

**REMARKS BY HONOURABLE PREMIER OF  
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, MS REFILWE  
MTSHWENI-TSIPANE ON THE CLOSING DAY OF  
TAKING LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE AT THABA  
CHWEU MUNICIPALITY COUNCIL**

Programme Director,

Honourable Members of the Legislature;

Honourable Members of the Executive Council;

The Executive Mayor of Ehlanzeni District Municipality,  
Cllr Jesta Sidell;

Our gracious host, the Executive Mayor of Thaba Chweu  
Local Municipality, Cllr Fridah Nkadimeng;

Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and  
Khoi San Leaders, Kgoshi Mokoena and all our  
Esteemed Amakhosi present today;

Provincial and Local Government Administrative Heads  
led by the DG Makhukhu Mampuru ,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Dumelang, Avuxeni, Rea le tamisha

1. Madam Speaker, it is an honour to join you and the beautiful people of Mashishing on this auspicious gathering.
2. Since the dawn of the democratically elected government in 1994, the South African Government has put public participation at the center of all the processes involved in government programmes.
3. Indeed, sections 152 (1) (a) and (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, obliges all spheres of government to consult, involve and

engage communities in the decision-making process on matters that affect them directly and or indirectly.

4. It is therefore imperative that we develop means and strategies which are to be used, for example, to inform the stakeholders about the process of the public participation, how the strategies are implemented and to assess the methods used to capture and address the views of the stakeholders.
5. The process of public participation is not only enacted in our Constitution in South Africa but it is also a global phenomenon that compels all government institutions to fulfill this very critical duty. A duty that signifies the importance of a democratic process that cannot be ignored or avoided.
6. The Taking Legislature to the people programme therefore includes the duty to facilitate public involvement in legislative and other processes; the duty to conduct the business of a Legislature in an open manner and hold plenary sittings and those of Committees in public; and the duty not to exclude the

public or the media from sittings of the House or Committees unless it is reasonable and justifiable to do so in an open and democratic society.

7. The TLP programme remains one of the most important pillars of our democratic dispensation. This is the period where our law makers engage with our people reflect on what has been achieved, revisit those areas that have remain unresolved and make commitments as to how such issues are to be attended.

8. As we meet here today, to wrap up the events of this long week engagement with our people, we are encouraged by the level the spirit and interest of engagement shown by the people of Thaba Chweu on issues that affect their day to day lives.

9. We are also reminded of how vital and critical are the principles of public participation at all stages of decision-making, to ensure active involvement of civil society actors, individual participants and other key stakeholders in the development and monitoring

of laws and policies, including budgets and use of public funds.

10. It is therefore befitting to extend our gratitude and appreciation of the outstanding and excellent work that you Madam Speaker and Deputy Speaker and all other members of the legislatures as well as the officials have done in this area since a decision was taken that the law makers would be visiting this Thaba Chweu.

11. We believe that you have taken a very bold step towards the fulfillment of the key pillars of the principles of our democracy that promotes among others; ***Accessibility, Openness, Inclusiveness, Respect for Self Expression and Timeliness.***

12. These principles are also anchored on the common understanding that nothing can be done for our people without their concern their involvement and their participation.

13. In my State of the Province Address last year, we endorsed the idea of economic reconstruction and

recovery plan to counter the effects of the two year devastating effects of Covid 19. Madam Speaker and Honourable members, it is only now that we are beginning to feel delayed effects of Covid 19.

14.Covid 19 left many people destitute, socially and economically displayed, some lost their jobs, others are holding half jobs, many businesses had to scale down and retrench people, others closed down completely leaving a trail of unemployed people throughout the value chain.

15.As the ANC led government introduce a grant that is accessible to all unemployed people of this country who are not receiving any other grant from government.

16.We are grateful that this grant has recently been extended again and there are all indications that after intensive investigations and prioritizations of budgets, this grant could at least be increased based on prevailing circumstances and affordability by the

national treasury. It is our wish that this grant becomes a basic income grant for the unemployed.

