

**STATE OF THE DISTRICT ADDRESS BY THE
EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT
MUNICIPALITY HONOURABLE CLLR MALEKE
MOKGANYETJI**

**VENUE: SEHLAKWANE VILLAGE
DATE: THURSDAY 23 MARCH 2023
TIME: 11H00**

Honourable Speaker, Kgwediebotse Chego

Honourable speaker of the Provincial Legislature
Rosemary Molapo

Honourable members of the Provincial Legislature, Jerry
Maseko, Advocate Rudolph Phala, Rebeccah Sono,
Dikson Masemola and MEC Rodgers Monama

The Chief Whip of Council, honourable Chores
Phokoane

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Section 79 and Section 80 Committee Chairpersons

Honourable Councillors

Honourable Speakers of Local Municipalities

Honourable Mayors of Local Municipalities

Our esteemed Maapara Nkwe

The Secretary of the African National Congress in the
Sekhukhune Region, Tala Mathope

Leaders of the Tripartite Alliance

Leaders of Opposition parties,

Acting Municipal Manager and senior managers,
Chairperson of Sekhukhune Development Agency
Board

Representatives of organised labour

Our friends from the media fraternity

Fellow residents of the mighty Sekhukhune District,

Esteemed guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thobela.

Honourable Speaker,

It is a great honour and privilege for me today to stand before you and deliver the **2023 State of the District Address.**

We are meeting here today **Honourable Speaker**, after two weeks of **mourning for the 16 people, including children among them who perished in a horrific motor vehicle accident along the R579 Motetema Road.** May their souls rest in eternal peace.

In the same breadth, and on behalf of the Sekhukhune District Municipality, I wish to express our gratitude to all stakeholders who played a role in making sure that the burial of our loved ones was dignified.

But we are also meeting here today after the successful state of the nation and state of the province addresses.

Both the State of the Nation and the State of the Province addressed by both **President Cyril Ramaphosa and Premier Stanley Mathabatha** acknowledged the challenge of electricity crisis the country is facing.

The President said and I quote “ **Without a reliable supply of electricity, our efforts to grow an inclusive economy that creates jobs and reduces poverty will not succeed.**

Therefore, as we outline our agenda for the year ahead, our most immediate task is to dramatically reduce the severity of load-shedding in the coming months and ultimately end load-shedding altogether.” Close quote.

As a district we are not immune to this challenge as well because we are part and parcel of South Africa. We however take comfort in the commitment the President has made in resolving the energy crises.

But honourable speaker,

We have also gathered here today, one day after our country commemorated Human Rights Day on the 21st of March 2023.

This is in remembrance of our painful history and the sacrifices that accompanied the struggle for the attainment of democracy.

We remember those who were persecuted.
We remember and honour those who paid the ultimate price as they confronted the evil regime.

We remember and honour the **victims of Sharpeville and Langa massacre, 63 years ago.**

We are further reminded of the pain we all suffered under the yoke of oppression.

We should never forget that we come from a past wherein as black Africans, we had no human rights in the land of our birth.

But we must also remind ourselves that we now live in a democracy. We have a **government that recognises and respects Human Rights**. The Bill of Rights clearly outlines several rights that all of us have and must enjoy under this democracy. It is therefore our civic duty to defend the democratic gains of our struggle.

Among the rights in the **Bill of Rights is the right to have a safe environment** that is not harmful to one's health or wellbeing. Women and children are not safe in this country.

And for this reason, **Gender Based Violence is a violation of human rights**. It is a pandemic in our country and in our district. As leaders of society, we should fight it with the same vigour as we do with the

triple challenges of – Poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

It is extremely disheartening what is happening to our women and children in this country, mostly in the hands of men.

You know **Honourable Speaker and fellow councillors.**

I always ask myself why we don't have Men's Day! I suppose it is because men have the whole year unto themselves... so every day is men's day.

There is a saying, that says: 'too much of anything is no good'.

So, it looks like when men start getting bored from **TOO MUCH OF ANYTHING** they abuse women and children.

Gender-based violence stubbornly remains one of the world's most pervasive human rights violations. It is an ignored pandemic that needs a systemic and intersectional response more than ever.

We also know that as a priority, we in government must propel the bold and ambitious rethinking, policies, and funding behind tackling of GBV.

We are first to admit that our efforts are never enough. We need more collaboration. Government, donors, and civil society must place women's rights at the centre of everything.

