

ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF LEPHALALE MUNICIPALITY DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENIN OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE FOURTH PROVINCAL HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS.

- Your Majesties and Royal Highness – Our kings. Maaparankwe.
- MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs.
- Leaders of SALGA
- Executive Mayor
- Councillors
- Media houses present here
- Distinguished guests

Thobela !

Lephalale Local municipality feels very honoured to host this important organ of state. As our Premier said during the opening of this house last year on the tenth (10th) April, this institution is charged with the responsibility of advising government, especially on matters of culture and tradition. As elected representatives of our constituencies, we rely on the house of traditional leaders for advice and guidance. Lephalale, like the rest of Limpopo Province, is predominantly rural, and therefore need the assistance and guidance of traditional leaders. It is a known truth that our struggle for democracy has its foundation and inspiration from the battles of resistance by great traditional warriors like kgoshi Sekhukhune, Hosi Makhado, Kgoshi Mmalebogo and others.

Fortunately, the ruling party – the African National Congress has traditional leaders among its founding-members. That is why the ANC, through the United Democratic Front (UDF) formed Congress of traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRSLESA).

The first South African to be awarded a Nobel Peace Prize, Dr Albert Luthuli, outlined the role of the traditional leaders very well in a statement he issued after he was deposed as the chief in 1952, when he said :

“My view has been, and still is, that a chief is primarily a voice of his people. He is the voice of his people in local affairs. It is inconceivable how chiefs could effectively serve a wider and common interest of their people without cooperating with other leaders of the people, both the natural leaders (chiefs) and leaders elected democratically by the people themselves.”

Chief Luthuli was emphasising the importance of cooperation between our traditional leaders, who are our natural leaders and the democratically elected government. He said this in 1952 and the ANC-led government implemented it through chapter 12 of the Constitution of the democratically elected South Africa which recognises the importance, status and role of the institution of traditional leaders. There is no contradiction here. It is simple : *Bogoshi bo a tswalelwa, bo ya ka madi. Boetapele bja dipolitiki bo a kgethwa, bo ya ka divoutu.* We know that there are others who illegitimately claim the royal status; but we are glad that Premier Mathabatha always reminds them that rakgolo Makgoma Matlala said : *“Bogoshi ga bo gakwe ke sefero.”*

We were very proud when the president of the country, President Zuma, mentioned our province during the occasion of the sitting of the National House of Traditional Leaders when he said : “Limpopo has some lessons and best practices on partnerships and intergovernmental relations that can be implemented in other provinces.”

Let me conclude by reiterating what Premier Mathabatha said during the opening of this house last year when he said : “We are committed to restoring the dignity of the institution of traditional leadership because this is the most authentic leadership of our people.”

PULA!!

I THANK YOU!