

A celebration  
of the life of

# THABO MAEMO MASEBE

1964-2022

Ceaselessly built  
a capable, ethical,  
and developmental  
Gauteng.

Gauteng Premier, David Makhura



**GAUTENG**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GGT2030**  
GROWING GAUTENG TOGETHER

# Eulogy by Premier David Makhura on the occasion of the Special Provincial Official Funeral of Thabo Masebe, Acting Director General and Head of Government Communication in the Premier's Office. Kempton Park Civil Centre, Kempton Park

23 April 2022

Director of the Programme, MEC Panyaza Lesufi;  
SAPS Chaplain, Rev. Mashiane, Rev Frank Chikane and all Members of the Clergy Ga-Masebe Family, Vhafamadi and Musanda Tshilaphala from Ha-Mashau;  
Former President Kgalema Motlanthe and Sis' Gugu Motlanthe;  
Premier Stan Mathabatha;  
Ministers, Deputy Ministers, MECs and Mayors;  
The Leadership of the ANC, the Alliance and other political parties;  
The Generation of the Young Lions and former Leaders of SAYCO and the ANCYL;  
DG Phindile Baleni, Directors General, Heads of Departments and Senior Public Servants;  
Members of the Media and colleagues of Thabo Masebe from the fourth estate;  
Fellow mourners:



I am truly honoured to speak on behalf of both the national and provincial government about this special type of a public servant – a true mandarin – who distinguished himself in the service of our nation and its young democracy.

Since Monday evening, 18th April 2022, there has been an outpouring of condolences, tributes, and testimonies about the phenomenal and fulfilling life of Thabo Masebe – our Acting Director General and chief Public Servant; the Master Communicator and Editor-in-Chief.

Thabo Masebe's existence enriched our lives, improved government work, and enhanced the quality of governance and service delivery wherever he was deployed.

It is therefore unsurprising that his sudden and unexpected departure leaves us grief-stricken and much poorer in every sense of the word.

As the family, comrades and colleagues and citizens who have known Thabo Masebe, we are heart-broken. He has left a big gap in the family, in government and in the ANC.

This is the time we need good people, with the kind of integrity, skills, commitment that Thabo Masebe has demonstrated throughout his life of activism and service.

We have all been saying to the family, we share your pain and your loss. The truth is that this is a very difficult moment for the family. Bhut' Thabo was both the pillar of strength to the elders and a great inspiration to younger generations of the Masebe and Vhafamadi clans. He was the pivot around which family festivities and activities were planned. Once more, we convey our condolences and pray that in time the family will find healing.

Though Acting DG Masebe lived like an ordinary mortal, he was a great patriot. In her Poem titled, "When Great Trees Fall", our ancestor and great feminist activist Maya Angelou expresses profoundly and accurately what we feel:

"When great trees fall, rocks on distant hills shudder, lions hunker down in tall grasses, and even elephants lumber after safety. When great trees fall in the forests, small things recoil into silence, their senses eroded beyond fear...when great souls die, the air around us becomes light, rare, sterile. We breathe briefly. Our eyes, briefly see, with hurtful clarity."

Earlier this week, Ambassador Jerry Ndou concurred with Maya Angelou when, during the Memorial Service he said, "the Baobab tree has fallen", the great tree from the Limpopo valley.

Thabo Masebe is this great tree that has fallen and the great soul that has left us. It is indeed the case that for the entire week I have seen the eyes of many in the family and among Thabo's comrades and colleagues swelling with hurtful clarity.

As our nation mourns the fall of this great tree and the death of this great soul, we need to cast a sharp focus on what it means to be truly a good human being and a great servant of the people.

During the memorial service organised by the African National Congress (ANC) on Thursday, 21 April 2022, Rams Mabote said something profoundly important. He said Masebe's greatness was in his humility and his humanity.

I agree fully with Rams and would like to say more about other aspects of Masebe's work that demonstrates that his redefined "greatness". For him, greatness was not in the noise of his voice or pomposity or big-headedness that comes with power and positions.

It is the theme of Thabo Masebe's greatness that I want to unpack in this Eulogy and final message to him.