17.The grant on its own cannot be an to our unemployment challenges. ***The Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan*** seeks to address the negative impact of COVID- 19 on economic growth with a view to re-ignite its prospects and create new jobs in a manner that is sustainable and magnified.

18.This will be spearheaded by stimulating growth and job creation through the implementation of key priority areas:

- Infrastructure development programme;
- Industrialisation centred on localization and growing export sectors;
- Mass employment programme;
- Strengthening the role of SMMEs across the economy;

19. There are indications that this strategy is beginning to gain traction especially in the renewable energy industry.
20. We have also seen massive job creation projects in the coal and other mining sector industries giving us hope that sooner than later our economy will start to grow, create jobs and reduce unemployment and poverty levels. We are well aware that the mining sector is facing volatile and unstable commodity prices, but this is seasonal and will come to pass.

### **Infrastructure/Public Works**

21. Madam Speaker, our road infrastructure is a vital component of our efforts to recalibrate our provincial economy.
22. We have had a number of community meetings this week, and the state of our road network across Thaba. Chweu has been sharply raised as an area of concern.



23. As a caring and accountable government, we have heard the cries of our people. An amount of R284 834,00 has been budgeted for maintenance of roads in Ehlanzeni North in the 2023/24 financial year. These include patching of potholes, and re-gravelling and blading of gravel roads. One of these roads is between Hazyview and Mashishing.
24. We have completed the rehabilitation of Road P170/1 between Matibidi and Graskop (22.5 km) and we have completed the sealing of an additional 5 km of roads.
25. We are in the process of rehabilitating a total of 43,7 km of road P33/4 between Hazyview and Sabie.
26. We are also in the process of attending to the slip Failures/Sinkholes on, Graskop to Old Mapulaneng Hospital (Road P57/3), Sabie to Hazyview (Road P33/4), Hazyview to Mkhuhlu (Road P33/5).
27. Madam Speaker and members, just to give you a full picture of my government's infrastructure

investments in this area. Between 2019 and 2023 we have invested R1,562 billion on more than 10 projects, 5 of them have been completed others are currently running and some are at a planning phase.

28. These projects include but are not limited resealing, repairs, rock-falling prevention, grading, gravelling and rehabilitation.
29. We will continue to invest in infrastructure in this area given its strategic position between the east the west and the south. Infrastructure is the artillery of our economic growth without which we cannot make gains and move forward.
30. What is even more exciting, Madam Speaker, about these projects is that they are linked to skills development and training. Working with Construction CETA and other skills development institutions, we have trained and skilled more than 1000 people in this area and other areas.
31. We have also linked our programmes with the skilling of young professionals who have qualifications in the

built industry. Ten of them are already attached to the Department of Public Works for a duration of four years.

32. There are a number projects that are planned for the near future which include but are not limited to;

- The Rehabilitation of Sections of Road P8/1 (R36) between Mashishing and Bambi (Phase 3) (9 km);
- The Upgrading and Rehabilitation of Road D2571 from R37 to P171/1 Lydenburg Bypass (13.4 km);
- The Rehabilitation of Road P171/1 from P81/1 near Mashishing to D212 & D2630 towards Roosenekal /Sekhukune (Phase 2) (8.7 km);
- The Upgrading of Road D3951 (Boiketlo) and D3950 (Motlamogale) between Road D3954 and R40 in Bushbuckridge (12.60 km) Graskop – Limpopo Border Pilgrims Rest –Lydenburg

33. Furthermore Madam Speaker these projects have resulted in the creation of job opportunities for the

local economy. For example the Siyatentela Roads Maintenance Programme a job massification programme has created 10 000 in the province.

34. 5 109 are from this region and 1 474 from Bohlabela which include 376 from Thaba Chweu LM. We also have 90 young people from this area serving under National Youth Service (NYS) programme 45 of whom are from Thaba Chweu.

35. Our Sak'habakhi Contractor Development Programme has 13 women from Bohlabela which include 2 from Thaba Chweu LM.

## **AGRICULTURE**

36. Madam Speaker, our agricultural sector continues to ensure that as a country and a province we are food secure, and we are able to honour our trade obligations through exports to our trade partners in the world.

