishment two years ago, it has conducted workshops with various vulnerable groups within our communities.
14. Through the structure, widows and senior citizens are continuously being sensitized about their human rights.
15. As part of the awareness campaigns on how to live a healthy lifestyle the youth in particular young girls have benefitted from workshops conducted by the structure of Amakhosikati. Social issues that include prevention of HIV/AIDS infections, teenage pregnancies, crime and violence and the importance of culture are discussed and debated.
16. Young mothers are also taught lessons on how to care for their children and are encouraged to go back to school or acquire life skills.
17. This structure has also played a significant role in the distribution of sanitary towels, targeting young girls from disadvantaged backgrounds in order to ensure that no girl child misses school due to her menstrual cycle.

18. With the support of Municipalities and Sector Departments, bo-Ndlunkhulu are expected to play a meaningful role in the fight against poverty in the rural areas.
19. We are determined to work with traditional leaders to significantly expand agriculture, not only to ensure food security, but also to create jobs on a significant scale and increase the value of our exports.
20. We also want to build partnerships with traditional leaders to tackle the challenge of youth unemployment.
21. Government will assist them to mobilize resources and facilitate the establishment of co-operatives in our rural communities as part of our inclusive economic participation by all our people.
22. Training and skills development of rural youth and women will be coordinated by COGTA. Focus will be on agricultural production and government will assist by providing a ready market for the produce through our Government Nutrition Programme.

### ***Delivery of Basic Services in rural areas***

23. Chairperson, our commitment to provide water to our communities remains on course. This is a matter that this 6<sup>th</sup> ANC-led Administration shall pursue until Section 27 (1) of the Constitution, which states that open quote ***“Everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water”*** closed quote is realized.

24. Ndabezitha, allow me to reiterate what I said in the State of the Province Address, which I tabled earlier this month. I indicated that during the next Medium Term Strategic Framework of 2019-2024 our government shall focus on:

- i. The Construction of a new dam in Mbombela that will augment the supply of water to meet the demand of the growing population in Ehlanzeni.
- ii. The construction of the bulk pipeline from Loskop dam to Thembisile Hani and the resuscitation of the Mkhombo dam in the Dr JS Moroka to stabilize the provision of water in Nkangala.
- iii. The completion of the Lusushwane regional bulk water scheme in the Gert Sibande District.

25. Through these water projects, we are poised to increase the number of households with access to water in Mpumalanga.
26. We will continue to devote every action and every effort towards the delivery of water, despite our limited financial resources.
27. I am also encouraged by the currently exploratory work by COGTA in strengthening the relationship between municipal councils and traditional leaders through the development of credible and responsive IDP's.
28. I have been informed that the Department is working on developing a Rural Development Chapter in the IDP's which will seek to dedicate focus and therefore allocate resources for the communities in areas of traditional leadership.
29. These communities also deserve to be uplifted equally in line with the Bill of Rights enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic.
30. We should avoid a situation where the loudest voices in municipal councils determine what type of development must be prioritized for the communities in the rural areas.



We must ensure that the development of our communities is premised upon proper consultation and dedicated planning.

31. To this effect, COGTA is spearheading the piloting of the Rural Development Chapter within IDPs during the current term of office of local municipal councils.
32. This will lay the ground for the full implementation of the Chapter in the next term of councils that shall commence after the Local Government Elections in 2021

### **Land Reform**

33. Chairperson, the question of land ownership lies at the centre of our liberation struggle. Our struggle for freedom was informed by, among others, the need to expedite the restitution of land.
34. Without land our people will remain bonded by the shackles of our unfortunate past. We therefore must work even harder to resolve the land issue in a manner that will not compromise our economic development and food security.

35. We encourage ***boNdabezitha*** to work closely with their municipalities in order to determine and agree on the land use spatial framework that has been approved and is being implemented. Such cooperation will reduce tensions and avoid unplanned human settlements that becomes a burden to municipalities when it comes to planning for basic service delivery.
36. We further appeal to our traditional leaders not to use arable land for human settlements because this has a potential of discouraging new agricultural investments in their areas and bears the risk of adversely impacting our food security.

### ***Rural economic development initiatives***

37. Chairperson in line with the National Development Plan (NDP), we adopted the Comprehensive Rural Development Plan and the Agrarian Transformation Strategy to address the challenges facing people living in the rural areas.
38. These are vital instruments for integrated spatial planning. The Rural Development Plans are aimed at ensuring integration of rural development and land reform interventions within the wider Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP).

39. The CRDP was developed to tackle issues such as underdevelopment, hunger, poverty, joblessness, lack of basic services and other social ills which have become synonymous with rural areas.
40. The CRDP addresses specific needs of the communities in rural areas such as running water, sanitation, housing and development support.
41. Through the Youth Development Fund that we announced during SOPA we will initiate Rural Enterprise Industrial Development to assist young people in rural areas who are entrepreneurs and need industrial parks for their manufacturing. We will also link them with our Social Enterprise Development Programme. Those who require skills will be assisted through our partnership with the private sector through our artisan development programme.
42. Chairperson, tourism plays a pivotal role in the economic growth of this province. What has been missing in the tourism value chain is the involvement of our rural communities in this industry
43. Working with amakhosi, MTPA will promote community ecotourism which targets impoverished rural communities.

We will invest in rural infrastructure to promote both capital inflow and employment opportunities to the community.

