

SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, HON. R.M MTSHWENI-TSIPANE ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL AND KHOI-SAN LEADERS IN THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

DATE: 17 APRIL 2024

Salutations

Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders and Khoi-San Leaders, Kgoshi Lameck Mokoena;

Your Majesties, Ingwenyama Makhosoke II and Ingwenyama

Mabhoko III, in absentia;

Chairperson of the National House of Traditional Leaders, Kgosi Milton Seatlholo, Rapulana;

Deputy Chairperson of the Provincial House, Inkosi TM Yende,

MEC for COGTA, Hon. MJ Msibi and Members of the

Provincial Legislature;

Executive Members of the Provincial House, Chairpersons of the Local Houses;

Our revered Traditional Leaders, Amakhosi / Magoshi,

Abo-Ndlunkhulu and Izinduna;

Acting Director-General, Mr Peter Nyoni;

Senior Management of the Department of COGTA, led by the

Head of the Department, Mr Samukelo Ngubane; Compatriots and fellow citizens, Sanibonani, Lothjani, Dumelang, Avuxeni!

INTRODUCTION

1. Chairperson of the House, Kgoshi Mokoena, it is with greatest pleasure and honour to stand before you today to officially open the House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders. This momentous event marks a significant milestone in our journey towards a more inclusive and representative democracy.
2. As we gather here today, we cannot help but reflect on the incredible progress and achievements that have been made over the past 30 years of our robust democracy. From the ashes of the inhuman injustices of the past, we have risen to build a society founded on the principles of equality, justice, and freedom for all.
3. As we close one chapter of our journey and open a new one, we must pay homage to the generation of traditional leaders who fought fiercely against colonialism and subjugation.
4. Their contribution will remain an indelible legacy that must continue to inspire the current and the future generation of traditional leaders to advance the ideals of a human rights-based society, free from the tyranny of poverty, social deprivation, crime and violence against women and children.
5. Once again, today's opening of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders reminds us of our collective obligation to address poverty and underdevelopment challenges that continue to confront the people of the Province, especially those living in rural areas under the jurisdiction of traditional leaders.

6. I must also pass my acknowledgement and appreciation for the discussions that took place yesterday at the Sefako Makgatho Presidential Guest House, where Mpumalanga, was once again put on the Map through straightforward and constructive inputs by Kgoshi Mokoena, that earned acknowledgement by all including the Deputy President for the efforts Mpumalanga Province is doing for Amakhosi. We are proud of the great work we are doing in the Province
7. One of the key milestones of the chapter that we are closing is the recognition and empowerment of the institution of Traditional and Khoisan leadership in line with Chapter 12 of the Constitution of the Republic, and in further deepening our democracy by ensuring that it functions in full in order to achieve its constitutional mandate. This Institution plays the most crucial and pivotal role as a fortified House of preserving our cultural heritage and customs, promoting social cohesion and unity across multicultural diversity.
8. It has grown from strength to strength from the very 1st House that was established in 1995 and chaired by iNkhosi MB Mnisi to the current 6th House currently chaired by Kgoshi ML Mokoena.
9. It continues to effectively carry out its mandate to promote for peace and an indigenous sense of belonging while ensuring the well-being of our communities.
10. The functioning of this House is testament to our commitment to honouring and upholding the traditions and customs of our ancestors.

11. Over the past three decades, we have made great successes in advancing the rights and interests of all our citizens, regardless of their background or heritage. Through inclusive policies and programmes, we have all worked together to ensure that every person in Mpumalanga Province has the opportunity to thrive and prosper.
12. As government, we remain committed towards strengthening effective partnerships with the institution of traditional leadership to promote development and service delivery in areas under the jurisdiction of traditional leaders.
13. **In addition to the existing R20 million budget, an additional amount of R20 Million will be allocated during the adjustment period to make it R40 million. This funding is aimed at enhancing the day-to-day operations and overall functionality of the Provincial House, ensuring that it continues to serve its purpose effectively.**
14. We are grateful that, over the years, the leadership of the Provincial House of Traditional Leadership has worked in collaboration with government to entrench the critical role of traditional leadership institutions in our local governance system.
15. Within the purview of our democratic system of local government, we should continue to create space for the meaningful participation of traditional leadership institutions in development planning and service delivery programmes of government.
16. Municipalities must ensure that traditional leaders participate and provide critical input into integrated development plans, particularly

when it comes to areas falling within the jurisdiction of traditional leaders.