37. This is thanks to the investment that Provincial Government is making in supporting the sector and the investment made by private sector in growing the agribusiness. But most importantly, we must give thanks to the hard work put in by farmers both commercial and smallholder.
38. Our forestry, continues to be the backbone of our country's economy through its contribution to mining, rail and road construction, housing construction, furniture manufacturing industry, paper and pulp industry, ecotourism and other opportunities of agricultural nature.
39. Linked to this, is the role of tourism sector, which apart from the landscape, flora and fauna of our land is complimented by the beauty of our wildlife, hence the globally known Kruger National Park. We continue to attract a number of foreign and domestic tourists who come to enjoy the beauty of our Province.

40. Thaba Chweu is well positioned to make a meaningful contribution to our provincial economic growth. This area has an estimated population of more than 123 000 people, which is estimated to grow to 133 000 by the year 2030.
41. The main industries that are dominating and driving the economy in this area are mining and agriculture. Unfortunately, these two industries have seen phenomenal growth in the past but have also experienced significant downturns during difficult years.
42. As government, we are also landing our hand in fighting unemployment, in particular youth unemployment. We created a youth development fund which has benefitted a number of young people in this area and throughout the province. Every year my office issues out invitations to young people to apply for funding on any kind of business excluding liquor and other prohibited businesses.

43. I am therefore making a clarion call to young people of Thaba Chweu to participate and apply for funding to start their own businesses. If your application doesn't get funded, keep trying and improving your business plan, eventually you will be selected.

***Uzoyithola kanjani uhleli ekhoneni.***

44. The ANC led government has been at the forefront in bringing development to our people, assisting them to be self-reliant and self-sustaining in the process developing their skills and helping them to start their own businesses.

45. My government has invested heavily in agriculture in this area. A number of communities have been given their land under land restitution programme, others are leasing land from government.

46. These include Qwabe farmers who are farming on 600 HA and Segame farmers with 250 HA.

47. We are also leasing out land to 1.Elandspruit & Kruisfontein 869ha : leased by Mr. Bhiya.

48. Boschoek farm 3000ha: leased by Boeshoek community.
49. Dorenhoeck farm 628ha leased by Mr. Manstengwane.
50. You may be asking a question as to who gets land and why. These are people who we believe are farmers and have come forward with applications for land to engage in farming.

***Wena otlai thola jwang o dotse mo khoneng.***

51. Our government assisted programmes in this area are assisting farmers with grain, cash crops like vegetable seeds and we also provide implements. We assist farmers with ploughing, planting but also with the market.
52. Those who are interested in animal farming are provided with a start-up pack, whether it is cattle, goats, sheep, pigs or chickens. Again it is those that come forward and avail themselves through Masibuyele Emasimini and Esibayeni who benefit.



53. Our Fortune 40 programme gets expanded every year and young people are the beneficiaries of this programme.

## **SMMEs**

54. Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA) is providing funding to SMMEs businesses located in the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality and throughout the province. Some of the businesses funded include but not limited to;

- Biyakhulu Trading CC, a farming business was granted an agricultural loan of R996 640.00 to purchase additional 95 breeding stock (93 cows & 2 bulls), and to fund operating costs.
- Compassion Nephro Centre (Pty) Ltd t/a Chronic Hemodialysis Unit, was granted a loan funding of R361 461 for the purchase of dialysis equipment costing R 296 961.00 and to finance working capital valued at R64 500.00. The business offers renal medical service (Dialysis).

- Mahlogohlo Investments (PTY) Ltd, benefitted from a loan facility of R450 000.00 for the purchase of a Galito's franchise, delivery bike and helmet, promotional material, shades and gardens desks, rest rooms and stock.

