

**ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE PREMIER MP NDLOVU
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE
MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL
LEADERS**

VENUE: MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

DATE: 06 MAY 2025

**CHAIRPERSON OF THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE OF
TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND PRESIDENT OF
CONTRALESA; KGOSHI MOKOENA**

**CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL HOUSE OF
TRADITIONAL AND KHOISAN LEADERS, KGOSHI
SEATHLOLO;**

**DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE,
INKOSI YENDE**

**MEC FOR CoGHSTA, HONOURABLE SK MASHILO AND
MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL PRESENT;**

**MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE
AND CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LOCAL HOUSES;**

**OUR ESTEEMED TRADITIONAL LEADERS,BO NDABEZITH,
AMAKHOSI, MAGOSHI, TIHOSI**

**ABO-NDLUNKHULU, OUR QUEENS AND IZINDUNA;
JUDGE PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH COURT OF
MPUMALANGA, JUDGE MPHAHLELE
ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY
LEADERSHIP OF VARIOUS RELIGIOUS FORMATIONS
LEADERSHIP OF TRADITIONAL HEALERS
THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY OF THE GOVERNING
PARTY CDE MUZI CHIRWA
ANC VETERAN MS NORAH FAKUDE
LEADERS OF THE ALLIANCE PARTNERS
LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES**

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL
GOVERNMENT MS. SKHOSANA**

**SENIOR MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
CoGHSTA, LED BY THE ACTING HEAD OF THE
DEPARTMENT, MR NGUBANE AND ALL HODS**

**AB AHLALI BONKE BASE
MPUMALANGA**

***SANIBONANI, DUMELANG, LOTJHANI,
AVUXENI***

THE CONTEXT

1. It is with great deference and a deep sense of gratitude that I stand before you today as we gather for the opening of the 7th Mpumalanga Provincial House of Traditional and Khoisan leaders. This occasion comes at a pivotal moment in our governance and celebrates our rich cultural heritage and the enduring legacy of our ancestors.
2. Njengoba sihlangene khona la kulendlu ye sishaya mthetho sibonga umsebenzi obalulekile owenziwa nga Makhosi ukusigcugcuzelela ukuthi singakhohlwa amasiko nobuntu bethu.
3. Ukuba khona kwethu lana kubonisa indlela esi sebenzisana nesi bambisene ngayo namakhosi ukusebenzela isizwe sethu.
4. However, it is also a time for reflection. We take a moment to acknowledge the profound loss that has touched our Province. With heavy hearts, we extend our sincere condolences to the family, friends, and the entire Sphezi Traditional Council. The tragic murder of our Senior Traditional Leader leaves a void that will be deeply felt by all who knew him and were touched by his remarkable life and enduring spirit.

5. In honour of his legacy, we reaffirm our commitment to finalizing the recognition of a regent, “Libambela,” in alignment with the wishes of the Royal Family. This decision not only honours his memory but also ensures that his spirit of leadership and unwavering dedication to our people continue to inspire future generations. May this gathering serve as a reminder of our shared responsibilities, our cultural heritage, and the collective effort needed to build a united and resilient society.
6. BoNdabezitha, ngithanda ukuthatha leli thuba ukubonga noku hlonipha sikhumbula imisebenzi eyenziwa ngabo mkhulu nabo gogo ukulwelwa amalungelo nale nkulukeko siyiphilayo. Siyazi ukuthi amakhosi aye phambili ekulwiseni uhulmende we bandlululo. Nanamuhla amakhosi asebenzisana nathi ukucinisekisa ukuthi abantu bathole izintsiza
7. Hi khensa, hi vuyelela ku hi nika ntokoto wa kuya emahlweni mi hi pfuna ku hlayisa ntumbuluko wa hina.
8. You are a shining light that continues to beam very high and illuminating even during the darkest times of our history.

9. Your ancestors, the Kings and Queens that ruled this land more than three centuries ago, left a legacy of strong resistance to colonial domination. The Kings and Queens of amaSwati, amaNdebele, amaTsonga, amaPulana, amaPedi, amaZulu and many other nations that once lived and conquered this region.
10. Siyajabula ukuthi imithetho ne mfundiso zabo gogo nabo mkhulu anizilahlanga ngoba amasiko wethu ne ndabuko kanye nomlando ani walahlanga futhi aphephile ezandleni zenu.

STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP: A COMMITMENT TO EMPOWERMENT AND PROGRESS

11. In the spirit of partnership and collective progress, I take immense pride in highlighting the significant strides our provincial government has made in strengthening the institution of traditional leadership.
12. Over the past year, we have invested purposefully in empowering our traditional leaders, providing them with essential tools of trade to enable them to serve our communities more effectively and sustainably.

13. We have initiated the construction of dedicated offices for traditional leaders across the province. These offices will serve as accessible hubs for community engagement, streamlining the processes through which leaders can provide structured support. By establishing these spaces, we enhance the functionality of traditional leadership and affirm the vital role these leaders play within our governance framework.
14. Our investments underscore a foundational belief that traditional leadership is indispensable to the fabric of our society. By equipping our leaders with the necessary resources, we empower them to navigate the complexities of modern governance while remaining rooted in our rich cultural heritage.
15. Within the vibrant province of Mpumalanga, we are blessed with diverse cultures and languages, each contributing uniquely to our shared identity. It is our duty to honour these differences while fostering respect, dialogue, and collaboration among all communities. We gather not just as leaders of individual constituencies, but as custodians of a collective vision for empowerment, sustainability, and progress.

16. As we convene today, I would like to highlight key words articulated by the President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency, Cyril Ramaphosa during the opening of the National House of Traditional Leaders in Cape Town recently.
17. The President emphasized, and I quote: "Our traditional leaders are the custodians of our history and our cultures. They play an essential role in maintaining the social cohesion of our communities and guiding us towards a more united and prosperous South Africa.
18. As the government, we are committed to supporting traditional councils with necessary resources and frameworks that empower their functions and enhance their leadership."
19. Today's gathering is a testament to our shared responsibilities. We are entrusted not only with guiding our people but also with stewarding the land and environment that sustains us. It is imperative that we advocate for development that respects our traditions while embracing innovation, ensuring that future generations inherit a heritage that is both rich and vibrant.

RECOGNITION OF LEADERSHIP

20. Chairperson, recently, we issued certificates of recognition to two newly inaugurated Senior Traditional Leaders in our province. It is my singular honour and privilege to acknowledge **Prince Nkosinathi Paulos Nkosi of the Esandleni Traditional Council**, as well as **Inkosi Mkhutshwa Solly Mabhena of the Manala Mbhongo Traditional Council**.

21. We currently have five recognised vacancies which will require replacements with appointment of the senior traditional leaders. We call upon the House of Traditional Leaders to assist the facilitation of this process by engaging with the affected royal houses.

22. Their recognition is grounded in the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act No. 3 of 2019 and follows formal submissions from royal families, adhering to customary laws of succession. This financial year, we anticipate acknowledging further Traditional Leaders in alignment with the principles outlined in Sections 211 and 212 of the South African Constitution.

23. It is essential to clarify that the government does not possess the authority to appoint Amakhosi. Such decisions rest solely with the Inner Royal House. Our certificates of recognition serve as formal acknowledgments of leadership, not as conferrals of authority over appointments.
24. Thina singu hulumeni asinawo amadla wokukhetha ukuthi ngubani ofuneka athathe isikhundla sobukhosi. Ubukhosi buse zandleni zenu nina base bu khosini, manje ngicela niyekele ukulwa, ninga bulalani, hlalani phantsi nicocisane, nibonisane, nizwane ukuthi nibeka bani esikhundleni anihole.
25. We are dedicated to closely collaborating with all Amakhosi recognized by their royal families, acknowledging their role in preserving our cultural heritage and social fabric. Together, we will foster a partnership that honours their authority while promoting unity and development within our diverse society.

THE OVERSIGHT ROLE OF THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE

26. As we gather today, we must recognize the rich tapestry of traditions represented by the Khoi-San and other

indigenous people. Our cultures are vibrant legacies that shape our identities and futures. The Provincial House bears the crucial responsibility to ensure these traditions are respected and integrated into the broader societal narrative.

