

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MEC OF COOPERATIVE
GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MR. BASIKOPO MAKAMU, ON
THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNING OF LEVEL 2
HOUSING ACCREDITATION IMPLEMENTATION
PROTOCOL: NEW COUNCIL CHAMBER, POLOKWANE**

Thursday, 1 February 2024

“There shall be houses, security and comfort for all”

Programme Director,
Executive Mayors of Polokwane Local Municipality and
Capricorn District Municipality
Speaker of Polokwane Local Municipality, and other
Speakers
Members of the Mayoral Committees of Polokwane and
Chairperson of the Housing and Rental Tribunal and
Members
Chairperson of the Housing Advisory Board and Members
Capricorn Municipalities
Officials led by the HOD and Municipal Managers
Distinguished guests,
Esteemed colleagues,
Colleagues from Media,
Comrades and Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

As we gather beneath the bright skies of Limpopo, in the vibrant City of Polokwane, I stand before you filled with hope and a sense of purpose. Today marks a momentous occasion for the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, and for the beautiful people of Polokwane.

Today, February 1, 2024, marks a significant moment in the annals of the Department of Coghsta and the Polokwane Municipality, as well as across the Limpopo province. The sixth provincial administration, under the leadership of Premier Hon. Chupu Stanley Mathabatha and the ANC-led government, is capturing a historical milestone - one that is indelible, enduring, and a source of personal pride for me as the MEC for Coghsta. I am honoured to be the first MEC in this position to complete a full term in office.

This day is an occasion of great importance for the residents of our province and, more specifically, the Polokwane Municipality. It is a time for joy and celebration, a day that should be etched into memory and preserved in our archives. Today, the City of Polokwane is entrusted with a tremendous constitutional and legislative responsibility as they assume full control of housing administration as outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Housing Act.

As the MEC of COGHSTA, I have the honour of signing the Level 2 Housing Implementation Accreditation Protocol alongside the Polokwane Local Municipality. This protocol is

more than just a document; it is a pledge — a pledge to unlock the immense potential within our communities through empowerment, through enhanced capabilities, and through a shared vision for the future.

Limpopo is blessed with abundant natural resources, profound cultural heritage, and, most importantly, resilient and hard-working people. Yet, despite our riches in culture and spirit, we remain challenged by the shackles of inadequate housing, which have perpetuated a cycle of poverty and limited the aspirations of many of our people. The protocol we endorse today is a step toward breaking these shackles.

Housing is not merely about brick and mortar; it is the cornerstone of dignity, security, and opportunity. Through the Level 2 Accreditation, we are entrusting the Polokwane Municipality with greater autonomy and resources to address the housing needs of our residents. This decentralization of power is a bold move that underscores our belief in local governance and its proximity to the people — for who better understands the needs of a community than those who walk its streets every day?

As we turn this page, we are not merely initiators of policy but activators of change. The protocol facilitates a collaborative framework in which the Provincial Government and Local Municipalities operate not as separate entities but

as partners, wielding a shared commitment to service delivery and excellence.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me sketch for you the vision that this protocol embodies:

Imagine communities where every family has a home — a place to build memories, a sanctuary to nurture dreams. Envision townships pulsing with vigour, where public spaces buzz with the laughter of children and the exchange of ideas among neighbours. Picture homes that do not only shelter but also catalyse the growth of individuals and communities.

This is not a utopian dream. It is a foreseeable reality and the blueprint for our action.

For our commitment to take tangible shape, the accreditation protocol outlines clear responsibilities and targets. It stipulates that the Municipality shall ensure the provision of adequate and sustainable human settlements. This entails fortifying the housing sector's supply chain, fostering partnerships with private stakeholders, and strategically leveraging technological advancements.

Moreover, the protocol compels us to prioritize the most vulnerable of our society — the homeless, the indigent, and those living in informal settlements. Our policies must be inclusive, ensuring that the benefits of development are equitably distributed. The youth, women, and the disabled

must be given priority in our housing initiatives, not as an afterthought, but as a fundamental policy standpoint.

The torch of progress is now in the hands of the Polokwane Municipality. Yet, I stand here confident that this new undertaking is the catalyst for an unprecedented modernization of our human settlement's landscape. The Province has laid the groundwork through policy formulation and capacity building. Now, with the passing of the torch, execution and delivery become the prime focus.

Excellencies, let us not underestimate the challenges that lie ahead. The road to achieving our vision will require diligence, tenacity, and, often, tough decisions. It will demand innovation in our approach to housing development, agility in our deployment of resources, and, above all, accountability to the people we serve.

In achieving these goals, we envision partnerships with various stakeholders, utilizing cutting-edge technologies, and leveraging data-driven strategies to inform our planning processes. Empowerment through education will be a cornerstone of our approach, ensuring that our citizens are fully aware of their rights and the avenues available to them for housing and community improvements.

As we sign this protocol, we also pledge to uphold the highest standards of governance. Transparency, integrity, and the rule of law must govern every action we take. We acknowledge the need for constant engagement with the

people, inviting their suggestions and solutions as primary inputs into our housing strategies.

Executive Mayor, I would like to emphasize that this transfer of responsibility comes at a crucial juncture—mere months before the election of the seventh administration. Ideally, this substantial task should have been assigned one or two years earlier. This would have afforded me, as the MEC, ample time to perform my duties, ensuring that the City of Polokwane fulfilled its housing mandate, from the administration of beneficiaries to the completion of their housing.

Fortunately, we in the department have completed studies for all the developmental areas in the province, including the City of Polokwane. This is an accomplishment we hold in high regard. As the MEC, my preference was to offer support and oversight throughout this process, ensuring a smooth execution of these duties. Last week, Executive Mayor, I committed to a briefing that Coghsta officials will collaborate with the Municipality's officials. Together, we will provide the necessary assistance to carry out this noble task meticulously, ensuring that the people of Polokwane receive superior housing services, in line with the provisions set out in the Freedom Charter, which was penned by the people of South Africa in 1955 at Kliptown, Gauteng.

I trust that we will encounter few, if any, disputes in implementing these protocols, especially since both the municipal and provincial governments fall under the

governance of the African National Congress—a party dedicated to the ideals enshrined in the Freedom Charter. With a vast and illustrious history of service delivery, the ANC has consistently met the needs of South African citizens.

Under ANC leadership, our commitment is unwavering—we will see this task through diligently until our people enjoy the quality housing they have come to expect from us over the past 30 years. Our government provides services, including housing—a fundamental need—at no cost, a service unparalleled by any previous administration.

We are deeply proud, and as an ANC-led government, our pledge is to continue to enhance the quality of our people's housing, their comfort, and their security of tenure, thereby restoring their dignity.

Moreover, this government is firmly committed to the distribution of property title deeds, an aspect of homeownership that had never been addressed by any past government. Moving forward, my office will work to distribute title deeds on a weekly basis. We have nearly 4,500 title deeds poised to be handed over to the residents of this province—a fact we take great pride in.

In conclusion, I invite all stakeholders represented here — the government, at all levels, the private sector, civil society organizations, and community leaders — to rally behind the ideals encapsulated in the Level 2 Housing Implementation

Accreditation Protocol. It is through unity of purpose and a shared commitment to service that we will forge a future of thriving communities, characterized by safe, affordable, and dignified housing.

Let us, together, weave the narrative of a new dawn for Limpopo — a dawn of prosperity, dignity, and humanity.

I thank you all for your dedication to this noble cause and for your unwavering belief in a better future for all our people.

God Bless Africa. God Bless Limpopo.

Thank you.

Dankie.

Ke a leboga.

Pula.