

**THE ADDRESS BY THE MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MR AJD NDOU, ON THE OCASSION OF THE LIMPOPO INITIATION SCHOOL INDABA AS HELD AT FOREVER RESORT, BELA-BELA, WATERBERG, ON THE 28 NOVEMBER 2018, 09:30**

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Programme Director, Hosi Chauke

MEC Phophi Ramathuba

Mayor of BelaBela Municipality

The Leadership of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders under Chairperson Kgoshi Dikgale – Mokone! and Deputy Chairman, Hosi Ngove – Mhlave!

Committee ya Dikoma led by Kgoshi Rammupudi – Phaahle! and Deputy, Hosi Chauke – Muhlengwe mudli wa humba!

Leadership of the Local Houses and Local Committees for Initiation Schools

Maaparankwe!

Councillors

Traditional Surgeons

Provincial Commissioner of the South African Police Service, Lieutenant General Ledwaba – Tlou!

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Today we are taking the first step towards defending the clean bill of health we received during the operations of the 2018 Initiation Schools season. Indeed as said before, meshomo ya rena e tla ba bohlatse bja rena go baswa le bokamoso

bja bona. This process we are engaging in today, is the continuation of maintaining Limpopo as a South African model of best practices on matters of initiation schools.

The Limpopo Provincial Initiation Schools Indaba is taking place during the time when the world marks the 16 Days of Activism Against Women and Children Abuse. Our communities should and would not be taking the walk of shame as they would have failed the down and needy in our society. Our communities would not, with traditional leadership presence, take the walk of shame for allowing social ills to go unprevented and or unattended to.

Indeed, our communities, should and would not take a walk of shame, for allowing the indigent to suffer, in the presence of leadership, as elected. Our women, should rise, with the support of their male counterparts to build a society free of disease, illegal initiation schools and other social ills. We should appreciate each other in the presence of dominance and build a society that will raise boys to believe and respect the women in our families, communities and society as a whole.

Today in this body convention, the primary aim of the initiation school is to traditionally prepare boys and girls to become responsible men and women and be acceptable in an African society. It is a bridge to be crossed by boys in order to become men and to be leaped over by girls for them to be women. That is why it is important to undertake this broad programme of initiation to really teach our children to be responsible in the wake of the social ills that have come to embarrass ourselves as women and children get to be crime scenes in the society. We believe this programme will help in instilling respect for the elimination of gender-based violence.

The lesson of a lifetime, is that we need to protect the future by protecting the yesterday and today. The Women and Children in our families, communities and broader society cannot be the crime scenes when we have both the institution of traditional leadership and a caring government. We would have failed our nation, we would have failed our mothers, sisters and daughters, if these ills happen to our people, in our time. That is why it is prudent that we all walk and work together, with pride, in the upliftment of the lives of our people.

We are celebrating and acknowledging that our strategies of zero deaths in our initiation schools programme has for the past two years borne us fruits and we are proud of the institution of traditional leadership for ensuring that the Province of Limpopo respects, works and walk with pride when it comes to the issue of Initiation Schools. Registering 50 379 initiates in our 448 Initiation Schools in our province with an incident free programme is a positive wave that we have to ensure we maintain. We must emphasise that there has been an upward trajectory since 2016, where we enrolled 14 833 initiates compared to 2017, where we enrolled 20 000. The picture of this year shows that we have increased the enrolment by more than 100%.

And I will be failing in my Executive responsibilities if I don't acknowledge and give my regards to the great work of Committee led by Kgoshi Rammupudu – Phaahle! and the whole House of Traditional Leadership at both province and local government spheres. It has been a daunting task, enrolling such a huge number, was not a child's play. Thank you Kgoshi Dikgale – Mokone! and your leadership collective.

Programme Director, we owe this success to the partnership arrangement we have with the Department of Education, Department of Health and the South African Police Services has really helped and profiled Limpopo Provincial Initiation School programme as one of the best in the country. We are proud of the work done by all stakeholders in the province. We pride ourselves with the great work done especially in 2018, where there was zero cases of reported abduction, which must be viewed as a milestone which we must sustained.

Successful, as our programme of initiation could be, we should never lose focus in the presence of dominance, we should always have our guards on check. The fact that we have reported 30 illegal schools in 2018, should be a worrying factor for us, hence we have to ensure that as Senior Traditional Leaders, work with our communities and, especially those with interest, to understand the laws governing the operations of the Initiation Schools. And I believe this Indaba will design a clearer picture that will assist in combatting illegal operations, especially in the Sekhukhune District as this has been a trend previously and currently.