27. Our oversight function is critical as we monitor and evaluate the impact of policies on our communities. Accountability is paramount; we must ensure that those in power uphold their commitments. This oversight transcends mere compliance; it fosters transparency, social justice, and champions the rights of all indigenous people.
28. Furthermore, the Provincial House serves as a vital bridge between our communities and the government, facilitating dialogue and communication. We advocate for equitable resource allocation, access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for every community member.
29. With this responsibility comes the recognition of significant challenges. We must navigate complex social, economic, and political landscapes. Collaboration is essential, and we must build alliances that amplify our collective voice. Engaging our youth is equally critical, instilling them with a sense of pride in their heritage while encouraging their active participation in leadership roles.

30. As we soldier on, marching towards the future, let us reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding our traditions while embracing innovation. The Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership is not merely a watchdog; it is a beacon of hope, guiding our communities toward empowerment and self-determination.

31. We pledge our unwavering commitment to collaborate with Bo-Ndabezitha. Together, we will strengthen the oversight role of our House to ensure our communities thrive, our voices resonate, and our legacies endure for generations to come.

THE APPOINTMENT OF HEADMEN AND HEADWOMEN

32. Bondabezitha, as we gather here in celebration, I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge and appreciate the commitment of our government towards strengthening the institution of traditional leadership in our Province and indeed our entire nation.

33. Today marks a central moment in our journey, one that encapsulates our dedication to empowering and honouring the voices of our traditional communities through the

appointment of 286 Headmen and Headwomen, as we pledged in last year's commitment.

34. Traditional leadership is not just an institution; it is the bedrock of our societal values and norms. The heads of our communities' men and women who embody the spirit of our ancestors play a crucial role in sustaining our cultural legacy and addressing the unique challenges that face our people today.

35. The appointment of 286 Headmen and Headwomen serves to ensure that every part of our society is represented, cared for, and uplifted. These leaders will act as bridges between the communities and the government, facilitating communication and enhancing understanding. They will guide our citizens in governmental policies, assist in community development initiatives, and preserve our rich heritage for future generations.

36. In investing in the institution of traditional leadership, we are safeguarding the very foundation of our democracy. The traditional councils are vital in providing a framework that ensures that the voices of our communities are heard. They will play an integral role in our ongoing journey toward

nation-building, fostering social cohesion and promoting unity among our diverse cultures.

37. However, let us also acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. As we empower traditional leadership, it is vital that we ensure their integration with modern governance structures.

38. We must work hand in hand with our appointed leaders, providing them with the necessary training, resources, and support to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Statesmanship requires continuous learning, and we must support our traditional leaders in adapting to contemporary societal needs while protecting and defending our customs.

39. Furthermore, it is imperative that we create channels for collaboration between traditional leadership and the local government to maximize the impact of our initiatives. This partnership will foster innovation and bring about sustainable development that resonates with the aspirations of our people.

CAPACITATION OF THE INSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

40. Traditional leaders play a vital role in preserving our cultural identity, mediating conflicts, and guiding their communities with profound wisdom. Yet, the landscape they navigate has transformed significantly due to advances in technology and modern governance.
41. To honour their dedication and enhance their capacity to serve, we must equip them with essential resources: organized office spaces for collaboration, tablets for effective communication, and vehicles to ensure they remain connected with their communities.
42. Today, we embark on a transformative journey. By providing these crucial tools, we will enhance our traditional leaders' capabilities and reinforce the very foundation of our society. Bo-Ndabezitha, let us celebrate this invaluable legacy while paving the way for a future where tradition and innovation work hand in hand for the greater good of all.
43. In this spirit, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development has already taken significant steps to empower Amakhosi within the province by offering training on the Traditional Courts Act.

44. As the department drafts regulations for this Act, we will conduct further training to ensure our traditional leaders are equipped to navigate the evolving legal landscape once this process concludes. Together, we can amplify their capacity and fortify their indispensable role within our communities.
45. Chairperson, Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) remains the biggest enemy that should be fought at all costs in all corners. It destroys the moral fibre of our society and a daily trauma that women and children have to live with daily. The rising figures depicted by research studies and the statistics of the South African Police Services (SAPS) are empirical evidence to substantiate this.
46. The recent launch of the Provincial Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) Structure, must be seen as one of the measures to fight this pandemic. It marks a historic milestone in our ongoing battle against gender-based violence in Mpumalanga.
47. The presence of senior traditional leaders during the launch highlighted their crucial role in championing this pressing issue. Together, let us commit to safeguarding our future where every community member is empowered, respected, and heard.

