

**OPENING OF THE WATERBERG LOCAL HOUSE OF
TRADITIONAL LEADERS**

27 JULY 2018

RAPOTOKWANE SPORT GROUND

11H00

Programme Director,

**Chairperson of the Local House of Traditional Leaders Kgoshi
Kekana,**

Deputy Chairperson of the Local House Kgoshi Mahlangu,

**Mayor of BelaBela Local Municipality Cllr Ngobeni and other
Mayors present,**

**All Members of the Local and Provincial House of Traditional
Leaders,**

Speakers and Chief Whips,

All Councilors present,

Mantuna a rena,

Ward committee members,

Community Members,

Members of the Media,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thobela.

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to address this august House of Traditional Leaders in the Waterberg.

Today is not only a day to open the Local House of Traditional Leaders in the district, but to also recognize and honour our heroic kings and queens for their unrelenting struggle against the brutality of colonialism and apartheid in defense of our freedom, our land and our identity.

Chairperson, for over hundred years ago, Traditional Leaders in Waterberg led our people in wars against dispossession and subjugation. A typical example is when Chief Mokopane of the Ndebele tribe bravely fought and defended his people against the Voortrekkers.

It is at Makapan Valley caves where you find fossils which include some of the oldest ancestral remains in South Africa and indicate that early humans lived there some 2.8 million years ago. During the height of apartheid, many chiefs paid with their lives to achieve the sacred goal of national liberation.

The democratic breakthrough in 1994 was a victory for Traditional Leaders as it was for all South Africans. As we are gathered here today we also celebrate the centenary of our icon Tata Nelson Mandela, the first and former President of a democratic South Africa. Tata Nelson Mandela himself was also a chief.

To celebrate Madiba's life, we need to stay true to his ideals, including his unwavering commitment to justice, equality and a non-racial South Africa. All South Africans have a responsibility to promote freedom and defend our democracy in honour of Madiba's life-long commitment to these ideals.

The 1994 democratic breakthrough was a victory for formations like the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA), which mobilised communities to achieve a government of the people, by the people for the people.

Chairperson, the institution of Traditional Leadership in our district continues to enjoy an indispensable place in our governance system of democracy led by the African National Congress (ANC).

The legislative framework which is now in place clearly articulate the role and purpose of the Traditional Leadership in our society. As usual, our government of today continue to rely on Traditional Leaders for their wise counsel on matters related to traditional leadership, custom, heritage, land and language as they are the rightful custodians of these values.

Traditional Authority is in fact, a tried and trusted system that existed for centuries before the colonisation of our continent. The African National Congress was the first amongst the political parties in our country to attend to the issue of traditional leadership.

The ANC`s first Constitution adopted in 1909, provided for a forum within the Congress known as the Upper House of Chiefs. Issues which affects areas under the jurisdiction of Traditional Leaders and of their interests were constitutionally referred to Traditional Leaders as an organised body in the Upper House.

This attitude of the ANC created a framework, which allowed Traditional Leaders to look at local problems and address them from the point of view of the national agenda, which sought to advance the interests of the African majority against the oppressors.

Chairperson, it is for this reason that we take this opportunity to congratulate those of our Traditional Leaders within the district who actively participate in the governance of their municipal areas, either as elected public representatives or as Traditional Leaders of the people.

The active involvement of Traditional Leaders in the affairs of local government shows that there is no inherent contradiction between the institution of Traditional Leadership and the pursuit of the national democratic revolution which aimed at meeting the basic interests of our people.

There are so many opportunities for close cooperation between elected local structures and the institution of Traditional Leadership in our district. These opportunities can be multiplied if Traditional Leaders continue to support and participate in these municipalities in their ex-officio capacities.

Chairperson, our district is predominantly rural and home to the majority of poverty stricken people. Our conception of local government is that of an engine which powers the process of development. Government has stated categorically clear that the bulk of responsibility for the delivery of services must reside at the level of local government because it is this sphere of government, which is closest to our communities.

