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Limpopo 'is building a richer future'

Alex Japho Matlala

After delivering a moving speech at the official opening of the Limpopo legislature in Polokwane on Friday, premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba says the future looks bright for the province.

The speech, which many said indicated her preparedness to build a capable, ethical and developmental provincial administration, concentrated on the four main pillars of the province's economy: mining, agriculture, tourism and manufacturing.

Ramathuba said leveraging natural resources, fostering entrepreneurship and promoting sustainable development would pave the way for a more prosper-

ous future as the province is a gateway to the countries of the Southern African Development Community.

"Almost 72% of the country's minerals reserves are in Limpopo, with untapped rare earth potential," said Ramathuba.

"Mining investment is shifting drastically to the big six metals: copper, platinum group metals, lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earth elements.

"Our major investments in mining, retail, property development and agro-processing will bode well for the province's economic growth. We must transform our investment commitments into jobs, produce wealth through ownership and revenue and business growth."

On agriculture, the premier said: "Limpopo is still leading in South Africa as the source of food at 90.6%. People here have proven to be subsistence farmers in their own right. They are able to feed their families, making it easier to tackle the cost of living."

Ramathuba said the province aimed to use its agricultural products to manufacture goods and reduce the export of raw materials that could be processed in the province.

"It is the intention of my government to increase participation of black producers in domestic and export markets and broaden their participation in the agricultural value chain."

She said road infrastructure was key to improving the provin-

cial economy.

"Good road networks attract investment and economic growth. Road projects are also about fostering opportunities and stimulating economic growth.

"The department of public works, roads and infrastructure, under MEC Tonny Rachoene, has improved community roads in the entire province," she said.

"We have also begun talks with the provincial treasury to help us with finance so we can make Limpopo not only an industrialised province, but a food basket and a destination of choice."

EFF provincial chair Lawrence Mapoulo said his party would watch to ensure jobs on these projects do not only go to ANC members.