At the base of all of it though, is the community itself where the pandemic originates. Therefore, as communities we need to address the harmful social norms that prosper GBV and reimagine new cultures that can tackle many root causes of it.

Honourable Speaker,

It is estimated that a female person is physically traumatised or murdered every day. Latest statistic shows that, **855 women and 243 children** were killed in South Africa. **IT CANNOT BE BUSINESS AS USUAL WHEN SO MANY WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE BEING KILLED!!! ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.**

Another right in the **Bill of Rights is access to water. Water is life**, and none of us can live without it. When people don't have access to water, their right to have their inherent dignity respected and protected is being violated.

Seated here today, can we confidently say we are the true champions of human rights of the people of Sekhukhune when they don't have water? Surely, we must be frank enough when we answer this question.

Honourable Speaker

Last year, we made a commitment to the people of Sekhukhune that, we shall rise from the **devastation caused by the COVID19 pandemic.**

We said that among other things, we will fill all **critical and strategic positions in the organogram** so that the district is able to provide basic services to our people.

We said we will pursue a **sound, efficient, effective, transparent and accountable administration.**

We said that we will **pursue Good Governance**, for it is essential for promoting stability and ensuring sustainable delivery of services to communities.

It is only when there is good governance that we will be responsive to the service delivery needs of our communities.

We said that our economic recovery route will be guided by the **resuscitation of SDA** and thereby giving it support both financially and in terms of human resource.

We said we will allocate sufficient funding to SDA so that it can run its own affairs. In addition, we said we will also give support to our **Planning and Economic Development department for effective local economic development.**

We said we will improve in providing basic services, water in particular to our people. We said we will do all these by making sure that conditional grants are well spend.

We said we will not tolerate corruption, fraud, and maladministration.

Honourable Speaker

These were our commitments and today, we have gathered in this manner to give an **account of the work we have done, the challenges we have come across and to pronounce on the plans and programmes of government for the year ahead.**

In terms of filling of **critical and strategic posts**, we have completed the filling of posts of **Director Planning and Economic Development, Director IWS, the CFO and Chief Operations Officer**. The filling of posts of director community services, **Chief Audit Executive** and that of the **Municipal Manager** are at an advanced stage and the process will be concluded soon.

Sound financial management practices are the cornerstone of every municipality that wants to remain sustainable and continually provide services.

A municipality that has weak financial management is open to corruption and the misdirection of financial resources.

This is a practice we should never allow. It is against this background that a credible and implementable revenue enhancement strategy is now well underway.

This will empower us to recover the millions of rands that households, businesses, and government departments currently owe us. But importantly, we want to recover debt owing to us, proactively and timeously, to avoid a costly accumulation.

We have also managed to reduce expenditure on **non-priority spending including uncontrolled overtime, travelling costs, security, and fleet management**. We hope and believe that this will go a long way in reducing unnecessary costs.

Good governance is key for the success of our municipality. Our governance challenges in the district municipality are a matter of public knowledge.

We are the first to concede that once again, we have obtained a **qualified audit opinion which does not auger well with us**.

We are however working hard towards resolving all the issues that were raised **Auditor-General, leading to an attainment of a Qualified Audit opinion for the past financial year. We have also developed audit action plan to deal with all the audit issues**.

We have further put in place the internal audit plan and the audit committee to ensure that improved internal controls are implemented without delay.

In the same breath, I hereby congratulate **Makhuduthamaga and Elias Motsoaledi local municipalities respectively for having obtained an**

unqualified audit opinion. Our district should therefore take cue from the two municipalities.

With regard to **fraud, corruption and maladministration especially in terms of double payment and financial impropriety in SDA, Council has appointed the Financial Misconduct Disciplinary Board to investigate those matters.** A preliminary report will soon be table to council for consideration and further processing.

Honourable speaker

Economic growth is one of the main indicators of a progressing and developing district. Mining is the biggest contributor in the economy of the district.

Its contributions is very important, but we are convinced, that an increased collaboration between government, the mines, and communities, will attain even more achievements.

This is evident by the 127-million-rand construction of the Ga – Malekana Steel Bridge, which is a flagship project between all spheres of government and the private sector.

This project will bring much needed economic activities in our district and will provide work opportunities to our SMMEs and, priority will be given to women, youth, and people with disabilities.

We have also kept our commitment to provide support to SMMEs and Co-operatives in our district.

After we had called on eligible applicants to apply for the Inaugural SMMEs and Cooperatives Development Fund, we have since received 105 applications and 41 SMMEs and Cooperatives have been recommended for support.