For, Masebe would insist that every time you go and speak, try to answer the question: "What is the theme of your speech? What is your key message?"

Today, Acting DG Masebe, you are not going to edit what I will say about you.

I must say, Acting DG, you were good at, and comfortable with setting up the stage and preparing others to say things that will make them shine, whilst you worked in the background to ensure things get done and others say what you believed must be said.

I am one of those people you made shine and you also got me to say many things that you wanted said, without you claiming credit for it. So, I personally thank you for who you are and what you meant to the collective work of Team Gauteng.

We express our heart-felt gratitude to the family for planting, growing, and pruning this great tree that has provided shade and shelter to many in our universe. We hope his incredible and indelible legacy of tireless involvement in our nation's democratic, transformative, and emancipatory efforts will help the family to find solace and healing.

Thabo Masebe was a good example of what a true cadre of the ANC who serves in government should be like. He brought the best traditions of the liberation struggle into his government work and to his relationship with the media. He was calm and collected; humble and hardworking, truthful, and ethical to the core; and very competent. He placed the interest of the people above everything else. We know that it is these qualities that, in the best of times, made the ANC great and the opposite of these qualities is what has destroyed and continues to destroy our movement.

Masebe demonstrated his greatness by living up to the expectation that appointment to positions in government must be an opportunity to serve, not to loot. He stayed true to the values of the ANC.

As a media activist and public communicator, Masebe had a deep understanding of democratic institutions and respect for the media. His greatness lied in understanding that a strong independent media combined with an effective government communication contributed to an informed and active citizenry and an accountable, capable, and ethical government. He never saw the media as an enemy. He resisted the lazy temptation to blame the media for bad publicity and insisted that government must build its own capacity to tell its own story to the people of South Africa.

Masebe's communication ability was grounded on a very good understanding of the policies of the ANC and the government. He could explain, not spin, every policy position in very simple language.

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His greatness was also demonstrated in his intellectual stamina to debate any question for countless hours with people deadly opposed to such and still maintain pleasant relations with those with whom he disagreed. He could have a heated debate with you for hours without any hard feelings. He bore no grudges.

One thing that should be said is that Thabo Masebe eschewed empty political rhetoric, sloganeering and phrase-mongering. His greatness was in his simplicity and clarity of thought in public discourse and political communications. In typical Masebe style, if you can't explain it to a young child, you really don't know what you are talking about.

He set a gold standard for Gauteng government communicators: be truthful, factual, transparent and proactive when you work with the media.

He is a man who followed the Chinese dictum: "always seeking truth from facts".

His impeccable integrity and consistency in communication is a mark of his greatness, especially in a world characterised increasingly by "alternative truths".

Thabo Masebe was a man of structure, process, and method. He was very organised and consistent in asking the same questions which we should ask ourselves whenever we prepare speeches, media statements and policy documents.

His questions were always:

- 1) What are you trying to communicate to the nation – what are the key messages?
- 2) What is the theme?
- 3) Is it truthful and factual?
- 4) Does the message deal with the issues of fundamental concern to the people?
- 5) How do we enlist stakeholder involvement and ownership of the problem and its solution?

Thabo Masebe's methodical and disciplined approach to dealing with all government communication and media enquiries earned him so much respect among journalists and government communicators. Among the younger generation of government communicators, he was more than an authority. In fact, he became some kind of professorial enigma in political communication, crisis communication and stakeholder management.

As you heard in the testimonies at the memorial service hosted by the Government Communication Information System (GCIS) on Friday, 21 April 2022, government communicators loved Thabo Masebe and the media establishment respected him enormously. This type of greatness cannot be achieved through spin.

Masebe is the kind of mandarin that would make a great contribution to the training of a new type of public servant at the National School of Government (NSG).

I dreamed and looked forward to the day he would be able to join the NSG to train government communicators on the art of communication and building strong and sound relations with the media. The NSG is very important for the development of a capable, ethical, and developmental state. There is no short cut.

I would like to urge all of you present here, including Ministers, Premiers and Mayors, that we must all attend the NSG for master classes so that we can be better servants of the people in this fast-changing world.