17. Chairperson, as I have on numerous occasions highlighted in the past, rural development linked to land reform is one of the priorities that the my government has worked tirelessly to achieve and we will continue to pay special attention to as part of addressing underdevelopment and poverty challenges in rural communities.
18. We have always emphasised the critical point of commitment to create decent work and sustainable livelihoods as a collective responsibility that we must undertake in partnership with traditional leaders.
19. As traditional leaders, you have always been instrumental in advancing sustainable development and environmental conservation. Bondabezitha, you have tirelessly collaborated with Government and civil society, non-governmental organisations to protect our prestige natural resources and preserve our biodiversity for future generations.
20. When we reflect on our maturing democracy, we should be proud of the gains and achievements made possible by the efforts of our traditional leaders. Indeed we have had credible successes to get here yet our work is still far from being over.
21. It is therefore imperative that we continue to build upon the progress we have and forge ahead for an even more inclusive and representative democracy.

22. Sizokuragela phambili ngokusekela nokuhlomisa abadosi phambili bendabuko njengombana basebenza ngamandla ukwakha imiphakathi efaka woke umuntu, imiphakathi enokulingana begodu nedzimelele etuthukweni yasafuthi yawo woke umuntu.

Let us work together, hand in hand, to address the challenges that still face our communities and to create a better, brighter future for all.

SUPPORT FOR TRADITIONAL LEADERS

23. Chairperson, as we are all aware that South Africa is this Year celebrating its hard earned Freedom and Democracy. . For a developmental state, which forms part of a continent faced with a confluence of opportunities and challenges, this has been a remarkable journey.

24. Amongst the lessons we can tease out of this journey is the central role that Amakhosi have played throughout the period of hardship, where their subjects endured the pain of subjugation from the evil regime pioneered by the inhuman system of the past which sponsored decades of our sufferings.

25. The Provincial Government is unwavering in its commitment as the to continue providing all the necessary support for the effective functioning of the Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders. Our determination to strengthen the capacity of this Provincial House seeks to concretize the central role of the institution on developmental issues.

26. In this regard, it gives me great pleasure to announce that we have already started with the training programmes meant to equip, upskill and sustain Amakhosi with foundation skills in Financial management and Bookkeeping.

27. We will be intensifying these capacity building Programmes to amongst others include .

- Ethical Leadership and management
- Land use management and anti-la'd invasion techniques
- Local economic development and investment traction
- Rolling out capacity building workshops on the Traditional Courts Act in collaboration with Department of Justice.
- Agrarian and farming skills, to mention just a few.

28. Through these capacity-building programmes we are satisfied that they will equip abo-Ndabezitha with the skills and knowledge required to initiate and oversee long-term economic initiatives in their communities whilst working together with Government in creating sustainable jobs.

29. Chairperson, in this era of digital and technological advancement, adaption is inevitable. Therefore, capacity development is key to helping abo-Ndabezitha adapt to new ways of our operations. These changes have rippling effect on societal dynamics and require knowledge, technical skills and practical exposure in response.