On this programme we have partnered with the Sekhukhune TVET College Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator, to provide financial and non-financial support to emerging entrepreneurs in our district.

We have invested R2 million in this empowerment programme and we will certainly continue with it in the next financial year. In addition, we have increased the budget for SDA from 4 million to 7 million to run its own affairs.

Honourable Speaker

The department of Infrastructure and Water Services is the heartbeat of the district municipality. It lies at the heart of our mandate as a municipality, which is to provide sustainable clean drinking water and sanitation to our communities.

We are currently implementing a massive sanitation programme and providing VIP Toilets to various households. For the financial year under review, **7858 VIP Sanitation Units were built across the district as part of providing dignity to our people.**

In Ephraim Mogale 958 units were constructed, while in Makhuduthamaga 2300 units were constructed, Fetakgomo – Tubatse 2500 units were constructed and in Elias Motsoaledi 2100 units were constructed.

This is what we have achieved in terms of sanitation, and we know it better that more still need to be done.

Honourable Speaker,

a few weeks after our election on the 1st of December 2022, I led a team of mayoral committee members to monitor progress on the **Malekana water scheme, reticulation, and yard connections**. We met with consultants, project managers and contractors after we were made aware that some business forums are disrupting our projects.

I deliberately mention this because these challenges are amongst many that impede our progress in spending our grants and concluding our water projects in time. The community unrests, disruptive business forums and disappearing contractors are some of the major reasons our projects stall, and that forces us to underspend and at times return money to treasury.

In this, case I am proud to announce that the **yard connection and reticulation projects at Ga – Malekana is progressing well after our intervention**. Allow me also to give a progress report on the flagship **Loskop Bulk Water Project**. The water pipeline project starts at Loskop dam, Steve Tshwete Local

Municipality passing through Moutse to Thembisile Hani Local Municipality.

This inter – provincial project between Mpumalanga and Limpopo Province under the stewardship of the Minister of Water and Sanitation Senzo Mchunu is at an advanced stage with the site already established and pipeline already being laid underground.

The bulk water pipeline will connect with the district Moutse Reticulation and yard connection scheme. A water treatment plant and a reservoir will be built, which will provide 3 mega litre of water per day to the people of Moutse.

This project once finalized will provide sustainable clean drinkable water to over eight villages in **Moutse namely– Tambo Square, Malaeneng, Ntwane/Mametse, Marapong, Thabakhubidu, Phooko, Bloempoot/Uitspanning and Elandsdoring to name but a few.**

On the 3rd of March 2022, the Minister of Water and Sanitation and his deputies were here in Moutse to monitor the implementation of the projects and I can report back to the people of Moutse that we are impress with the progress of the project.

We condemn in the strongest term possible the violence that has engulfed and might potentially disrupt this much needed water project. As leaders of society, we have had a meeting with all stakeholders after the recent

shootings that took place in Moutse concerning the said project.

The fundamental challenges here is that there are some people who believe that when a project is in their background, only them and their friends are supposed to benefit. That will not be tolerated. The Moutse bulk pipeline water project is for everyone in particular the people of Moutse to benefit from. It is not for a specific village or section of Moutse.

Honourable Speaker,

Allow me to also report on the following water projects.

- **Tukakgomo Water Supply Phase 4** – construction of 1.8 km reticulation network and installation of 668 water meters is complete. The villages to benefit from this project are **Tukakgomo and Mapodile**.
- **Uitspanning Water Supply** – installation of Reserve Osmosis Water Treatment Package Plant. Wastage pond is complete. The village that will benefit from this complete project is Uitspanning.

Now, let it be known, council speaker, that on this project I was supposed to have officially handed it over to the community of Uitspanning until I was alerted that one borehole was vandalized and destroyed. It is really sad that this kind of behaviour prevails in our communities.

We therefore call upon the community of Uitspanning to be in the forefront of this project, protect and guard it as it will relief their need for water.