Masebe was that type of mandarin who understood the teething problems of lack of implementation and pathologies of government administration such as corruption and incompetence. He held in deep disdain the dishonest, lazy, and corrupt public officials and public servants.

He was so un-assuming and self-effacing that he could keep quiet and listen to reports and debates in government meetings without saying a word. I often had to ask him to share some views before concluding the weighty matters. It is at that point that everyone would understand that he knew the history and evolution of government policy and the state machinery in the democratic era.

He was 'a walking library' on many government policies and decisions at provincial and national level and would explain why and how different decisions were taken. He would then propose how best we can introduce the new policies and programmes in a way that ensures we understand what worked and what did not work. This ensures that we avoid the tendency to introduce intermittent and thoughtless policy changes every time new leaders come into a province, a department, or a municipality.



Acting DG Masebe produced the best quality on any document that he needed to edit or memo he needed to submit. But I must indicate that many who worked with him in the youth movement and in government would know that he was very slow. Now, in government we know that this can be very frustrating because there are things that require speed and urgency. We also all know that, sometimes, doing things fast doesn't always give you the best results. Thabo represented this tension between being fast and being thorough, with a great deal of frustration to his colleagues and comrades.

Another dialectical tension arising from the fact that although Thabo was this great mandarin who gave his best to every responsibility he was assigned, he was a very reluctant administrator. He accepted the appointment to the position of the Acting Director General simply out of duty and respect. He was uncomfortable with and had intrinsic mistrust for the bureaucracy and general administration and he complained about "hidden motives" of public officials and public servants who are in government for wrong reasons.

When there were frustrating moments of lack of progress or bad decisions about his colleagues in the departments, Thabo would frustratingly quip: "Eish Premier...these people...I don't know why they are getting such a simple thing wrong? What are they trying to do which will discredit this government?"

"These people can get you to sign documents in which they have hidden material interest and when things go wrong, you must take responsibility as an accounting officer or executive authority, having signed the documents". When he used the phrase "these people", you would know that he expressed anxiety and disdain of those seeking to rig the system and use public office or public service for personal gain.

One of the last issues we worked tirelessly on was the recruitment and appointment of the Head of Department of the Gauteng Department of Health. Thabo ensured that the process of interviews and all due process were completed and he promised to deliver the final documents immediately after Easter. Upon receiving a call from Thabo's sister, Florence Masebe about the sad news of his passing on Monday evening, 18 April 2022, I immediately went to the house. We found his computer which he had been working from on all government documents to ensure he meets the timelines we agreed upon next to him.

I would like to report that Acting DG Masebe has, yet again, completed one of the important missions of April that we had agreed upon and this week we appointed a new HOD for this important department as we mourn and celebrate his life.

Today we can proudly tell the world that Thabo Masebe's intellectual footprints are all over Gauteng for everyone to see. He was an emblematic figure in the development and public communication of the major initiatives.

Masebe gave the name "Ntirhisano" to our community engagement and service delivery programme and brought greater clarity in communicating the purpose and operations of the Open Tender Process, the Township Economic Development Act which has just been passed by the Gauteng Legislature, the Integrity Management and Anti-Corruption Strategy and the Growing Gauteng Together (GGT2030) plan of action.

**He was calm and collected; humble and hardworking, truthful, and ethical to the core; and very competent.**

Masebe also played a key role in enabling the Gauteng Provincial Government to deal with some of the major setbacks and failures such as the Life Esidimeni Tragedy and the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) corruption. His greatness as an administrator was in being forthright and firm in pointing out the misdemeanours and mala fide motives of departmental officials and unscrupulous service providers from the private sector.

His gold standard in dealing with government failure and setbacks was: Deal with all problems head-on, admit mistakes and take corrective action and administer consequence management in a transparent and accountable manner.

All these accounts and stories confirm that Thabo Masebe is indeed a great tree that has fallen and a great soul that has ceased to exist.

Many speakers have already testified about the conditions and collectives that shaped Thabo Masebe, our ever so revered and respected Acting Director General, Master Communicator and Editor-in-Chief.

As James A. Baldwin argued: 'I am what time, circumstance, history, have made of me, certainly, but I am also, much more than that. So are we all.'