44. We are convinced that this initiative will encourage entrepreneurship for local members to organize the community in implementing and running successful community-based ecotourism enterprises. This will contribute to the revival of traditional arts and handicrafts.
45. As a whole, community-based ecotourism can result in the overall increase of the economic value of a previously impoverished area through the provision of dignified jobs and capital into the local economy.
46. Along with economic value, community ecotourism enhances the value of the environment for both the hosting communities and the tourists.
47. As a result, community ecotourism becomes an incentive for conservation. For the community, their environment becomes a showcase to the tourist and brings a greater desire to maintain it.

48. As the custodian of our culture and traditions Amakhosi have a vital role to play in the socio-cultural aspect of ecotourism as tourist becomes more engaged in the community and their culture. This can be from learning a cultural traditions of that community or supporting a local handicraft project.
49. Our people should be the main beneficiaries of community ecotourism especially after the 1994 democratic dispensation because of a renewed attention towards local cultures that are selling traditional handicrafts and showing cultural tours.
50. Unfortunately due to lack of knowledge and understanding of the industry our people have been the least beneficiaries. We must change this phenomenon. We will support young people from rural areas who have a passion for this industry. We want then to build relationships with international tourists and become social agents and ambassadors of this province.
51. Studies have shown that through community ecotourism, engagement in nationalism, socioeconomic conditions, and similar age groups can help narrow the social gap and decrease stereotypes.

52. This leads to a more positive cultural understanding on both sides. This effect can even go beyond the tourist's journey. After visiting such communities and learning about their livelihood, studies have found that people gain a newfound activism to contribute back to the community. This socio-cultural connection with the community can in return bring about greater resources to this community to help promote education, conservation, disease prevention, and other needs.

53. It is through the sociocultural aspect that enhances the tourist's engagement with the economy and environment to maximize the overall community-based ecotourism experience.

### ***Traditional leadership disputes***

54. Chairperson, the institution of traditional leadership in Mpumalanga, is plagued by infighting within royal families. This situation polarizes the communities and contribute towards instability.

55. This undermines the integrity of the institution of traditional leadership, and we, as your subjects, are gravely concerned. Efforts to discourage this malpractice have not yielded the desired outcomes.

56. These individuals allocate land illegally, issue certificates for ingoma, which poses a threat to the lives of our children and to a large extent, they render the authority of Amakhosi ineffective through litigious cases.
57. Unless we educate and teach our communities that bukhusi is not established on the basis of a voting process, but is hereditary, the status quo will continue.
58. It is the sole privilege of the inner royal family – *lusendvo*, consisting of *bo-Anti*, *bo-Malume*, *bo-Babe lomncane*, *bo-Mkhulu nabo-Gogo*, to appoint the rightful heir, based on a knowledge of the family's ancestry, history, heredity and the family tree.
59. Bo-Ndabezitha, the time has come for us to take bold steps to deal decisively with this scourge. Otherwise history will judge us harshly that we allowed these disputes to eventually erode the sacrosanct integrity of bukhusi/bukgoshi.
60. We are duty-bound to prevent this old age institution that is part of our heritage, from destruction, and together we must protect it for the next generation.

61. We have studied the resolutions presented by the Provincial Committee on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims. The resolutions are an outcome of a lengthy consultation process with all affected royal families, by members of the Committee some of whom are academics, legal experts and knowledgeable in customary matters.
62. We owe it to ourselves to implement the resolutions without prejudice against any of the parties to restore peace. We are aware that in some instances the disputes are in litigation.
63. Our position in such instances is that we allow the court processes to run their course so that the outcomes can determine the way forward. COGTA will communicate the process with the affected royal families.
64. This will also answer the questions raised by our people in the Social Media, such as Mr Bhekabantu Mtshali of eNtombe in Mkhondo regarding a submission to the Committee. We appeal to all affected parties to accept the outcomes, whether it is in their favour or not.
65. Chairperson, we are also monitoring closely the process to enact the Traditional Khoisan Leadership Bill (TKLB) into law.



66. This piece of legislation seeks to address issues of traditional leadership disputes and to democratize the institution of traditional leadership by reconstituting Traditional Councils.
67. We are convinced that, upon enactment, this piece of legislation will provide guidance in our pathway towards the solution to resolve this traditional leadership threat.
68. We wish to further thank ubuKhosi across the Province for playing a central role in the continuous reduction of deaths and injuries during the initiation season.
69. We, as Government shall continue to work together with ubuKhosi base Mpumalanga to ensure the full implementation of the Mpumalanga Ingoma Act of 2011 in order to preserve this sacred, age old practice of transition to manhood.
70. It is also disheartening to hear some of the tribalist comments that are being aired on electronic media as well as being published on online media recently at DR JS Moroka.

71. It is hard to believe that those comments are being made now when our people never had issues about each other all along, the level of intolerance is quite alarming and should be addressed. Tribalism has no place in Mpumalanga.

### ***Conclusion***

72. Chairperson, let me conclude by reiterating the commitment I made during the State of the Province Address, to replace the current old fleet with new vehicles as tools of trade. I am repeating this commitment because nothing will persuade this government from reneging on its promise.

73. Contrary to the criticism we have encountered from the opposition parties that the purchase of vehicles is a waste of money, we are finalizing the administration processes to deliver the new fleet. We are doing this as a replacement for the current fleet to meet your needs of a reliable transport.

74. It is our desire for you and all Amakhosi/Makgoshi to have a good experience of travelling when participating in multi-sectoral forums that deal with health, education and other pertinent societal issues, in far flung areas.

75. Furthermore, as Government, we re-affirm our commitment to preserving the dignity of the institution of Traditional leadership, and ensuring that ubuKhosi are given the requisite tools of trade to perform its function. It is in the interests of our participatory democracy and in the interest of our people to ensure that Government and ubuKhosi work together to propel the advancement of the people of Mpumalanga

76. I thank you