30. Our long-term goal is to enable conventional institutions, such as this House, to function as key players in cooperative governance structures. This is an ongoing process that requires commitment, resources and collaboration among various stakeholders that we continuously pledge to provide.
31. Chairperson, Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) remains a growing concern on a daily basis.
32. Despite measures to step up the fight against GBVF, as instituted by the President, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, the GBVF scourge continues to rear its ugly head, and our province is not spared.
33. South Africa's rating as the 130th country among the 163 where safety and security is under threat. This is evidence enough to understand the extent of crime in general and GBVF in particular.
34. Whilst we note and observe a decline in rape cases, as depicted in the Quarter 2 Report on crime statistics, such cases are now at 74%.
35. This can be attributed to the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide, announced by the President, which encompasses the establishment of special courts to prosecute the perpetrators without delays and Victim Support Centres, to secure the evidence required for prosecution .
36. We are putting into effect the resolutions adopted during the Crime Prevention Summit held in White River last year. One of them is to

work with Amakhosi to enhance community participation in the implementation of social crime prevention programmes.

37. The resolutions of the that Summit were further complemented by a Men's Dialogue, held here in Mbombela at Emnotweni Arena, which sought to mobilise various structures of society to fight the scourge of GBVF.

38. Your words of wisdom, Chairperson, during the Dialogue were taken to heart by many when you said, "Amakhosi akhathele ngamagwala asaba ukushela. Lamagwala acabanga ukuthi ukugagadlela iyona indlela yokuphila. Hashtag Asinifuni Magwala ndini".

39. The fear syndrome entrenched among women and children is highly prevalent. This is fuelled by the brutal cases they witness in their backyards, on their streets and on media platforms.

40. We are inspired by the steps taken by the House, through the Target Group Committee and Emakhosikati Structure, to conduct awareness campaigns on GBVF in areas under Amakhosi continuously.

41. Siyaniva njalo nanihlaba umkhosi kulemmemo, nikhuta amadvodza kutsi awuyekele lomkhuba lomubi wekubulala nokugagadlela labasikati ne batfwana nezingane.

42. Your partnership with key stakeholders, such as the South African Human Rights Commission and the Commission on Gender Equality, is an impetus to achieve the vision of a society free from the scourge of this GBVF pandemic.
43. Ntsena loko kuxaniswa kahaya emahlweni, ahinge wisi. Hi ta teka nhlokomhaka leyinge “ Na loyi angayi ngheneki uta yinghena” ku tiyisisa ku lwisana na nyimpi ya GBVF.

DECENT WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR TRADITIONAL LEADERS

44. In fulfilling the government’s mandate to capacitate and support traditional councils, the much-needed tools of trade have been provided to senior traditional leaders across the province. This will enable the institution of traditional leadership to accelerate service delivery and strengthen development in rural communities.
45. Last year during the August sitting of the House, I committed to construct and renovate -traditional council offices across the province. I am happy to inform the House that we have matched words with action, through the construction of 22 offices which are at 100% and the renovation of 17 offices also at 100% completion.
46. Among the completed offices of Traditional Councils is that of Bakgatla ba Mocha Maloka, under the leadership of Kgosi Maloka of Pankop. His words of acknowledgement, is heart-warming. He states the following, in part: “it is noteworthy to indicate that your office has stayed true to its commitment to support Traditional Councils, and importantly, to transform the institution in accordance with constitutional imperatives and restore the integrity and legitimacy of

traditional leadership. The completion of the Traditional Council Offices contributes to the realisation of this commitment”.

47. Ra leboga Kgabo, e bile re itumetse.
48. Chairperson, other Traditional Council Offices in the same League of New State of the Art Offices include: Mathibela TC, Jongilanga TC, Hoxane TC, Mohlala-Morudi TC, Setlhare TC, Thabakgolo TC, Mashilane TC and Mbuyane TC all of which are eight (8) new offices in Ehlanzeni District area.
49. The three (3) new offices in the Gert Sibande District include Somcuba Bhevula TC, Duma TC and Madabukela TC.
50. We have also constructed eleven (11) new offices for Manala Mbhongo TC, Manala Mgibe TC, Manala Makerana TC, Ndzundza Phungutja TC, Ndzundza Mabusa TC, Ndzundza Somphalali TC, Ndzundza Fene TC, Bakgatla Ba Mmakau TC, Barolong Ba Lefifi TC, Bakgatla Ba Seabe TC and as mentioned earlier, the Bakgatla Ba Maloka TC all of which are in the Nkangala district area.
51. These offices have now been supplied with brand new furniture, are currently being fenced and have now been prepared to be ready for occupation. We shall be handing them over to all beneficiaries both during the months of April and May as they are already eager to put them into good proper use for their administrations and community benefit.

