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Extended Public Works Programme workers at the Old Peter Mokaba Stadium last Friday.

Premier launches Phase 5 of EPWP

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Limpopo Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba officially launched Phase 5 of the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) on October 11 at the Old Peter Mokaba Stadium in Polokwane and commemorated the programme's 20-year legacy.

The initiative has successfully assisted young people by transferring skills, equipping them with the necessary expertise to secure permanent jobs and enabling some to enter the business sector and become entrepreneurs.

Ndavhe Ramakuela, the Limpopo Provincial Government's spokesperson, said the significance of the EPWP Phase 5 launch is to essentially create opportunities that will contribute to alleviating poverty in the lives of locals.

Ramakuela indicated that the launch

also celebrated the programme's existence since it was first launched in 2004 by then-president Thabo Mbeki in the province.

"Executive members of the council signed the 2024/2025 – 2028/2029 Limpopo EPWP Phase 5 pledge, solidifying the province's strategy to remedy the unemployment pandemic," stated Ramakuela.

He pointed out that testimonies shared by some of the beneficiaries who are endorsed by the programme in different sectors are evidence that EPWP goes beyond infrastructure but supports businesses and social affairs.

"Research shows that employment creation through the EPWP has strengthened community participation, infrastructure improvement, skills enhancement for participants and provides social security. Through this programme, the government aims to improve employment opportunities

through skills development, increasing employability, which we believe can help reduce crime," entailed Ramathuba.

Ramathuba further emphasised the need to prioritise appointing current EPWP workers permanently in either the government or the private sector for the betterment of their livelihoods.

Koketso Raselemane, a beneficiary of the programme, thanked the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure for the initiative, saying that it helped her open her own gift box business, which has created employment opportunities for others.

Mmapula Maomela, another beneficiary who owns a charcoal-producing company, testified that the programme helped her employ 22 people, 65% of which are youths.

"We are now helping fight poverty. The programme has changed our lives and brings food to the table," said Maomela.