48. Throughout the 2024/25 financial year, the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoi-San leaders has diligently conducted awareness campaigns addressing gender-based violence across all three districts.
49. During the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, a powerful dialogue was hosted under the theme, “30 Years of Advancing Collective Action to End Violence Against Women and Children.”
50. This initiative emphasizes the prevention of violence and highlights the essential need for economic empowerment, aiming to foster financial independence and resilience among women.
51. Again, the newly established Provincial GBVF Structure serves as a crucial framework designed to combat the scourge of GBVF within the province. With the backing of traditional leadership and active community engagement, this initiative is poised to create a stronger, united front in promoting safety and support for all individuals affected by violence. Together, let us strive for a future free from violence and discrimination, where every person can live with dignity and respect.

52. As the Mpumalanga Province we are proud about the recent appointment of Ingwenyama Makhosoke II Mabena as the Chairperson of the Kings Council. This significant appointment underscores his exceptional leadership qualities and commitment to our cultural heritage while emphasizing the province's dedication to preserving traditional values and promoting unity. We anticipate that his leadership will have a positive impact on the council and strengthen the broader institution of traditional leadership.

53. Chairperson, the Provincial Government, through the Department of Cooperative Governance Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), is actively advancing the development of our Traditional Councils.

54. We are pleased to announce the ongoing construction of five (5) Traditional Council offices: Mahlaphahlapha, Ogenyaneni, Kwandwalaza, Matsamo, and Amashangana. In addition to this, we have successfully completed renovations on seven (7) Traditional Council offices, namely Mpakeni, Msogwaba, Mjindi, Lugedlane, Nkambeni, Mdluli, and Makhosoke II (Kings Cluster). Furthermore, the renovation of the Ndzundza Mabhoko

55. During the 2025/26 financial year, we have earmarked plans to renovate two (2) additional Traditional Council offices: Enikakuyengwa and Ebutsini.

56. These initiatives are part of our broader commitment to support and strategically collaborate with the Institution of Traditional Leadership, ensuring that we foster a strong partnership and empower traditional structures within our communities.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE MINING SECTOR

57. Partnering with the mining sector is vital for fostering sustainable economic growth and social development in our communities. These collaborations are not just beneficial; they are essential for driving positive change and leveraging the resources of the mining industry for the greater good. We believe that through meaningful partnerships, we can unlock the transformative potential of our natural resources, ensuring that they serve as a catalyst for community upliftment.

58. Our commitment to effective implementation of Social Labour Plans and Corporate Social Investment initiatives is at the forefront of this government. Tailored specifically to

empower traditional communities, these initiatives are designed to generate sustainable employment opportunities and enhance the quality of life for our people. We have proposed that the provincial government be included as a signatory and a stakeholder when these SLPs agreements are entered into. Traditional leaders too must be involved.

59. By working together with the mining sector, we strive to ensure that the wealth generated from our natural resources translates into lasting benefits, fostering a brighter and more prosperous future for our communities.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN AMAKHOSI AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

60. Solar farming involves the extensive use of land to install solar panels that capture sunlight and convert it into electricity. This process not only generates renewable energy to power homes and businesses but also allows for excess electricity to be fed back into the grid. As a vital component of a sustainable energy future, solar farming offers an efficient way to harness solar energy on a large scale.

61. To maximize the benefits of solar farming and other sustainable practices, it is crucial to foster synergy between Amakhosi and the private sector. By collaborating on initiatives such as solar farming and forest planting, we can promote environmental stewardship while simultaneously creating economic opportunities for our communities.

62. This partnership not only aims to cultivate a brighter future for our people but also seeks to preserve the rich natural beauty that surrounds us. Together, traditional leadership and private enterprises can develop meaningful programs that empower local populations, encourage sustainable land use, and generate employment in the fields of renewable energy and conservation.

EMPOWERING TRADITIONAL LEADERS THROUGH TOURISM INITIATIVES

63. To foster sustainable development and strengthen community empowerment, strategic initiatives that leverage both innovative projects and cultural heritage have been identified.