52. We have also been hard at work renovating 18 existing Traditional Council Offices throughout the Province of which all 17 have been completed except the one at Nikwakuyengwa TC, due to a poor performance of the contractor that had to be terminated. This will soon be completed with a newly appointed contractor during this 1st quarter of this current 2024/25 FY. These offices are also being installed with brand new contemporary furniture.

53. Chairperson, we are not resting at all as we shall be continuing with our crusade to construct a further eight (8) new offices, renovate at least ten (10) identified offices including those identified for the Kingdoms of AmaNdebele. are finalising procurement processes of the furniture for the 18 Traditional Council offices to deliver, once renovation is completed.

54. In the new 2024/25 financial year, we will continue to construct eight (8) and renovate at least nine (9) Traditional Council Offices.

55. These projects contribute significantly to local economic development. Material is sourced from local business, Labour has been sourced locally, thereby creating an estimated 200 job opportunities in rural communities throughout the province. Reaching this milestone marks a significant step towards bolstering the institution of traditional leadership.

56. Chairperson, as you may be well aware, there have been vacancies that opened-up, after the unfortunate passing of Traditional Leaders.
57. Whilst some of these were a basis of unfortunate instances of cold-blooded killings, which we have observed particularly with Mnisi Traditional Council, that had left us shocked with heavy hearts, Families were allowed to mourn the passing of their loved ones until the Inner Royal Family affected is able to pass a Resolution as to who shall be the successor.
58. Chairperson, it is further saddening and quite appalling that some families find an opportunity to start fighting over the throne resulting in disputes over who the successor shall be, which in certain instances result in an unnecessary protracted decision to install a new traditional leader.
59. We have been concerned that some would suddenly challenge whether the throne should stay in a particular House or should move to a different House, whilst such a challenge over the throne or dispute did not arise when the late Traditional Leader was still alive.
60. We have seen these instances happening in other parts of the country, and we are always indebted to the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, with its Subcommittee of Elders, who would

always share in their wisdom as to the right direction that should be taken in following the already established cultures and customs.

61. As you may be aware Chairperson, there were four (4) vacancies that opened up largely here in Ehlanzeni. The long outstanding Hoxane TC vacancy has now been filled by the nominated Kgoshi Mfumani Nkuna as was nominated through the resolutions of the Inner Royal Family and supported by the Executive Committee of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders.
62. We expect to fill the other outstanding three (3) vacancies in Mnisi TC, Thabakgolo TC and Kgarudi TC all of whom have started with their Inner Royal Family meetings to nominate their successor in the throne.
63. We will continue to heed the call of the Inner Royal Family choices of whom they nominate, which must also go through the scrutiny of this House, before recommendations thereto can be considered for such recognition by myself as the Premier of the Province.
64. It is therefore important that we align ourselves with the wisdom and knowledge guided from the House. We are confident that the House will continue to guide us so we are not misled through the sudden mushrooming claims that are not authenticated, that emerge only after the traditional leader has passed on.

65. Whilst it sounds as taboo to put in writing or any kind of record who the next successor of a throne shall be, it does however seek to put a clear position on record to the Inner Royal Family how they should allow succession.

66. However in our current day democracy, our ultimate arbiters are a legitimate court of law. Although we do advocate that court litigations can be avoided through proper Inner Royal Family deliberations and resolutions, however we are also quite clear that it does provide a legal solution, wherein everyone should abide by the rule of law. Government would therefore not shy away from this remedy of the law when it is necessitated.