Thabo Masebe was shaped by the time, circumstance, and history of his generation – the brave and fearless generation of youth and students who fought ferocious battles and refused to bow down to racial oppression and exploitation.

He was a student activist in the Azanian Student Organisation, AZASSO (SASCO's predecessor). He rose to the highest ranks of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) and ANC Youth League through the same dedicated activism, hard work, consistency and integrity that has earned him respect in the public service and media today.

Jerry Ndou, Lulu Johnson, Dipuo Peters, Malusi Gigaba and Febe Potgieter have extensively testified about the qualities and contributions of Thabo Masebe as a member of the generation of Young Lions and the ANC Youth League.

Having met Thabo Masebe at Turfloop (University of Limpopo) in 1989, I can attest that his humility, humanity, truthfulness, and concern for others, has remained unchanged. He had ensured that many student activists and students who need financial assistance are provided with bursaries, through the Educational Aid Programme (EAP).

I hereby testify here as we bid farewell to Thabo Masebe that I am one of those student activists who got such financial assistance in those years. I am very grateful. I know that Thabo never felt I owe him something and every position he was appointed to was purely on merit. This is the true mark of a true cadre and a great patriot.

Having said that Thabo was a true cadre of the ANC and a special type of public servant, we must explain what we mean to avoid a loose or lazy deployment of concepts or phrases or slogans. In the literature on the military, in the civil service and political parties, a cadre is someone who has been deliberately prepared and trained, given responsibilities that accords with their preparation and training, deployed, or assigned to a specific assignment or area of operation, equipped with the requisite tools and skills will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.

The practice of appointing people to positions of serious responsibility of which there was no prior preparation or any proven leadership abilities, is a fundamental distortion and corruption of ANC cadre policy, making a complete mockery of the word "cadre".



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In bidding farewell to Masebe, we should insist that cadres are people who have been prepared over time. We must all aspire to be true cadres like Thabo Masebe was.

Thabo Masebe chose public service not because he did not have an option but because public service fit very well with his self-effacing demeanour and humble persona.

Thabo Masebe was deeply loyal to the fundamental socio-economic transformation of our country. He had great respect for the institutions of our democracy and constantly sought to improve whatever imperfections there are in our democracy.

He worked ceaselessly to build a national democratic society and truly capable, ethical, and developmental state.

His life story comprises of a book full of multiple volumes of narratives about human kindness, humility, integrity and seeking truth from facts. This is a true story of South Africa's emergence from the dark history of apartheid and its contemporary government successes and failures which threaten to reverse the democratic gains.

Thabo expressed himself very clearly about what troubled his soul. He worked around the clock to curb and stop malfeasance and maladministration.

One of the messages posted on social media after the announcement of his passing reads as follows: "May the final hour meet us in service to the people".

His greatness is enhanced not by the sad reality that he passed on.

We shall all die one day. But shall we meet our final hour in the service of humanity or as thieves who betrayed their trust of the people?

This is the question all public servants and public officials must answer emphatically to themselves.

Certainly, a question that ANC members should be the first to answer.

Let me conclude by returning to the last stanza of Maya Angelou's Poem, "When Great Trees Fall".

"And when great souls die, after a period of peace blooms, slowly and always irregularly. Spaces fill with a kind of soothing electric vibration. Our senses, restored, never to be the same, whisper to us. They existed. They existed. We can be. Be and be better, for they existed".

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Thabo Masebe existed so that we can be better people; be a better country; have better public servants and public officials; have better politics free from toxic and polarising divisions; trust between government and citizens and sound relations between government and the media; have peace, social justice, and a better quality of life for all; end corruption; guarantee a better future for all the children of our motherland and an economy that serves the interests of all South Africans.

This great tree which provided shade and fruits to strangers and family alike is no more.

The great soul that was loving and caring has ceased to exist.

May the period of peace, healing, and renewal bloom in the Masebe Family.

Farewell Director General!

You have run your race!

Robala ka kgotso Tlou!

Rea leboga.

Ndaa!

I thank you.