64. Building upon the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MPHTKL and MTPA, the Mantjolo Traditional

Council (TC) has been strategically selected as the ideal location for implementing the innovative Game Farming project. This site features land that meets the rigorous standards set by MTPA, ensuring optimal conditions for the project's success.

65. The initiative is poised to deliver significant socio-economic benefits to the rural Mantjolo community, fostering sustainable development and empowering residents. Moreover, this project exemplifies a strong partnership model that seamlessly integrates government efforts with traditional leadership under the Amakhosi system, reinforcing collaborative governance in developing areas within the province.

66. In addition, we must extend our unwavering support to empower our traditional leaders in promoting their localities through impactful tourism initiatives. By collaborating with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT), we will create opportunities to celebrate our rich cultural heritage while stimulating economic growth.

67. Together, we can showcase our unique cultural identities through sustainable tourism, ensuring that the benefits are equitably shared among community members. Through

these efforts, we are not only building a vibrant future but also honouring our past and embracing the limitless possibilities that lie ahead.

PROVINCIAL INVEST RURAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

68. In line with our commitment to fostering sustainable rural development, the Department is diligently developing a comprehensive Provincial Invest Rural Framework.

69. This framework will serve as a strategic blueprint, outlining the pathways for social and economic advancement across our rural areas.

It will pinpoint key drivers, establish fundamental principles and overarching goals, and implement a sectoral approach to rural economic development. Ultimately, it aims to articulate a “preferred future” where our vision of Invest Rural becomes a reality within every rural community.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH AGRICULTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

70. Chairperson, I am pleased to report that we are witnessing remarkable progress in the implementation of the agrarian

revolution. The collaborative efforts of DARDLEA are yielding fruitful outcomes, culminating in the formalization of their partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This synergy is pivotal in propelling our agricultural reform initiatives forward.

71. Significant strides have been made in the execution of greenhouse agricultural projects across the province under the jurisdiction of our Amakhosi. The successful distribution of smart boxes and the ongoing construction of greenhouse structures are set to enhance local agricultural capacity and resilience like never before.

ENGAGEMENT OF PRIVATE PARTNERS IN AGRARIAN PROJECTS

72. We are thrilled to announce that several private sector partners have expressed a keen interest in collaborating with our agrarian programs. Their commitment to agricultural projects, particularly within our rural areas under traditional leadership, is heartening.

73. Together, we will provide comprehensive training to individuals managing these projects, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge.

Additionally, our efforts to secure markets for the produced goods will bolster local economic stability and food security.

74. The ongoing initiatives, rooted in strategic partnerships and active community engagement, are paving the way for significant advancements in rural agriculture and sustainable development. Together, we are diligently working towards a resilient and food-secure future for all communities in our Province. Thank you for your commitment, your passion, and your unwavering support as we embark on this transformative journey together.

THE PROVINCIAL INITIATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (PICC)

75. The Mpumalanga Province reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the principles outlined in the Customary Initiation Act of 2021 (Act No. 2 of 2021) and the Mpumalanga Ingoma Act (Act No. 3 of 2011).

76. These legislative frameworks have established strong mechanisms to protect young men and women throughout their initiation journeys. Central to this effort are the dedicated work of the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Council (PICC) and the Ingoma Task Team, whose tireless

efforts ensure the safety and integrity of our initiation practices.

77. We sincerely appreciate the vital role played by the PICC and recognize the profound cultural significance of the Ingoma Customary Practice, a cherished tradition passed down through generations.

78. This practice goes beyond mere rites of passage; it embodies our identity, values, and responsibilities as custodians of our rich heritage. Therefore, we place great emphasis on safeguarding the safety and well-being of initiates as they undertake this transformative experience.

79. Let us celebrate the remarkable progress achieved over the past year. Thanks to our collective dedication, during the last Winter Initiation Season, we registered 14,944 male initiates across 291 male initiation schools and 7,642 female initiates from 266 female initiation schools, totalling 22,589 initiates. The Summer Season saw the registration of 21 initiation schools, and we successfully closed six illegal initiation schools, resulting in one arrest.