55. MEGA is further managing the disbursement of funds to the Premier's Youth Development Fund (PYDF) beneficiaries, these include;

- Disbursement to Pigro Projects (Pty) Ltd, a business that obtained grant funding from PYDF amounting to R 2 494 990.00 for the construction of the piggery units R 1 800 000, purchase of equipment R 450 000.00, feeds R 93 000.00 and salaries R 151 990.00.
- Disbursement AJS Fitness Studio, the business obtained a grant of R1 000 000.00 from PYDF for the start-up capital of fitness centre.
- The funding assisted the business to purchase gym equipment valued at R 570 000.00, to do renovations for R 149 951.06, to purchase office equipment valued at R 46 000.00, to cover costs

on marketing material & rental R 180 050.25 and salaries for R 49 998.69.

## **HEALTH**

56. Madam Speaker, there has been a consistent request that clinics in ward 10 A and B and 1 and 3 should operate 24 hours. We appreciate the need for such to be available at all hours. However, the Integrated Health Planning Framework (IHPF) indicates that to increase hours to 24hrs (Community Health Centres) there should be a minimum catchment population of 50 000 to 60 000 people.
57. The clinic has a catchment population size of less than 50 000, meaning that the clinic does not qualify to operate as a 24hr facility. I will engage the Minister of Health to explore the granting of a special categorization for communities comprised of less than 50 000 people.
58. There is a complaint about shortages of medicine in some clinics and hospitals. We are treating this with

the necessary attention and priority it requires. In the short term we shall ensure that ;

- Emergency orders are processed based on identified gaps.
- As interim measures, PHC facilities that have sufficient stock share medicine whilst awaiting delivery.
- Alternate drugs are also used to mitigate against drug shortages where possible.
- We are also focusing on weekly monitoring of medicine availability using stock visibility system (SVS) at PHC clinics and RX Solution at the hospitals, to identify and address gaps immediately.

59. There was also a complaint about shortages of specialists care at Sabie hospital. Sabie hospital provides District Healthcare Package of services for Level 1, which does not include specialist care services. Patients are referred for specialist care to regional and tertiary hospitals.

60. There was also a complaint about the shortages of staff in clinics and hospitals. We have extended the contract of nurses, Data clerks and EPWP to alleviate the shortage of staff in the short term.
61. We recently appointed Pharmacist assistants at Sabie, Glory Hill, Simile, Brondal and Bourke's Luck clinics.
62. There seem to be a significant number of complaints about Sabie hospital, from poor service to cleanliness. I will be dispatching a team to go and investigate but I will also do my own unannounced visit to Sabie hospital to see for myself all these issues that you have raised.

## **EDUCATION**

63. Madam Speaker, we have received a request for a government nutrition scheme to be provided at Graskop and Panorama schools. I am happy to

announce that the government nutrition scheme shall be extended to accommodate both areas.

64. A number of wards have requested new high schools, building a school depends on the number of current and projected learners in future. If the numbers now and in future do not demand a new school, we refer and transfer learners to nearby schools.
65. Learners with disabilities at 6,7 10 A7B wards will be accommodated at Estralita Special School in Lydenburg.
66. Ekucathulani, Arise and Shine and Emadlelweni ECDs have requested funding. We will assist these centres to meet the requirements on the norms and standard for funding.
67. Parents in Ward 5 have raised the issue of learners bring drugs at school. I must say that this a wide ranging problem. We will be sending our law

enforcement units to do unannounced searches in our schools.

68. Madam Speaker, we have received a number of complaints regarding the quality of school infrastructure. We are in the process of refurbishing a number of schools. These include;

- The construction of 14 waterborne toilet, 4 urinals, 15 wash basin, 4 fountains, 5000l JoJo tank at Glorry Hill primary in Sabie.
- We have constructed 15 enviro loo- toilets, 4 urinals, 17 basins with new fully equipped steel tank stands with two 5000l JoJo tanks and 2 fountains, and demolished 19 pit toilets at Dintjie primary Sabie.
- We have also built a new state of the art school in Sabie.
- At Marifaan Primary in Mashishing we have refurbished the waterborne toilet, constructed 4 waterborne, urinary basins, two 5000l JoJo tanks, 2 stands, drinking fountain, refurbished

13 class rooms and hall, installed perimeter fence.