There have been registered challenges, which we have to all work on them, and this should assist us in the determination of the process forward because it cannot be acceptable that we mess up our zero-death report with the enrolment of underage initiates when the law clearly stipulates the required age as 12, and consent forms being signed arbitrarily and without control and reprimand. We can't be contravening regulations and laws governing the initiation schools.

We must sharpen our monitoring tools to avoid situations that will lead us into disrepute. Coghsta together with the House of Traditional Leadership in the Province and Districts have to ensure that all the named challenges are addressed ahead of the season of 2019. We must announce today that the

implementation of the Action Plan for 2019, will be regulated under the new Limpopo Initiation Schools Act 2018, as amended, thus repealing the Northern Province Circumcision Schools Act.

The Chairperson of the Committee, Kgoshi Rammupudu – Phaahle!, will present the Action Plan for 2019 Initiation Schools Programme, for adoption by this august house and it therefore means we need to familiarize ourselves with the new Act governing the programme.

We must rope in the Municipalities into our work to ensure that plight of community members are taken into consideration and both the License Operators and Municipal infrastructure are part and parcel of any issues that will need the attention of the Municipality. Working together we can always achieve more. In other provinces, municipalities are the Issuing Authority when it comes to Dikoma! That is why, even though in Limpopo Coghsta and the House of Traditional Leaders, are playing that role, we still have to find space for our Municipalities in our operational plans and its implementation.

We should remember that we are part of the community of interest, which has thousands of thoughts, that can differ or agree, but we have to remember the constitution as the supreme law of the country. That is why the partnership arrangements has to include Local Government sphere.

Re swanetse re gopole gore setshaba se na le dikgomo, tseo di nago le badisha. Bjale ka nako ya dikoma, setshaba ga sa swanelwa go ka hlokomologa leruo la sona. That is why there is a need for proper engagements with the Local

Municipalities to prepare our communities about the imminent operations of Koma.

We cannot be seen, as government both at province and local government, and House of Traditional Leadership on the community cries that stock theft only rises during the time of Ngomani. We have to see how best can we manage this issue, as we avoid violating the rights of other people in the communities.

One other important aspect of the Initiation Schools Programme, is that in accordance with the law, which this body convention, has to bear in mind, is that 2019 is the year of the National General Elections, which the guiding prescripts suggest that the elections should be held between May and not later than August 2019. So our planning, as we all await the proclamation by the President, on the actual date for the Elections, which we hope that it will not be within the initiation school calendar.

We must note however that in the Sekhukhune District they have an Ndebele Initiation calendar which has their programme taking two months, of which we are told it is a compromise. So we need to converse on how do, we prepare ourselves on this issue. Our role converged here, is to ensure we preserve our culture through the journey to manhood and womanhood for our children.

We believe from this engagements, which in 2019, we will launch the Official Opening of the 2019 Season of Initiation Schools with the House of Traditional Leaders and our stakeholders, we would have had the Status of Readiness Report to the public at large. We must keep up the good work and deliver another zero-death Report of 2019.

Allow me to appreciate and thank the Department of Health for the continuous support they have shown to all of us, by availing Medical professionals that added a spark in our programme that showed a clean bill of health.

We also send our regard to the South African Police Service for always been present when we need their support to defend and protect the interest of the law.

I would be doing injustice to the whole zero-death Report celebration, if I forget our officials led by the Director Anthropological and Institutional Support, Mr. Mohlala – Molopyane! who, together with the team of Monitors, worked tirelessly under severe and dangerous conditions, braving the storms, whatever the weather, just to ensure Limpopo remains one of the best and continue shining example in the management and administration of Dikoma.

Words might fail us in appreciating your determination, love, deeds and bravery you showed us during the execution of this programme. All in all your work is duly acknowledged. We wish you strength and wisdom as we prepare for the 2019 Initiation School Programme that will remain with no deaths reported, no abductions and becomes an all systems go programme that will keep profiling the province as the best.

As a caring government, with our hands on the deck inspired by the Thuma Mina – Send Me message of hope, we have to work together with the institution of traditional leadership to ensure that our communities are able to work and move

from negative to positive. We are all, and should remain, agents of hope for the hopelessness. The ambassadors of progress and goodwill.

As we have raised our hands and proclaimed our availability to send messages of peace, hope and progress to our communities, we have to, as a caring government, working together with the institution of traditional leadership, on the issues relating to the social security of our people.

Let's work together in maintaining and sustaining a zero-death initiation programme.

Na khensa!

I thank you