FILLING OF HEADMEN/ WOMEN POSITIONS

67. Chairperson, one other thorny issue has been the filling of and/or replacement headmen and headwomen.

68. We understand that for proper rural community coordination and the representation of Traditional Council in various IGR meetings, including coordinating public participation with Councillors, monitoring the social activities with Amakhosi and other institutions of Government, performing oversight on traditional customs and oversee certain inherent traditions for the community, performing ceremonial duties as may be assigned by a Senior Traditional Leader, and many other functions key enough for the proper functioning of the traditional community, the appointment of headmen/women is crucial for these key functions and activities to be rendered successfully.

69. We also understand that we currently have 356 headmen/women on our Persal System who receive monthly salaries. There are currently 287 headmen/ women who either have to be newly appointed whilst some are replacement appointments.
70. I have evaluated this prolonging state of affairs that has been crippling the functionality of the administration of the affairs of Traditional communities.
71. I have therefore resolved to take a decision, as I hereby do, that all 287 headmen/women shall be recognized by the Premier and thereafter appointed at once by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs from this Financial Year 2024/25.
72. This in effect would mean that a total amount of R38m that would be required for these appointments would be effected through the Adjustment process and be injected in the MTEF baseline of the Department.
73. This means both replacement appointments and new appointments to fill old yet established vacancies shall be resolved and be the thing of the past. This is how this caring Governments pledges further support to the Institution of Traditional Leaders.

ADMINISTRATION OF GRANTS AND CULTURAL GRANTS

74. Chairperson, on the 2nd of March this year, we marked the 44th commemoration of King Silamba, one of the gallant fighters, Wesitjaba sama-Ndebele, Komjekejeke.

75. True to its character, it was attended by dozens of people, some of whom are the King's subjects from Zimbabwe, who came to listen to the address by Ingwenyama Makhosoke II.
76. The attendance confirms the assertion that our nation holds its African cultures in high esteem. The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 prevented communities from attending such ceremonies.
77. We also observed that AmaNdebele wakwa Ndzundza led by King Mabhoko III also commemorated King Nyabela Day at Mabhoko Caves on 19 December 2023. We have also witnessed several other successful hosting of cultural ceremonies from almost all Traditional Councils to date.
78. Now that we have clawed back our lives, the Provincial Government will continue to provide financial and administrative support for cultural ceremonies to celebrate our rich cultural heritage and traditions. We will continue to provide **R350 000** Administration Grants and **R250 000** as Ceremonial Grants for all TCs led by Senior Traditional Leaders. Kings Councils shall receive **R1000 000** Administrative Grants and **R450 000** towards Cultural Ceremonies.
79. Njengabaholi bemiphakathi yendabuko siyanincenga ukuthi nisebenzise le mali ngobuhlakani nangokuhambisana ne-PFMA, njengoba kuhloswe ngayo ukweseka ukuthuthukiswa kwezindawo zasemakhaya.

PROVISION OF NEW VEHICLES

80. Chairperson, once more as a caring Government, we have to ensure we provide all traditional leaders in our Province with new vehicles.
81. We do this in-keeping with our promise that we shall review the state of Traditional Leadership fleet for every five (5) year cycle
82. In this regard, we vowed that no Traditional Leader in this Province shall suffer the consequences of the deprivation of transport facilities. As a necessity to do your work appropriately, we shall again extend our assistance to all traditional leaders as part of yet another level of tools of trade.
83. We wish to handover all of these vehicles by (24 May 2024 or any date approved by Premier).

RECONSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS

84. Chairperson, in terms of Section 63(4) of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act No. 3 of 2019, it clearly states that all Provinces are required to formally reconstitute their traditional authorities and traditional councils.
85. I am happy to learn that much progress has been made with national Government in response to concerns of Amakhosi regarding the frustrating 60/40 formula for the reconstitution of the traditional councils. Bondabezitha, It gives me great pleasure to inform the House that the Minister has Gazetted the amended formula that was agreed upon, addressing the concerns raised. This allows us to continue with our

preparations for the reconstitution of Traditional Councils. We anticipate announcing a new date following the National General Elections.