Madam Speaker ***siyadeliver***.

69. At Pitas Primary in Sabie we constructed 15 enviro loo, 9 washing basins, 5 urinals, 5000l tank, fencing, new borehole, drinking fountain, French drain and demolished 12 pit toilets.

70. At Makuke Secondary in Sabie we demolished 23 pit toilets, constructed 11 enviro loo, 9 basins, 4 urinals, 2 water fountains, borehole and 2 water storage tanks.

71. At Kobeng Primary School Sabie Construction of 12 Enviro-loo toilets and installation of new fully equipped.

72. Our future plans for 23/24 years include renovations and new buildings, computer rooms. Libraries and refurbishments in the following schools;

- Hlong Secondary School Sabie,
- Mashishing Secondary,



- Mashishing Estalita Special School
- Lydenburg Primary School,
- Lesodi Primary School,
- Graskop Primary School,
- Marifane Primary School,
- Sybrand Van Niekerk Secondary School; and
- Harmony Hill Primary,

## **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

73. Madam Speaker, there has been a number of requests for food parcels for the indigent families in ward 2, 5 and 10.
74. We will be sending our social workers to do the needs analyses and verify the information provided and thereafter provide the necessary assistance.
75. We are also providing funding to Non- profit making organizations operating in the area that assist old age homes, child protection centers, youth development

centers social crime prevention, victim empowerment and to people living with disabilities.

## **CULTURE SPORTS RECREATION**

76. Madam Speaker, we will be upgrading Simile Library in the coming financial year to enable our people to have a one stop shop for connecting to the internet within their communities.
77. We have received and we note the request for libraries in Badfontein, Coromadel (ward 4) and Kellysville, Draaikraal, Chagal and Kiwi (ward 5). We will explore the feasibility of the requests and come back and engage our people on the way forward in the weeks ahead.
78. As a government that understand the important od cultural issues we will continue providing support to cultural groups, museums and host dialogue on issues like gender based violence and gold panning competitions.

## HOUSING

79. Madam Speaker, we are aware that the provision of housing is one way through we can restore the dignity of our people. In the past five financial years, we have assisted the municipality with the construction of 2 097 low cost houses and handed over to qualifying beneficiaries and serviced 3 621 sites.

80. The houses were completed in the following Areas.

- Sabie ext. 10
- Mashishing ext. 6
- Mashishing ext. 108
- Mashishing ext. 110

81. Water Interventions in the area included installation of Water Steel Reservoir Tanks (2 x 500KL) This project which cost R17,9 million was completed and handed over to the municipality.

82. Current projects include Mashishing ext.6, 108 and 110 bulk sewer outfall, The construction of Bulk Sewer outfall pipeline to service Mashishing Extension 6, 108 and 110 at a cost of R10, 580 441.03 The project is progressing well and is anticipated to be completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.
83. There are a number housing projects that are currently running across Thaba Chweu.
84. These include the construction of 200 low-cost houses in Mashishing ext 6.
85. Construction of 17 low- cost houses in Mashishing ext 6 Simile.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

86. There were complaints raised about illegal mining, gender based violence and the matters of police taking too long to respond to crime scenes and having no vehicles to attend to crime scenes. The MEC of the Department of Community safety has assured me that he will take these

matters up with the provincial commissioner and the relevant police stations commanders and find an amicable solution to address them.

87. The department is also employing community safety monitors to assist with tourism safety and prevent crime in general. The department will also continue supporting police forums and work closely with private security to ensure that our citizens are not just safe but also feel safe.

## **CONCLUSION**

88. Madam Speaker, as I conclude, I wish to once again express my deep appreciation for this programme that you have convened. As the ANC led government, we are committed to delivering services in a transparent, ethical and accountable manner, true to the ideals of the Freedom Charter.
89. To the community of Thaba Chweu, our accountability does not end here. We urge you to continue to hold government accountable to you because that is the only

weay we can honour our commitment to creating a better life for you.

I thank you.