

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY THE SPEAKER OF THE NORTH WEST
PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, HON VIOLA NTSETSAO MOTSUMI, ON
THE OCCASION OF A SPECIAL SITTING HELD IN MAHIKENG ON
TUESDAY, 18 AUGUST 2026**

Honourable Members of the North West Provincial Legislature,

Deputy Speaker, Hon Mokone Maine,

Premier of the Province, Hon Kagiso Mokgosi,

Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa, Hon Refilwe Mtshweni - Tsipane

Delegation from National Council of Provinces of South Africa

Chairperson of the ANC, Cde Nono Maloyi

Provincial Secretary of the ANC, Cde Louis Diremelo,

The people of Bokone Bophirima,

Distinguished guests,

Comrades and colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, I stand before this House with humility.

I stand here with gratitude. But above all, I stand here conscious of history.

Today, I become the eighth Speaker of the North West Provincial Legislature since the dawn of our democracy in 1994.

Eight Speakers. Thirty-two years of democratic provincial government.

Thirty-two years of Members entering this House, taking their seats, debating, disagreeing, legislating and representing the people of this province.

And today, I am entrusted with the responsibility of presiding over this House.

I do not take that responsibility lightly. But there is another part of this moment that is deeply personal.

I have sat in this House before. I have occupied the Chair of the Deputy Speaker.

I mention it with humility about the institution. Because it reminds us that public institutions are built over time. We inherit them.

My journey to this Chair therefore does not begin today. It began when I first entered this Legislature. It continued when I was entrusted with the responsibility of Deputy Speaker.

The responsibility is greater. But the purpose remains the same: to serve the people of the North West.

Honourable Members, the history of this Legislature teaches us something important. The Speaker's Chair does not belong to the person who occupies it.

It belongs to the institution. And the institution belongs to the people.

I therefore accept this office knowing that I am not the Legislature.

I am its Speaker. That distinction will guide me.

The authority of this office does not come from the title. It comes from the trust placed in the person who occupies the Chair. And that trust must be earned every day.

The Speaker must protect the dignity of this House. The Speaker must protect the rights of Members. The Speaker must protect the integrity of our proceedings.

And the Speaker must protect the constitutional responsibility of this Legislature to hold the Executive to account.

That responsibility does not belong to one political party. It belongs to Parliament. It belongs to democracy. It belongs to the people.

Honourable Members,

I have served on both sides of the constitutional relationship between the Legislature and the Executive.

That experience has taught me something I consider fundamental:

Oversight is not hostility. Accountability is not an act of opposition. And scrutiny is not disrespect.

A strong Legislature does not weaken government. A strong Legislature helps government govern better.

When Members ask difficult questions, we must allow them to ask them.

When Members disagree, we must allow them to disagree.

When the Executive must account, it must account.

And when government succeeds, this House must also have the maturity to recognise that success. Because our responsibility is not to embarrass government.

Our responsibility is to ensure that government works. That is what the people elected us to do.

Honourable Members, democracy is easy when we agree. It is tested when we disagree. And I want to make this commitment today:

Under my stewardship, disagreement will not be treated as disloyalty. Government Members will be heard. Opposition Members will be heard.

Every Member, regardless of political affiliation, will be treated fairly. But fairness must work both ways.

The Rules must matter. The Constitution must matter. The dignity of this House must matter.

And the conduct of every Member must reflect the seriousness of the responsibility entrusted to us.

I cannot promise that every Member will always agree with my rulings, but I can promise that every Member will know that I have made those rulings in good faith, guided by the Rules, the Constitution and the interests of this House.

The rules must apply to all of us. Friend and opponent. Government and opposition.

Senior Member and new Member. That is what fairness requires.

Honourable Members, there is another history that we must never forget.

Since 1994, generations of public representatives have passed through these doors.

They came here with different political views. They represented different communities. They argued different positions.

But they shared one thing; they were entrusted with the lives and hopes of the people of this province.

We are now the custodians of that inheritance. One day, we will leave.

Another generation will take our seats. Another Speaker will occupy this Chair.

And when that day comes, the question will not be how loudly we spoke.

It will not be how many political battles we won. It will not be how often our names appeared in newspapers.

