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Mathabatha's top 6 bid opens way for female premier

Alex Japho Matlala

Is it time for Limpopo to have its first female premier?

This is the question on many lips after premier Stan Mathabatha's election bid to get into the top six of the ANC top brass received a boost from other provinces.

Limpopo is the only province in the country which has never had a female premier since 1994.

The province's first premier was Ngoako Ramatlhodi, followed by Sello Moloto, then Cassel Mathale and now Mathabatha.

The ANC is to hold its national elective conference in December.

Limpopo has touted Math-

abatha to be elected the party's national chair at the conference. The province has also lobbied other provinces to support its choice of leadership to make the list of the party's top six positions.

The province will also back current acting ANC secretary-general Paul Mashatile for deputy president and President Cyril Ramaphosa for president.

The province's choice has since got nods from influential provinces such as Gauteng and Mpumalanga.

Mathole Jimmy Machaka, Limpopo ANC provincial executive committee (PEC) spokesperson, said: "Once Mathabatha

is elected as national chair, Florence Radzilani, as his deputy, will automatically assume the chair responsibility until the next provincial general council. It is in this congress where a new provincial chair will be elected."

But lobbying was currently going on underground with four females and a male from regional and provincial ANC structures being touted as Mathabatha's replacement. They are: ANC Lim-

popo deputy provincial chair Radzilani, health MEC Phophi Ramathuba, public works MEC Nkakareng Rakgoale, ANC Sekhukhune regional chair Julia

Mathebe and the only male, cooperative governance, human settlement and traditional affairs MEC Basikopo Makamu. Makamu is also current ANC deputy provincial secretary.

Mathebe said the province's biggest priority right now was to deliver Mathabatha to the "promised land" (ANC top 6).

"The national conference is our biggest priority.

"We cannot be discussing Mathabatha's replacement now. It is just unethical and unbecoming to say the least.

"Our biggest goal at the moment is to deliver our political principal to the top six and nothing else," she said.

It is likely Mathabatha will have to relinquish his position to concentrate on national politics.

Biggest goal is to deliver our principal to the top 6