80. Tragically, last year's Winter Initiation Season claimed the lives of five young men. While the Summer Season was free

of fatalities, it is important to remember that even a single death is unacceptable. We owe it to our communities to work tirelessly towards a future where initiation ceremonies are conducted safely, without loss of life.

81. As the 2025 Winter Initiation Season approaches, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC) for their steadfast commitment and diligent efforts to safeguard the well-being of initiates.

82. In preparation, the PICC, in collaboration with the Ingoma Task Team and other stakeholders, has intensified awareness campaigns across the province. These initiatives aim to ensure strict compliance with the provisions of the Customary Initiation Act, thereby promoting safety and respect.

83. With these comprehensive measures in place, we are confident that our province will maintain its commendable record of zero fatalities during this year's initiation season, reaffirming our collective dedication to the safety and dignity of our youth.

84. While we celebrate our achievements, we must also confront ongoing challenges. A major concern is the unresolved cases in relation to initiation-related incidents that require urgent attention. It is imperative that we collaborate closely with stakeholders, especially the Director of Public Prosecutions, to ensure that justice is served swiftly and effectively.

85. In response to these challenges, we have developed a comprehensive plan focusing on key initiatives such as awareness campaigns on the Customary Initiation Act and the Ingoma Act, enforcement of compliance at initiation schools, and the creation of a detailed database of legally registered initiation schools. Engaging all relevant stakeholders, including traditional surgeons, caregivers, parents, and school principals is essential for monitoring activities and addressing areas of concern where incidents have previously occurred.

86. Our partnerships with organizations such as the South African Police Service (SAPS), Right to Care, and the Department of Health have been instrumental. Collectively, we have achieved an impressive compliance rate of 99% in monitoring initiation schools. Let us continue to work together to ensure that initiation ceremonies uphold safety, respect,

and dignity, thereby protecting the well-being of our communities.

87. Moving forward, we must reaffirm our commitment to creating a safe environment for our initiates. We must uphold our traditions while prioritizing the health and safety of our youth. We reaffirm our dedication to the Ingoma Customary Practice protecting our culture with integrity, compassion, and resolve. Together, we can ensure that our cherished traditions thrive, safeguarding not only our customs but also the lives and future well-being of generations to come.

RECONSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL COUNCILS AND HOUSES OF TRADITIONAL AND KHOI-SAN LEADERS

88. Chairperson, it is an honour to report a significant milestone achieved by our Province: the successful Traditional Council Elections. This marks a crucial step towards the reconstitution of Traditional Councils, as mandated by Section 63(4) of the Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Act (TKLA). As you are aware, this legislation requires the reconstitution of all tribal authorities and traditional councils within two years from its commencement.

89. I am proud to announce that the Mpumalanga Province has successfully conducted the Traditional Council elections in accordance with the Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Act No. 3 of 2019.
90. The advent of democracy in South Africa has created valuable opportunities for the recognition and restoration of the dignity of traditional leaders and their communities. Our Constitution, along with relevant legislation, acknowledges the status and role of traditional leaders while establishing the framework for the formation and recognition of traditional councils.
91. This legislative framework places traditional leadership at the heart of sustainable development and promotes cooperative governance and integrated development planning. It provides mechanisms for the appointment and removal of council members and outlines essential operational guidelines.
92. The structure of our councils reflects a balanced governance approach: 40% of the members will be elected representatives from the community, while the remaining 60% will be appointed by traditional leadership. This dual

approach fosters a robust governance framework, ensuring effective representation and collaboration.

93. Traditional Councils will play a vital role in managing community affairs while upholding customs and traditions. They will provide crucial guidance and support to traditional leaders, collaborate with municipalities to identify and address community needs, and participate in the development and revision of integrated development plans at the local municipal level. This collaborative approach ensures that the interests and aspirations of their communities are effectively represented and prioritized.

94. To ensure fairness and address any concerns, we have established an Independent Appeals Committee composed of legal experts. This committee will review issues and guarantee that all voices are heard and considered. This empowerment approach underscores our commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusivity as cornerstones of the reformed councils.

95. As we celebrate this momentous occasion and the appointment of our Traditional Councils, let us embrace the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Together, we

can empower our communities, uphold our traditions and forge a more united and prosperous future for all.

PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

96. As we gather in this chamber, we are united by the rich tapestry of our traditions, which anchor us in our past while guiding us toward a brighter future. The voices of our traditional leaders are not merely echoes of history; they are vital instruments in fostering unity and driving development within our communities.

97. In light of the recent traditional council elections, I want to emphasize the importance of this democratic process not only as a means of preserving our cultural heritage but also as an avenue for actively engaging in the governance of our municipalities.

98. These elections signify a momentous milestone in the evolution of our democracy at the grassroots level, reflecting the hopes and aspirations of our people for better governance and sustainable development.

99. Traditional councils serve as essential conduits between our local communities and municipal leadership. With the

recent elections, we have empowered our traditional leaders to participate meaningfully in municipal decision-making processes. This collaborative approach ensures that the distinct needs and values of traditional communities are acknowledged and integrated into local governance agendas.

100. Our elected traditional leaders now bear the crucial responsibility of championing their communities' interests, advocating for resources, infrastructure, and services that resonate with our cultural identities.

101. This strategic linkage between traditional leadership and municipal governance not only promotes accountability but also enhances the legitimacy of local governance in the eyes of our people.

102. Furthermore, the active involvement of traditional councils in municipal affairs fortifies the very social fabric that binds us. Traditional leaders are not merely custodians of our cultural practices; they are pivotal architects of local governance. Their engagement can spur initiatives focused on development, health, education, and social welfare, providing tailored solutions to the unique challenges faced by our communities.

103. As we chart our path forward, let us reaffirm our collective commitment to ensuring that the impact of the traditional council elections reach far beyond the ballot box. It is our communal duty traditional leaders, municipal officials, and community members to join forces in advancing the aspirations of our people.

104. In this spirit, I earnestly urge you, Bo-Ndabezitha, to actively engage in the forthcoming DDM council meetings. Your voice is crucial in representing the authority and unique perspectives of an essential segment of our society.

105. Your deep understanding of the rural landscape is invaluable as we collaboratively seek effective strategies to eliminate bottlenecks and enhance service delivery. Together, through this dialogue, we can ensure that the needs of our communities are diligently addressed, steering us toward a just and equitable future for all.

106. As an African proverb wisely states, "If you want to go fast, go alone; but if you want to go far, go together." Let us choose the path of unity and collaboration, working hand in hand towards our common goal.

LAND INVASION AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES

107. Chairperson, I want to emphasize that land invasion remains a significant barrier to the comprehensive realization of the agrarian revolution. This issue not only hinders our efforts but also perpetuates cycles of poverty, inequality, and unemployment within our communities. Therefore, I urge you, as our leaders, to collaborate closely with municipalities on effective land administration. It is crucial that we manage land resources in a way that ensures ample space for both settlement and sustainable development for future generations.

108. For those in need of land whether for residential purposes, agricultural ventures, or legitimate business enterprises adhering to a structured application process is essential. This approach will empower our rural communities by providing access to land that can significantly enhance their quality of life and economic opportunities.

109. Furthermore, I want to send a strong message: that the net is tightening around those who illegally occupy vacant land. Their days of acting with impunity, often in collusion

with individuals engaged in corrupt allocation practices and bribery, are numbered.

110. We will continue to forge strong partnerships with law enforcement agencies to hold these perpetrators accountable and to bring an end to illegal land invasions. It is essential that we uphold the rule of law, protect the rights of legitimate land users, and ensure that our land resources are utilized in a manner that benefits society. By doing so, we can create a more equitable and prosperous future for our communities.

111. Bo-Ndabezitha, I know that a number of our senior traditional leaders are helpless when they are confronted by moments of ill health requiring some medical attention. I am fully aware that National Government intends to finalise a handbook for traditional leaders which shall also cover their medical expenses. We have to explore this thoroughly with an intention to make means to cover Amakhosi, their spouse and children so that they can be fully covered for medical expenses.

112. Bo-Ndabezitha I thank you for giving yourself time to listen to a commoner who knows that If people come together they can even mend the crack in the sky, Let us work together and mend any crack that might bring divisions amongst us.

Siyabonga, Siyathokoza. Re a leboga; Inkomu.