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WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE PREMIER MANDLA NDLOVU AT THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE MEETING, EMALAHLENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, ON 26 MAY 2026, AT 10:00am.

Co-Chairperson, Ms N Ngwenya,

Members of the Executive Committee,

The Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders, the President of CONTRALESA, Kgoši Mokoena, and *Amakhosi* present here today,

The Executive Mayors of Nkangala District Municipality, Cllr. TD Ngwenya and All Other District Executive Mayors,

The Executive Mayor of Emalahleni Local Municipality, Cllr. Vusi Nhlapho and all the Executive Mayors from Local Municipalities present here today, including all the Councillors,

Representatives from COSATU, SANCO and SACP,

The Director-General, Ms MM Skosana, HODs and all Senior Officials of our province, Municipal Managers and all officials from Municipalities,

Representatives of civil society, members of the South African Police Service (SAPS),

Representatives from the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA),

Representative from the Department of Correctional Services,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning,



1. Co-Chairperson, esteemed members of the Council, distinguished guests, traditional leaders, members of law enforcement, civil society partners, and colleagues, it is both an honour and a profound responsibility to welcome you all to this important sitting of the Provincial Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.
2. Today, we gather here weaker than yesterday as we have learned about the political activist that was gunned down in Ward 16 under DR JS Moroka Local Municipality. She was gunned down in front of her kids what a barbaric act by a coward man. We are pleased that the Police acted swiftly and apprehended the suspect. We believe the law will take its course.
3. Gender-based violence is more than a criminal act. It is a direct attack on the humanity, dignity, and freedom of our women, men, children, and vulnerable groups. It destroys families, weakens communities, undermines social cohesion, and leaves deep scars that affect generations.
4. It is a silent war that continues to rage in our homes, our streets, and in the lives of our mothers, daughters, sisters, and children.
5. The fight against gender-based violence requires a whole-of-society approach. It requires communities that speak out against abuse. It requires men who become champions for equality and respect. It requires institutions that act decisively and consistently. Most importantly, it requires all of us to reject the culture of silence and impunity.
6. As leaders, we cannot normalise this violence. We cannot become comfortable with statistics while our people continue to live in fear. Every victim represents a life interrupted, a dream shattered, and a family traumatised.

7. As former President Nelson Mandela reminded us: *“In Africa, there is a concept known as **ubuntu** – the profound sense that we are human only through the humanity of others.”*
8. When violence becomes normalised, when women live in fear, and when children grow up witnessing brutality, we lose that sense of **ubuntu**; we cease to recognise ourselves in one another.
9. South Africa continues to face one of the highest rates of femicide in the world.
10. Research shows that approximately 5.5 women per 100,000 are killed by intimate partners, with about three women losing their lives every day at the hands of those who claim to love them.
11. Further studies indicate that nearly half of all women murdered in the country are killed by intimate partners, highlighting the deeply personal and domestic nature of this violence.
12. Here in Mpumalanga, the reality is equally concerning. Recent crime monitoring trends indicate that the province still accounts for high reported sexual offence cases, despite slight improvements in recent reporting periods.
13. Behind every statistic is **a name, a face, a family, and a future stolen.**
14. Co-Chairperson and delegates, we must, however, also acknowledge and commend the tireless efforts of our institutions.
15. The South African Police Service (SAPS), the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), and our justice system have intensified their work, improving investigations, strengthening prosecutions, and ensuring that perpetrators are brought to book.

16. The expansion of ***Thuthuzela Care Centres***, the improvement of victim support services, and the establishment of dedicated GBV courts are a testament to our collective determination to place survivors at the centre of justice.
17. At the provincial level, we are encouraged by the establishment of rapid response teams across municipalities and by the growing collaboration among government, civil society, and traditional leadership.
18. To all these institutions, we say: *your work does not go unnoticed*. But we must also say: *the work is far from done*.
19. Co-Chairperson, our fight against GBV and Femicide is not isolated from global efforts.
20. During South Africa's historic G20 Chairpersonship, hosted right here in Mpumalanga, including Ministerial engagements in the Kruger National Park, the global community reaffirmed a shared commitment to address gender-based violence.
21. The G20 called for:
 - Stronger laws and accountability,
 - Expanded prevention strategies,
 - Investment in survivor support, and
 - Critically, the engagement of men and boys as part of the solution.
22. These are not abstract commitments; they speak directly to what we must implement here at home.
23. Distinguished delegates, today, I want to pose a critical question to this Council: How far have we gone in educating our young boys and girls about gender-based violence and femicide?
24. Are we shaping a generation that understands, respect, consent, and equality?

25. Or are we leaving them to inherit the same cycles of violence?
26. And further, have we fully brought our **Amakhosi and traditional healers** on board?
27. Because if our guiding principle is that ***“no one must be left behind,”*** then our response must be rooted in every village, every community, every cultural institution, and every traditional council.
28. We are encouraged by the commitment already shown by traditional leaders in our province, who have begun to challenge harmful norms and teach young girls and boys the values of respect and equality.
29. But we must deepen this partnership.
30. Co-Chairperson, this Council was established precisely to ensure that our response is:
- Coordinated,
 - Evidence-based, and
 - Grounded in the lived experiences of survivors.
31. Council approved the Provincial Strategic Plan which consist of six pillars and out of 60 indicators across the six pillars of the Provincial Strategic Plan, 35 indicators were achieved, representing an overall performance of 58 percent. While this is encouraging, it also reminds us that much more work still lies ahead.
32. As Premier, I reaffirm our commitment to:
- Strengthening prevention through education and awareness,
 - Expanding comprehensive support services for survivors,
 - Ensuring swift and certain justice, and
 - Building a whole-of-society response that leaves no gap unaddressed.

33. Esteemed delegates, today's programme is rich and important.
34. We will receive presentations that will ensure accountability and help guide our path forward.
35. Our District Mayors, actively working on the ground, will also share their experiences of driving real change.
36. Let us listen attentively. Let us engage honestly, and most importantly, let us act decisively.
37. In closing, let this gathering not be another meeting; instead, let it be a turning point.
38. Let it be remembered as the moment when we **moved from words to action, from commitments to results, from pain to healing.**
39. Together, we must build a province where:
 - women walk freely without fear,
 - children grow up in safety and dignity,
 - and every citizen feels protected by the society they belong to.
40. I look forward to the robust deliberations, and outcomes that will bring us nearer to the crime-free province we envisage.
41. This Council must therefore continue to serve as a platform for coordination, oversight and decisive action. Together, guided by **ubuntu**, united in purpose, and driven by compassion, we will prevail.
42. You are welcome to this sitting of the Gender Based Violence and Femicide Council.

I thank you.