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Orange army makes demands!



Limpopo Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba during the launch of phase 5 EPWP at Peter Mokaba Stadium, Limpopo. Photo by Mankalele Thema

By MANKALELE THEMA

THE Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers demand better working conditions.

This was expressed during the launch of phase 5 of the EPWP programme at Peter Mokaba Stadium in Limpopo on Friday, 11 October.

Some employees demanded better conditions and for their contracts to be extended.

The orange army filled Peter Mokaba Stadium where Limpopo Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba was launching phase 5 of this programme.

The EPWP was launched back in 2014 by the then president, Thabo Mbeki, in Limpopo to create employment opportunities for the locals and to alleviate poverty.

Maria Tloumma (45) from Segopye outside Mankweng said their working conditions aren't conducive.

"I've been working for three months now. We're just grateful because it's better than staying at home and doing nothing, but the working conditions are not good on our side. I pick up waste on the streets, and sometimes we cover big areas where we must walk long distances in the sun. I just wish they could improve our working conditions and increase our wage because we

work for only six months," said Maria.

Matome Letsoalo (34) from Mamotintane said they don't get enough time to rest.

"I also pick up waste, we work every day until Sunday at noon. I don't have enough time to spend with my family.

We are grateful for this opportunity, but our government should allow us to work at least five days and then rest on weekends," Matome said.

Meanwhile, Mapula Maomela, who was part of the EPWP group of 2019, said she managed to start a business after being trained under the programme.

"I have a company that produces charcoal.

I started with four employees, now I have 22 employees and 65% of them are youth. Being part of EPWP helped us to also create jobs. I started working in this programme in 2019, saved some money and registered my business," she said.

During her address, Dr Ramathuba said they're considering extending the contracts to 12 months.

The premier was accompanied by, among others, Polokwane Mayor John Makoro Mphe, Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure MEC Ernest Rachoene, and Health MEC Dieketseng Mashego.