86. We will in the meantime be working closely with this House whilst ensuring that all regulations, processes and procedures are prepared with the Department of Cogta and all it's stakeholders are in place as required by legislation.
87. The identification of voting stations,, registration of voters, verification of certified voters roll from IEC as well as the provision of electronic equipment for voter registration and voting, some some of the preparations the Department has been tasked with together with experts supporting the process.
88. We are confident that by working together, we will fulfil our legislative mandate of ensuring that all traditional communities in the Province are duly represented by legitimate and democratically established traditional councils.
89. We should also be able to deal effectively with land disputes and those arising from succession claims and disputes, provided these are not meant to overtake court judgements already handed down by courts of law.
90. In this regard, I am delighted to be informed that the Department of COGTA has established two (2) Committees of dealing with qualifying disputes, which are: the Ad-Hoc Committee for Traditional Boundaries and the Investigative Committee for Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims.
91. In all instances, the Provincial House takes first precedence and priority in the resolution of disputes.

INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED WORK WITH GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE

92. Chairperson, the government's cooperation and coordination with traditional leaders is critical to providing our traditional communities with effective services. Our stance is against compartmentalised work and in favour of effective resource allocation that yields greater effects with fewer resources expended.
93. Significant strides have been made in improving the standard of living for the traditional communities through collaboration with the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and its Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land, and Environmental Affairs. Tangible plans of cooperation have been produced, highlighting potential areas for advancement and further collaboration.
94. As part of our endeavours to ensure food security, the Memorandum of Understanding has been signed. The Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) has provided traditional homesteads with a 30m x 10m greenhouse tunnel equipped with 280 climate-smart agriculture boxes for controlled climate and water-efficient food gardening.
95. Moreover, investing in agricultural initiatives also offers wider socio-economic advantages in addition to enhancing food security. It can create employment opportunities, empower women and marginalised groups, and contribute to the overall development of rural communities. By strengthening the agricultural sector, we can boost local economies,

reduce poverty, and enhance the resilience of communities to external shocks.

96. Chairperson, agricultural interventions are essential for ensuring food security and promoting sustainable development in traditional communities. As global citizens, it is our responsibility to support and invest in these interventions to build a more equitable and resilient food system for all. Let us work together to empower traditional communities and ensure that no one goes hungry in a world of plenty.

PARTICIPATION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

97. Chairperson, now is the time for Amakhosi to occupy their rightful position as prescribed by Section 81 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Amendment Act (Act 3 of 2021) and the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act of 2019.
98. Traditional councils play a significant role in preserving cultural heritage, promoting social cohesion, and ensuring the well-being of their communities. It is essential to recognise the valuable contributions that traditional councils can make to local governance and decision-making processes.
99. Traditional councils bring a unique perspective to municipal affairs, rooted in centuries-old traditions and customs. Their intimate knowledge of local communities and their needs can inform and enrich the decision-making process at the municipal level. By including traditional councils

in municipal affairs, we can ensure that policies and programmes are culturally sensitive, responsive to community needs, and inclusive of all members of society.

100. Additionally, the participation of traditional councils in municipal affairs can help bridge the divide between traditional and modern governance systems. By fostering collaboration and dialogue between traditional and municipal authorities, we can promote mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation.

101. Chairperson, we applaud the Nkangala Local House for choosing senior traditional leaders to attend sessions of the district and local municipal councils. This may result in more effective and sustainable solutions to local challenges, as well as greater social cohesion and unity within communities.

102. On the other hand, we have taken note of the concerns expressed by Amakhosi with respect to the revised Section 81, particularly with regards to the reduced representation of senior traditional leaders participating in municipal council sittings. We are hopeful that this matter will be resolved so that these structures can better serve the needs of our traditional communities.

