

Provincial Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders Kgoshi Mokoena

Deputy Minister of Traditional Affairs, Honourable Obed Bapela;

Deputy National Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders Ikosi S E

Mahlangu

Deputy Provincial Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders Inkosi S G

Ngomane

Honourable Members of the Legislature

Members of the Executive Council

Executive Mayors and Councillors present here today

Ubukhosi bonke obukhona lapha phakathi kwethu

The Director-General of the Province Dr Nonhlanhla Mkhize

HODs and Municipal Managers

Representatives from various organisations

Comrades and compatriots

Manene namaNenekazi

Ladies and Gentlemen

Sanibonani

Good Morning,

Lotshani,

Dumelang;

Avuxen

Introduction

1. Honourable Chairperson, in April this year, South Africa, will be celebrating 21 years into democracy. We look back with pride at the role that our Traditional Leaders have played in the establishment of a democratic South Africa.
2. This democracy is the outcome of several wars waged by great warriors such as Senzangakhona, Sekhukhune, Bhambatha ka Mancinza, Hintsa, Silamba, Nyabela and many others who fought gallantly against colonialism in defence of our land, our possessions and our cultural practices several decades ago.
3. Even the dispossession of their land, their positions and their humiliation did not deter them from stepping up the fight against racism and discrimination. Inkosi Albert Luthuli and Nelson Mandela Inkosi yaba Tembu, are few of the names which spring to mind.
4. Inkosi Luthuli was stripped of his title for his participation in the fight against minority rule while Mandela gave up his title in order to participate fully in the fight against injustice and for a democratic order.
5. We salute Amakhosi/Makgoshi in our midst as the descendants of great warriors, men and women who contributed so much to the South Africa we live in today.

6. Honourable Chairperson, as we march into the next decade of our democracy, we look forward to your sterling and collective leadership in your collective effort of making South Africa a better place to live in.

On Cultural Values and Violence against Women and Children

7. Traditional leadership institutions have a strategic role in the custodianship of cultures, customs, traditions and values.

8. Within the provincial context, traditional leaders have to promote indigenous knowledge systems and cultures as well as preserving heritage for future generations.

9. Traditional Leaders in the Province have a responsibility to support moral regeneration programmes targeted at inculcating moral values that help to entrench a culture of human rights, and discourage the infringement and curtailment of human freedoms.

10. I want to reiterate what I said at our last Opening of this House of Traditional Leaders that you should mobilize communities to fight against incidents of gender-based violence and the abuse of vulnerable people.

11. As government, we shall continue with our commitment of working with traditional leadership institutions, civil society formations and communities to build a moral and ethical society.

12. Traditional Leaders have an inborn cultural responsibility which cannot be delegated that of building law abiding citizens, sustainable and sound communities.
13. We commend you for the role you continuously play in education, health, development and security of our communities.

Health and HIV and AIDS Fight

14. Honourable Chairperson, let me reiterate the appreciation of His Excellency, Hon. President JG Zuma in commending Traditional Leaders for their active participation in government's fight against the scourge of HIV/AIDS.
15. To this end, we share the responsibility of tackling social challenges confronting our communities.
16. Your active participation in government's programmes in the fight against the spread of the disease is highly commended and we hope for a reduction in the figures, due to your intervention.
17. Honourable Chairperson, I am pleased to note that the meeting that I held with all Traditional Leaders in the Province on the participation of Traditional Leaders in the Mpumalanga AIDS Council is bearing positive results.

18. I am reliably informed that since our engagement you have participated in several workshops organised through the council.
19. This is in line with the principles of upholding and promoting sound morals and ethical practice, assisting government to raise social awareness on challenges such as crime and HIV and AIDS.
20. Chairperson, the rate of teenage pregnancy in South Africa has reached alarming proportions. According to statistics released by the Medical Research Council, one in three girls will be pregnant before the age of 20. More and more teenagers are becoming sexually active with children as young as 13 experimenting with sex. With few teenagers using contraceptives or protection to prevent pregnancies, in one year more than 17 000 babies were born to mothers 16 years and younger while 4000 were born to mothers under 14.
21. Chairperson in view of these astounding statistics, there is a need for the intervention by all stakeholders including among others Traditional Leaders. We believe that as custodians of our traditions and cultures, Honourable members of this house have a vital role to play if we are to turn this tide against teenage pregnancy and win this war.
22. It is a social problem that none of us can afford to ignore. In a country where HIV prevalence rate is 18.8 per cent and in our province the prevalence rate is 31 per cent based on 2011 statistics teenage pregnancy has serious negative implications for the development and empowerment of women.
23. We are making a plea and we are calling upon our traditional leaders to take an active and keen interest in this matter as it directly impacts on the future of their subjects.