The question will be; what did we leave behind? Did we strengthen this institution? Did we make it more accountable? Did we make it more accessible? Did we make it more respected? Did we make the people of Bokone Bophirima believe that their Legislature belonged to them?

That is the legacy I want to pursue. Not a personal legacy. An institutional one.

Honourable Members,

The people of this province are not interested in our titles. They are interested in whether their children can find work.

Whether their schools work. Whether their clinics function. Whether their communities have roads and water. Whether public money is spent properly. Whether government listens. Whether government delivers.

And whether those entrusted with public office remember who sent them here.

There is a young person in this province who is looking for an opportunity.

There is a parent who is worried about tomorrow.

There is a grandmother who still believes that government can make her life better.

There is a child sitting in a classroom today who does not know that the decisions we make in this building may shape the country they inherit.

We must never become so consumed by politics that we forget those people.

This House must remain connected to them.

We must listen before we speak.

We must understand before we decide.

We must take Parliament to the people.

And we must ensure that no citizen feels that this Legislature is distant from their daily struggles.

Honourable Members,

Today is also a moment to acknowledge those who came before us.

I stand here because many people stood before me.

Some occupied this Chair.

Some sat beside it.

Some served in the Executive.

Some served in opposition.

Some have long since left public life.

But all contributed something to the history of this institution.

I inherit that history.

I do not own it.

And I have no intention of breaking the chain.

I intend to add my contribution to it.

Perhaps that is what makes today's moment so significant.

I once sat in this House as Deputy Speaker.

Today, I sit in this Chair as Speaker.

But the lesson I carry from that journey is simple:

There is no small role in public service when it is performed with seriousness.

Every position prepares us for another responsibility.

Every institution teaches us something.

Every chapter matters.

And perhaps that is why I return to this Chair with a particular appreciation for the people who have occupied it before me.

I know that I am not the first.

I know that I will not be the last.

But I am determined to honour those who came before me and prepare the institution for those who will come after me.

Honourable Members,

To my colleagues, I say:

Challenge me.

Question me.

Hold me accountable.

Do not make my work easy for the sake of making it comfortable.

A Speaker who is never challenged is not necessarily a good Speaker.

A Legislature that never disagrees is not necessarily a healthy Legislature.

Our democracy does not require uniformity.

It requires courage.

It requires discipline.

It requires respect.

And it requires institutions strong enough to contain disagreement without allowing disagreement to destroy them.

That is the kind of Legislature I want us to build.

A Legislature where debate is vigorous but dignified.

Where oversight is fearless but responsible.

Where political differences are real but never greater than our commitment to the people we serve.

Honourable Members,

To the people of Bokone Bophirima:

This Legislature belongs to you.

The Chair belongs to you.

The debates belong to you.

The laws belong to you.

The public resources we oversee belong to you.

And the privilege of serving here belongs to you.

Hold us accountable.

Demand better from us.

Remind us when we forget.

Because public office is temporary.

But the institution must endure.

Today, I become the eighth Speaker of this Legislature.

I am deeply conscious of the women and men who occupied this Chair before me.

I am conscious of the significance of becoming the first former Deputy Speaker to rise to this Chair.

But I am even more conscious of something greater:

The Chair is bigger than the person who sits in it.

It has survived us.

It will survive us.

And it must never become smaller because of us.

So I make this promise:

I will serve this House with humility.

I will protect its dignity.

I will uphold its Rules.

I will defend its constitutional authority.

I will listen.

I will be fair.

And when difficult decisions must be made, I will make them.

Not because they are easy.

But because they are necessary.

I will not seek to make this House smaller so that I may appear larger.

I will seek to make this House larger than any one of us.

More democratic.

More accountable.

More accessible.

More effective.

More worthy of the people of Bokone Bophirima.

Thirty-two years after the birth of our democratic Legislature, I stand here as its eighth Speaker.

I receive that history with humility.

I receive this responsibility with courage.

And I receive this Chair in the knowledge that one day I must hand it to another.

When that day comes, my greatest hope is that I will be able to say:

I left the institution stronger than I found it.

That will be enough.

Ke a leboga.

Thank you.