103. Chairperson, we are pleased by the participation of the chairpersons and deputy chairpersons of the three local houses in the DDM councils convened by the District Executive Mayors.

104. we encourage this type of cooperation as it helps to close the gap between traditional communities and the Government in accordance

with the Intergovernmental Relations Act, 2005, which encourages governance in partnership in the delivery of basic services.

105. Re kgothatsa le go thekga tšhomishano yeo e lego gona gare ga setshaba le magoshi arena “Go latela molao wa dikamano tsa mebuso elego yona: Intargovernmental elations Act, 2005 Yona e kgothatsa pusho ya kopanelo go fihlisha ditirelo tsa maleba go batho kamoka.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION

106. Chairperson, in an effort to achieve sustainable rural development, we will develop a Provincial Invest Rural Framework that will guide the social and economic advancement of rural communities, identify the sectoral approach, goals and forces behind rural economic growth, and depict a "preferred future" in which all rural communities realise the Invest Rural vision.

THE PROVINCIAL INITIATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (PICC)

107. Chairperson, fatalities in the initiation schools, while communities practice their customs, necessitate our continued collaboration. The Customary Initiation Act, which went into effect in 2021, was intended to protect lives, establish norms and standards and ensure that the process occurs in a controlled and safe environment.

108. As a result, the institution of traditional leadership plays a vital role in ensuring that our customs and culture are preserved. Therefore, it is our top priority to make sure the Ingoma practice is safeguarded and free from fatalities. Our target is to record zero-deaths.

109. For us to achieve this target, we must continue to collaborate with abo-Ndabezitha in areas where initiation schools are established, to make sure that they are in compliance with the Ingoma Act.
110. The number of fatalities in the Province has significantly decreased. This can be attributed to the establishment of the Provincial Initiation Coordination Committee (PICC), which plays a pivotal oversight role.
111. Allow me, Chairperson, to applaud the PICC for taking decisive action to close 11 illegal initiation schools since its inception. It is through such action and partnerships with parents and communities that we will achieve safe zero-deaths during the initiation practices.
112. We are confident that as the winter initiation season approaches, we will continue to retain our stellar record because of the numerous awareness campaigns that the PICC has organised. We sincerely appreciate the valuable contributions made by various role players. Working together, we can put an end to these fatalities.

MINING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

113. Bondabezitha, we need to work collaboratively with government, particularly the Department of Minerals and Energy, the mining industry, and civil society to promote sustainable development that benefits all

stakeholders while protecting our natural resources and cultural heritage for future generations.

114. We have also learned through oversight conducted by the committees of the House that most traditional communities with mining activities are experiencing challenges.

115. These challenges include the issuance of mining licences without Amakhosi's involvement, a lack of monitoring by the Department of Mineral Resource and Energy during the design or drafting of Social Labour Plans (SLP), the non-implementation of SLP by the mining sector due to a lack of SLP monitoring, the cessation of royalties payments to traditional councils, and the inability of mines to rehabilitate the mining areas and land surface, resulting in illegal mining, which increases crime rates.

116. Therefore, it is essential that we engage with mining companies to ensure that they respect our rights, traditions, and environment. They should be held accountable for their actions, demanding transparency, accountability, and fair compensation.

117. On the other hand, we must also explore alternative ways to promote economic development in our communities that are not dependent on mining. We should invest more in education, skills development, agriculture, tourism, and other sustainable industries that can create jobs, empower our youth, and build a more resilient and inclusive economy.

118. Bo-Ndabezitha, we draw inspiration from the Cameroonian proverb, which aptly states that there are no shortcuts to the Palm tree. Every initiative and project I have announced today seeks to make our support for the institution meaningful.

119. We will never opt for short cuts in our support; instead, we remain committed to walking with you until the end of every project and every programme.

Re a leboga