24. Our children are the future of this province. Children living in rural and semi-rural areas are more vulnerable if one looks at high unemployment and high poverty rates in those areas.
25. Chairperson research has shown that there is a direct correlation between teenage girls who drop out of school and teenage pregnancy. Teenagers who are not at school are likely to fall pregnant than those who are attending school. This suggests that we need to keep our young girls at schools as long as it is required to prevent them from falling pregnant.
26. History tells us that girls are much more closer and are more willing to talk to their fathers than they are to their mothers. Girls look at their fathers as role models and would want to do everything possible to please their fathers.
27. We believe that time has come where as parents particularly as fathers to openly talk to our teenage girls about sex and also allow schools to run sex education to young children before they reach age 14 and become more sexual active.
28. I am aware that this is a very sensitive topic. On one hand our tradition did not allow us to talk to children about sex because culture dictated that young girls cannot indulge in such activities, on contrary, reality tells us that these children as young as 13 years and sometimes even younger are experimenting with sex.
29. Chairperson this is a challenge to us all. Let us rise above our traditions and culture and confront this scourge head on. In countries where sex issues are openly discussed among children and parents, pregnancy rates are much lower than in countries where such topics are still taboo.

Ingoma Act

30. Chairperson, let me take this opportunity and thank you and the MEC for COGTA for the sterling work and intervention during the time when we experienced the unfortunate incidences that occurred in some of our initiation schools.
31. I would further like to remind Makgoshi that Ingoma Act is in place let us move with speed to implement the provisions of the Act and mitigate against the loss of lives of our young men in any initiation ritual in the Province.

Economic and Social Upliftment of Tribal Communities

32. Over the 21 years of our democracy, we have realized the importance of a partnership with Amakhosi in addressing the socio-economic challenges facing our people, especially in the rural areas.
33. To this end, the Government is implementing a Comprehensive Rural Development Programme to create job opportunities for our communities in rural and tribal communities while providing simultaneously food security.
34. We invite the Makgoshi to work closely with our Government in supporting this leading programme for rural development and socio-economic upliftment of our people in tribal communities.

Water

35. The provision of basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity, proper human settlements is key in improving the quality of lives for all our people.
36. Honourable Chairperson, during the State of the Province Address I announced the roll-out of bulk infrastructure programmes to provide access to water in many rural parts of the province such as **Mbuzini, Goba and Kwa Mdladla villages** in **Nkomazi Municipality**, **Entombe, Ntithane, Ezitholeni, Congo, Alma, Madola villages** in **Mkhondo Municipality** and **Miliva, Suncity and Kwaggafontein** in **Thembisile Hani Municipality** among the key priority interventions of the Government's Programme of Action.
37. We are acutely aware of the fact that the villages listed above are not the only areas affected many more still needs to be serviced with these basic services.
38. Owing to the historical injustices, the areas of most needs happen to be in traditional communities where the apartheid government never provided any kind of infrastructure.

39. It is for this reason Chairperson that I announced the need for an immediate short term intervention to drill several boreholes especially in these villages to ensure our people do not drink water with animals, while we bring the long term bulk infrastructure along.
40. Our partnership with the Department of Water and Sanitation and Rand Water to provide water to our communities is bearing the right results to address water shortages in the rural communities as demonstrated by the delivery of water to a total of 24 villages in Bushbuckridge benefiting 15 000 households of that municipality with a total budget of R298m of investment.
41. A further R601m is already being implemented as part of Phase 2 of the support to the municipality to benefit an additional 69 villages.
42. To this end Chairperson, I want to repeat what I emphasized during the State of the Province Address that municipalities have been tasked with ensuring that water supply is supplemented with boreholes within the next 3 – 4 months.
43. Where boreholes exist but are non-functional, such boreholes shall be refurbished within the next 3 to 4 months in order to ensure that our people have access to water.

44. All such interventions will ensure a substantial reduction in the number of people without access to water whilst also contributing to the local economy.
45. We would appreciate it, if all our Traditional Leaders in the province could play a meaningful and central role in the implementation of this programme.
46. The creation of job opportunities through the labour intensive implementation methods that are applied during project execution, trickle-down business opportunities for the value chain of all supplies that are required and development of SMME's through contracts awarded is one area of crucial importance for traditional leaders to support.
47. We also need to mention that this Government has come up with the War on Leaks Programme aimed at improving the sustainability of our water supply.
48. Youth development through this programme shall be key as those with minimum qualifications would not only enjoy access to job opportunities but would also benefit in our long-term skills development and refinement of technical expertise.