In line with this vision, we are happy that all our local municipalities have established their ward committees after their recent local government elections. There is a need for municipalities to strengthen these structures in order to bridge the gap between government planning of programmes, implementation and community involvement including Traditional Leaders.

We believe this partnership will immensely contribute towards improving the credibility and integrity of our planning process.

Working together with Traditional Leaders, we crafted and adopted a Constitution which recognises and values the crucial role of Traditional Leaders in forging a capable and efficient developmental state. Working with you, we made significant advances in establishing a single local government system from the fragmented, undemocratic and racially divided apartheid system.

Chairperson the institution of Traditional Leadership is a bedrock of South Africa's constitutional democracy. It remains a vital resource in the hands of our people to repair the social fabric that colonialism and apartheid sought to destroy.

It remains a powerful instrument bestowed to us by our ancestors to achieve accelerated, inclusive social and economic development.

To best serve the interests of the most vulnerable of our citizens requires an understanding that Traditional Authority exists not for its own sake, but to improve the lives of our people.

It requires that we affirm and support the historical and contemporary interdependence between our Kings, Queens and Chiefs and the people they lead.

Chapter 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognizes the Institution of Traditional Leadership, its status and roles of Traditional Leaders according to customary law.

This Constitution further directs that National and Provinces must formulate legislation respectively which may provide for the roles of Traditional Leadership as an Institution at local level on matters affecting local communities.

As a sequel to the above, the Province has passed legislation; the Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act, Act No. 6 of 2005 and the Limpopo Houses of Traditional Leaders Act, Act No.5 of 2005. The Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act enable the Department to support 185 Traditional Councils in the Province.

We look to this House to work with government and other social partners to build a capable developmental state that will deliver clean water, sanitation, clinics and tarred roads especially to those who live in our remote rural villages. We are happy because our relationship and partnership with Traditional Leaders in the district has been solid.

We look to traditional leaders to mobilize their communities in the fight against poverty, inequality, unemployment, disease (in particular HIV/AIDS) and illiteracy. Like traditional leaders of days gone by, we look to you to take a lead in promoting education, industry and commerce in your communities.

We look to you to exemplify a courageous and patriotic leadership that is motivated and driven solely by the ideal of a better life for our people.

Because our people still yearn for justice, peace and fulfilment, we need servant leaders like Inkosi Jongintaba Dalindyebo, Inkosi Nelson Mandela and Inkosi Albert Luthuli.

They were among our proud and visionary leaders who were ready to sacrifice their birth right, their titles and comfort to advance the struggle against racial division and indignity.

Chairperson, we are in agreement that there are challenges that still confronting the institution of Traditional Leadership within our district and those include:

- Standardised payment of allowances for Traditional Leaders participating in councils
- Budget allocations for programmes of Traditional Leaders.
- Clarification on the land appropriation issue,
- Consultation regarding the implementation of government projects within areas of Traditional Leaders and,
- Various developmental issues within areas of Traditional Leaders.

The district municipality through the Office of the Executive Mayor and Local Mayors, is in the process of attending to some of these challenges.

Relevant authorities like SALGA, COGHSTA, Office of the Premier and other organs of state are also engaged to provide advices on how to approach some of these challenges.

We will however, keep on updating our Honourable Traditional Leaders on progress during our scheduled one on one meetings.

We are sharing the same vision and certain that the leadership of **“bogoshi”** at local level is capable and ready to lend a hand to rebuild our nation.

In conclusion, we wish to congratulate Kgoshi Kekana and his Team, on their election into the leadership of the Local House of Traditional Leaders within the Waterberg District.

A Sepedi adage says *“Bogoshi ke bja Bakgoma le Bakgomana, Kgoshi ke Kgoshi ka Sechaba”*, so keep up the good work of leading our communities and preserving our culture.

It is therefore my honour and privilege to declare the Waterberg District Local House of Traditional Leaders officially Open. May the strength, wisdom and unity prevail so that you are able to fulfil our promise of a better life for all.

We wish you all the wisdom and success as you champion the institution of traditional leadership and the wellbeing of our people in the district.

Working together we can do more to strengthen our partnership in delivering quality services to our rural communities.

I THANK YOU!!!