- **Mooihoek Bulk Water Supply Phase 4,1.** The construction of a 4.7 km of bulk water supply pipeline is complete. The village to benefit is alverton.
- **Mooihoek Bulk Water Supply Phase 4,2 -** construction of a 4.9 km bulk water supply pipeline and 500KL reinforced concrete reservoir is complete. On this project we have also tested the water for tightness. The villages to benefit are Alverton and Manoke.
- **Ga – Mogashoa, Sengapudi, and Manamane – 71.3** KM of pipeline completed, equipping of 3 boreholes, installation of fire hydrants and 896-yard connections are completed. On this project the contractor is busy with testing the line and finishing the remaining yard connections.
- **Makgeru to Schoonoord Bulk Water Supply – 18.2** KM pipeline constructed and 10ML command reservoir completed. We are busy testing the tightness of the reservoir and the villages to benefit are Makgeru/Schoonoord.
- **Malekana Regional Water Scheme –** The 3 reservoirs are complete. The villages that are already benefiting are **Ga – Malekana, Rantho, Ga – Maphopha, Ga – Mpana, Ratau, Maepa, Maseven, Steelpoort park, Kutullo and many more.**

- **Lebalelo South Phase 3, Ga – Maroga and motlolo**
– The project is completed with 1500 house connections. We are only left with pressure testing on some units and the village to benefit is **Motlolo Village**.
- **Motlailana and Makgemeng Water Supply** – The project is complete however we are being delayed by Eskom to electrify the borehole. **Motlailana is the village to benefit.**
- **Lebalelo South Connector Pipes and Reticulation** – The project is complete, but we are currently finalizing the installation of standpipes. The villages to benefit from this project are **Driekop, GaRiba, Ribacross, Ga – Maeseng, Mandela and France.**
- On the same project, we have also constructed and completed 6 steel tanks and erected a fence.

Honourable Speaker,

There are also some notable water projects that I want to give progress report as they have been hindering the district municipality and our communities are becoming ever impatient with the slow progress.

Firstly, it is the **Moutse Bulk Water Supply. The Bulk Line from Groblersdal to Moutse is at 95 % completion.** We must do a conditional assessment for pipeline from Groblersdal Water Treatment Works up to Bloempoot.

This is to repair **minor vandalism work that has occurred**. A service provider has been appointed and will start after the project steering committee has been established.

Once completed, the villages to benefit from this pipeline are **Moutse west – Maklerekeng, Mpheleng, Matlala Ramoshebo, Chikanoshi**. Both the **Loskop to Moutse and Groblersdal to Moutse bulk water pipelines will feed the Moutse reticulation Scheme**, this will mean that people will have water in their yards.

Secondly, our plans are to upgrade the **bulk pipeline from Groblersdal to Motetema, to Tafelkop, to Spaku**. The project is at an advanced stage and will be out on tender soon. This will increase the amount of water that we deliver to those villages and other surrounding villages.

Honourable Speaker and fellow councillors,

In our strive to provide sustainable clean drinking water to the people of Sekhukhune, as the district municipality we must at all times be transparent and truthful. So, having said that, there are other water projects that we have not done well in.

One of them being the **Nkadimeng Regional Water Scheme** whereby some projects ran out of funds and some contractors were terminated due to liquidation. This also includes **Zaaiplaas Village and Dindela** were numerous terminations of contractors on the projects were made because of underperforming.

Honourable Speaker

We take this opportunity and congratulate the **South African Women National Football Team, affectionally known as Banyana Banyana for winning the Women's African Cup of Nations.**

As the Sekhukhune District Municipality, we are proud to congratulate **Hilda Tholakele Magaia who hails from Moutse, Mpheleng, Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality.** Hilda scored both goals in the final match against the host nation Morocco.

As Sekhukhune District Municipality we are overjoyed that one of our own from **Mpheleng Village has reached such great heights and has put us on the map.** We are quite confident that her success inspires many young ladies in our district to follow their dreams.

In conclusion honourable speaker

The services our people elected us to provide, are not favours. But they are entitled to receive them, as part of the basic rights and freedoms afforded to them by our democratic order.

We therefore want to assure our fellow residents, that we are working tirelessly to fulfil the commitments we made to them.

We commit never to take for granted, the trust they vested in us.

Let me conclude with the words of our icon, **Isithalandwe, father of our nation, Nelson Mandela** when he said and I quote, **“The greatest glory in living lies not in the never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”** Close quotes.

As a district we had many challenges along the way, we stumbled and sometimes we fell but we are picking ourselves up and soldiering on. We hope and believe that we will rise above these challenges because we have the ability to do so. The people of Sekhukhune deserve better.

Honourable speaker

In the next **15 days from now, we will celebrate Good Friday and the Easter Weekend.**

Although we hope to spend time with family and friends during this time, often, it turns out to bring tragedy to many families.

We urge all road users, motorists, and pedestrians alike, to obey the rules of the road. **Better late than never. Do not drink and drive.**

On that note, **I wish you and your loved ones a safe Easter Weekend.**

Thank you.
The End

