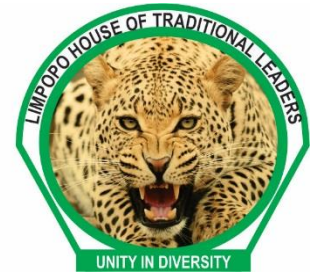




DEPARTMENT OF
CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE,
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS



Chairperson of the session, Dr N, Lekhwerani
National Commissioner of Police, Lt. General Masemola,
Deputy Minister of COGTA, Hon. Zolile Burne-Ncamashe,
Chairperson of the National Initiation Oversight Committee, Ikosi VN Mahlangu,
Chairperson of the CRL Rights Commission, Prof Mosoma,
Chairpersons and Representatives of varioust provincial PICCs present,
Representatives from National House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders,
Representatives from the provincial House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders,
Maaparankwe ka moka,
Traditional Surgeons,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I greet you all.

Chairperson of the session, it is my honour to be given such an opportunity to address you during this National Initiation School Indaba hosted by CRL Rights Commission. The discussion on the 2023 National Initiation School Indaba is focused mainly on good practices, challenges and modelling for successful initiation schools in South Africa as a whole. This milestone is attributed to the

collaborative effort from all relevant stakeholders associated with initiation schools.

Chairperson of the session, let me quickly share with you some of the experience for a successful initiation school practiced by the Limpopo Province. Initiation schools in Limpopo is guided by the provincial legislature, Limpopo Initiation School Act 2016 and its Regulations as well Customary Initiation Act 2 of 2021, which regulates initiation school customs and traditions of traditional communities. When we encounter challenges with the provincial Legislature, we refer to the National one. We are acknowledging that our strategies of maintaining zero deaths in our initiation schools programme has for the past years borne us fruits and we are proud of the Institution of Traditional Leadership for ensuring that the province respects, works and walk with pride when it comes to the issue of initiation schools.

Chairperson of the session, registering **79 529** initiates during 2022 initiation school season out of **680** initiation schools in our province with four death cases reported is a positive wave that we have to ensure that we maintain zero deaths rate. It has been a daunting task, enrolling such a large number was not a child's play. This season, 2023, the total number of initiation school applications received is 435 **(264 for males and 171 for females)**. Out of **435** applications received, only **351(231 for males and 150 for females)** have been approved by the PICC so far; and we are expecting more than 80 000 initiates.

Each year, a circular is issued by the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC) to all the districts informing them about the closing date of applications for initiation schools. The applications are submitted to the respective districts whereby the Local District Initiation Committee receive them; scrutinize and adjudicate and recommend them to the PICC for approval. The PICC under the leadership of Hosi SE Chauke is mandated to scrutinize, adjudicate, approve the initiation school's applications and advise the MEC COGHSTA in this matter. The approved applications are issued with official permits duly signed by the

Chairperson of the PICC while the disapproved ones are given letters indicating the reasons for such.

Chairperson of the session, let me also indicate that a compulsory pre-initiation workshop for Senior Traditional Leaders, Traditional surgeons and other stakeholders is held to minimize deaths and other unforeseen circumstances which may be detrimental to the health of the initiates. This endeavor is also a means of protecting the poor initiates from any unforeseen harm that may occur and caution those who will be acting beyond the requirements of the law that they will be prosecuted. Besides the compulsory pre-initiation workshop, continuous visits to the districts is done when the need arises until MEC COGHSTA pronounces the starting date of winter initiation schools.

As a province we never lose focus on initiation school programs, we have our guards on check. Like most provinces, we still encounter challenges regarding the mushrooming of illegal schools. We still have to ensure that as Senior Traditional Leaders, we must work with the Communities, especially those with interests, to understand the Laws governing the operations of the initiation schools. We believe that this Indaba will design a clearer picture that will assist in combating illegal operations as this has been a trend previously and currently.

Chairperson of the session, there have been registered challenges through out the initiation seasons. The enrollment of underage initiates when the Law clearly stipulates the required age. The Traditional surgeons keep on admitting these under age initiates into the schools. We can't be contravening Regulations and Laws governing the initiation schools.

Members of CRL Rights Commission will agree with me that overcrowding in our initiation schools is our concern. Overcrowding of initiates leads to hospitalization since the initiates are not well taken care of. All stakeholders (Senior Traditional Leaders, parents, care givers, traditional surgeons, Principals) must work on these challenges to ensure safer initiation school practices.

Chairperson of the session, working together we can always achieve more. We must rope in the Municipalities into our work to ensure that the plight of the community members are taken into consideration. The services to be rendered by the municipalities include amongst others, provision of clean water, grading of roads, etc.

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

We also wish to send our regard to the services rendered by the South African Police Services for always been present when we need their support to defend and protect the interest of the law. ‘Bravo’ to the Limpopo Police Commissioner.

It would be doing injustice, if I forget our officials led by the Acting Director, Mr Netshandzhe TGN, who together with the team of monitors, are working tirelessly under the severe and dangerous conditions, braving storms, whatever the weather, just to ensure Limpopo remains one of the best.

With these few words, Honourable Chairperson, let’s all work together to protect the livelihoods of our lovely children; they are our future leaders.

Na khensa!!!

I thank you all!!!