

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MEC FOR COGHSTA, MR.
BASIKOPO MAKAMU, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
HANDOVER OF THE BAKONE BA MATLALA A' THABA
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL OFFICE**

14 MARCH 2025 | SETUMONG SPORTS GROUND

Programme Director,

Kgoshigadi Lekwelaruri Matlala and the esteemed Royal Family,

Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders,
Hosi Pheni Ngove,

Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr. Mamedupi Teffo

Capricorn District Municipality Chief Whip, Cllr. Lesiba Matsemela

Chairperson of Contralesa, Kgoshigadi Seopela,

Traditional Leaders in attendance,

Bakone Ba Matlala a' Thaba Community Members

Honoured guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is with great pride and humility that I stand before you today on this significant occasion—the official handover of the Bakone Ba Matlala a' Thaba Traditional Council Office. This milestone reaffirms our government's commitment to strengthening traditional leadership and enhancing service delivery to our communities.

Traditional leadership is an integral part of governance and community development. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognizes this institution as a crucial pillar of our democracy. Section

211(1) of our Constitution states that "**the institution, status, and role of traditional leadership, according to customary law, are recognized, subject to the Constitution.**" This recognition places an important responsibility on all of us to work together to strengthen traditional governance structures and ensure that they remain a force for unity and development.

Honouring the Legacy of Bakone Ba Matlala a' Thaba

The Bakone Ba Matlala a' Thaba have a rich and inspiring history that dates back centuries. This community has not only survived immense challenges but has thrived, contributing significantly to the cultural and historical fabric of our province and our country. From resisting colonial and apartheid oppression to playing an active role in our liberation struggle, your resilience and determination are commendable.

Today, we celebrate yet another chapter in this rich history. The opening of this Traditional Council Office is a step forward in ensuring that the governance of this community is conducted efficiently, transparently, and in line with the laws of our country. This office will serve as a centre for administrative functions, a place where community members can access essential government services, and a hub for fostering development initiatives.

Strengthening Traditional Leadership and Governance

The Limpopo Provincial Government is unwavering in its support for the institution of traditional leadership. We recognize that traditional leaders play a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion, resolving disputes, and driving development in rural areas. To this end, we have taken deliberate steps to capacitate traditional councils.

Recently, we provided the Bakone Ba Matlala a' Thaba Traditional Authority with a vehicle to assist in governance and service delivery. Today, we are handing over this modern office, a space that will enhance the administration and coordination of traditional affairs. We are also proud to say that Limpopo leads the country in the constitution and

reconstitution of traditional councils, ensuring their alignment with our democratic laws.

Caution Against Traditional Leadership Succession Disputes

One of the biggest challenges facing traditional leadership today is internal disputes over succession. These disputes often divide families, destabilize communities, and delay much-needed development. President Cyril Ramaphosa has consistently emphasized the need for unity in our communities. He reminds us that **"We must work together to resolve disputes peacefully, with the interests of the people at heart. Divisions weaken our progress and only serve those who wish to see us fail."**

Let this gathering serve as a call for peace and unity among our traditional leaders. Disputes should be resolved amicably, with the guidance of our laws and the wisdom of our elders. We cannot allow conflicts over leadership to undermine the progress we have made in bringing services to our people.

A Shared Vision for Development

Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba has often emphasized that **"Development is not just about infrastructure; it is about uplifting communities and improving lives."** This new Traditional Council Office is a testament to that vision. It will serve the 49 villages under this authority, with the support of 41 headmen and headwomen. It will facilitate collaboration between traditional leadership and government departments, ensuring that services such as social grants, identity documentation, and community development initiatives reach the people who need them most.

Beyond this office, our government remains committed to supporting projects that improve the lives of our people. We will continue working with traditional leaders to address challenges such as unemployment, crime, and substance abuse—issues that threaten the stability of our communities.

Conclusion

Today's event is a celebration of progress, unity, and the continued partnership between traditional leadership and government. Let us use this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to building stronger, more resilient communities. Let us work together to resolve conflicts peacefully, uphold the values of our forebears, and ensure that our traditional institutions remain relevant and effective in the modern era.

Congratulations to the Bakone Ba Matlala a' Thaba on this achievement. May this Traditional Council Office serve as a beacon of progress and a foundation for even greater development in the years to come.

I thank you.