49. We want our youths to be responsible in the long-run to take care of the investment Government is making and become plumbers and water ambassadors in all our villages and protect the installed infrastructure against vandalism and theft.
50. The continuous stealing of our copper taps and selling them to metal scrap yards must be discouraged, particularly in the villages of Bushbuckridge.

Electricity

51. There are also programmes tailored to address backlogs on the electrification of households such as the Integrated National Electrification Programme (INEP) where a total of R186, 2 m has been set aside for the 2015/16 financial year.
52. We are quite aware of the energy demands that this country faces. We are therefore going to encourage the use of alternative energy sources such as solar energy and the development of hydropower in all our major dams such as the Nyaka Dam.

Land Use Management

53. Honourable Chairperson, I am aware that the procedures for land allocation in traditional communal tenure areas are generally not clearly articulated, let alone transparent to the public and those seeking land.
54. There is a general absence of uniform criteria for qualification to apply for land allocation procedures.
55. Exacerbating this is the overlapping and conflicting nature of land administration between Local Government and the institution of traditional council leadership mainly due to weak institutional capacities within both institutions.
56. In most cases this leads to a number of conflicts in that:
- In some cases the traditional authorities allocate land even in areas that are not under their jurisdiction;
 - They allocate sites in areas that are not accessible to roads; water and other services infrastructure;
 - Allocation of sites indirect conflict with the Municipal Spatial Development Framework thus leading to piece meal development.
 - Allocation of land on wetlands, protected forest, heritage sites, etc.
 - Fertile land suitable for agriculture allocated for human settlement, thus leading to shortage of land for the highly needed land for food security.
57. Honourable Chairperson I therefore hope that the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) will assist in guiding the allocation of land under the authority of traditional leadership.

58. Chairperson and Honourable Members, I happy that we all participated in the formulation of this Act. This piece of legislation aassist in cementing cooperation between the municipality and the authority of traditional leadership in land use planning that will lead to sustainable development.
59. Honourable Chairperson, illegal occupation of land in areas under traditional leadership still remains a challenge. We expect Traditional Leaders, SALGA, the South African Police Services, the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and COGTA as signatories to the MOU to implement the MOU in addressing this urgent matter.

Support to Traditional Councils in the Province:

Construction of Traditional Councils

60. Honourable Chairperson, not long ago in 2010, we started with the process of renovating the offices of our traditional leaders.
61. We succeeded in renovating 23 such offices that were in shocking structural conditions.
62. We will continue with this support into the 2015/16 financial year where we have prioritised four Traditional Councils. Work has already begun in Moreiputso Traditional Council, Barolong Balefifi Traditional Council, Umjindi Traditional Council and Malele Traditional Council.

63. Once these offices are fully constructed, it is expected that they shall be used as multi-purpose centres to bring government services closer to the people in traditional areas by providing services such as health; Social Development, Home Affairs, SASSA, Post Offices and other services needed by communities.

Tools of Trade

64. Honourable Chairperson, we are aware that the vehicles that were provided to our 58 Traditional Leaders and 2 Kings have now past their useful lifespan. To this end, a new fleet of vehicles will be provided to our Traditional Leaders to enable them to conduct their business in working with Communities for a better life for all.

Committee on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims

65. The Committee on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims will be winding up its activities by the end of the year. We must appreciate the sterling performance, dedication and commitment demonstrated by the Committee members in executing their task.

66. A total number of 136 out of the 163 disputes and claims, constituting 83.4% progress were successfully concluded by the committee. We expect the Committee to conclude all outstanding disputes and claims by the time its term of office expires at the end of December 2015.

67. Based on the lessons learnt from the cases already concluded, Bondabezitha and Izingwenyama zethu, I want to make a plea with you to make all efforts to be professional in dealing with issues of Traditional disputes. These are confidential matters and must be kept within the Royal Family (Lusendvo). This will sustain the dignity of the Traditional Leadership.

Functionality of Traditional Councils

68. As Provincial Government we will continue to support, strengthen and capacitate all institutions of Traditional leadership in our province to accelerate rural development, nation building and social cohesion within Traditional Communities.

Capacity Building Programmes for Traditional Councils

69. We will continue to provide capacity and equipping all our Traditional Leaders with necessary skills to enable them to better manage, control and lead their councils with professionalism. In the current financial year, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (GOGTA) has managed to capacitate Traditional Councils on Financial Operations; Control Systems as well as Traditional Leadership Protocol and Etiquette.

70. Government will continue to support the capacity building programme for Traditional Leaders to empower them with requisite skills and competencies to contribute to economic growth and community development programmes in our tribal communities.
71. Government will also continue to ensure that Traditional Leaders avail themselves to their communities as custodian of culture and customs through cultural events.