



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Department
SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE
OFFICE of the MEC

REMARKS BY MEC LERULE RAMAKHANYA ON THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE LIMPOPO PUBLICATION DEPOSITORY

Friday, 19 May 2023

**Executive Mayor of Polokwane Municipality, His Worship Cllr John Mpe Mogalakwena Mayor, His Worship Cllr. Thulani Taueatsoala
Head of Department, Sport, Arts and Culture: Ms Daphne Ramokgopa
Chair of the Legal Depository Committee
Members of the Provincial Legislature, MPLs**

Ladies and gentlemen.

Today is a significant day for us in the province as we launch the first-ever designated Official Publication Depository. It is a milestone, and we can say without fear of contradiction that this is a win for academics, for literature consumers, for learners and for the public at large.

This depository is now charged with the responsibility ensuring the collection, preservation and making available, documents that contain the intellectual and cultural heritage of the country. As government, we are mandated to preserve that heritage as a province, and ultimately as a country. It is through that very preservation that government looks to ensure that there is identification, collection, safeguarding, promotions and transformation of the South African heritage, archives, heraldry, and libraries. That is through the understanding that the Heritage Promotion and Preservation Programme which already exists in support of such depositories, supports delivery against a transformed, coherent, and development-focused Sector that looks to drive a greater policy and planning coherence in the Sector towards the achievement of sectoral development outcomes.

Ladies and gentlemen.

The OTP is legally constituted to establish voluntary and mandatory mechanisms in a manner which enables persons to obtain access to records of public bodies as swiftly, inexpensively and effortlessly as reasonably possible; and generally, to promote transparency, accountability and effective governance of all public institutions.

It is for that reason that our government has never been more committed in ensuring that it redoubles its efforts to maximise its programmes for the provision of services to deliver on its electoral promises, mandates and commitments. Top of those commitments has

been education, and we believe that there is more that will be achieved with access to this rich institution with so much projected literature.

In that very literature, we cannot move without ensuring that persons with disabilities are equally included in having access to the depository. Earlier this month, Members of the National Assembly passed a bill, paving way for sign language to be South Africa's 12th official language. This was after a year-long process filled with public participation and consultation. Going to the end of the 6th administration, the governing party has delivered in many ways on mandates it has been entrusted with. Nothing for the disability community without them. The Bill has been sent to President Cyril Ramaphosa to sign it into law. Freedom of information entails two main elements: the obligation to inform, and the right to be informed. Therefore, people have a right to request and receive information, and through this depository, we will be fulfilling our obligation to publish information proactively to everyone, no matter their ability or disability.

The right to access information is a fundamental right, protected by our very own constitution. When citizens can access information about how their government is performing, they can exercise their right to freedom of expression more meaningfully. That is a right we do believe come next year; they will exercise meaningfully. The access to this facility, shall be without charge. This is a government in action.

And yes ladies and gentlemen of the fourth estate. This is also open to the media. Access to information is a crucial tool for developing and upholding democracy. The role of media outlets informing the public is essential in this regard. To do their job effectively, journalists need as much access to as much information as possible, and this depository will help with such information. Most government documents will be made available here for your perusal. Through the documentation here, we believe that the correct notion and narratives will be presented, and of course as the vanguard of our democratic gains, you will be able to highlight to the public crucial elements of development and or irregularities, should there be such.

Ladies and gentlemen, I conclude with a quote by Ryan Shapiro, who says and I quote; Democracy cannot meaningfully function without an informed citizenry, and such a citizenry is impossible without broad public access to information about the operations of government”.

Your depository as a province is here. All municipalities, government entities are welcome to deposit their information here for the public to consume. We urge mayors and MECs present here to call to action their entities in depositing their documents here.

I therefore launch the Limpopo designated Official Publication Depository.