# Address to the Staff of the Office of the Premier delivered by Premier David Makhura

04 May 2022

Programme Director;  
Acting DG, Ms Marie-Louise Moodie; Special Advisors;  
Members of the Senior Management Service;  
Distinguished public servants of the public in the Department and Office of the Premier;

Thobela. Ndi matsheloni. Avuxeni. Dumelang. Sanibonani. Lotshani. Goeie more. Good morning.

Those of you who have been part of the Office of the Premier (OoP) would know that we are one of the fourteen departments of the Gauteng Provincial Government, but the pre-eminent department because we call ourselves the apex and the centre of government. You would also know that I do not routinely address staff meetings because that is the role and responsibility of the Director General (DG), as the chief public servant in the province.

I only speak annually with and to account to the citizens and residents of Gauteng on your behalf. I do so during the State of the Province Address - and on other special occasions - as we have done during many occasions to inform and update them on the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the 21st February this year I spoke to the people of our province during the Tenth State of the Province Address in whose planning many of you were involved. I also spoke to you and the people of our province and perhaps the nation on the 23rd April 2022, as I delivered the eulogy at the funeral of our late Acting Director General, Thabo Masebe.

On Friday, 29 April 2022, I also spoke to the people of Gauteng, when I signed and assented the Township Economic Development Bill into the Township Economic Development Act.

There are three reasons why I have asked the Acting DG to convene the staff meeting today. Firstly, to wish you, as the Office of the Premier staff a belated Happy Workers Day; as we are still in Workers Month. On Sunday 01 May the workers of the world celebrated the contribution of every worker to the economy, to society and various states across the globe. Without workers, no institution can truly function. Workers are the backbone of functioning, modern societies, democracies, and economies. So, Happy Workers Day to all the public servants, especially those who give their best, often without anyone watching. We celebrate you. We appreciate you.

Secondly, I have asked to talk to you today as the last time I spoke to you was just before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, in early March 2020. COVID-19 was just entering the shores of our country. I spoke to you with a great deal of confidence that we were getting somewhere. We had just adopted the Growing Gauteng Together 2030 Plan, there was a great deal of excitement across our province and amongst our staff members. On that day there was great deal of energy for those who considered themselves fortunate to work in the Office of the Premier. I felt the commitment and sense of pride. From there, the world went into panic and the pandemic wreaked emotional, social, and economic havoc in the lives of many households and local and global institutions alike.

You yourselves have been through a lot. We have been through a lot as humanity. We have lost family members and many friends who were pillars of our lives. We have also lost colleagues who made our work environment more fulfilling. Many of us were at one point or another infected with coronavirus and in quarantine at home or admitted to hospital. Many of us can talk from our own experience about this. Coronavirus has been devastating. We are still carrying with us not only the wounds but the mental and psychological wounds of having lost the people we love, co-workers and people we know. Coronavirus has inflicted wounds that will be difficult to erase. Many of us walk with the lingering symptoms of what is called long-COVID. Our lives will never be the same, our health will never be the same. Many of us today carry chronic diseases that we never had before COVID-19. We had regarded ourselves as healthy people. That is the impact of this pandemic. But I would like to say that even with that, we shall overcome.

Acting DG Thabo Masebe spent last Christmas in ICU due to his long battle with chronic asthma. But he woke up on that Christmas Day in 2021, much to the delightful surprise of his family. He woke up and started talking to them. I spoke to him after several days of being unable to hear his voice. His sisters, Florence Masebe and the MEC for Health in Limpopo, Dr Phophi Ramathuba and the family said Thabo had woken up and he wanted to talk to me. It was an exciting day. Thabo came back to work, and he recovered and gave us hope that everything was fine. But just after the Easter weekend he left us.

I want to take this opportunity today to once more convey my deep-felt condolences to all of you for the losses we have suffered and for the wounds you are carrying and the many ailments you now carry in your bodies. I once more convey to the family of our late acting DG our heartfelt condolences for the loss they have suffered when our DG was called up.

I want to say to you colleagues that we shall overcome and that every storm that doesn't break you makes you stronger for future storms. That is the nature of things; that is the nature of the universe. What God throws your way cannot break you. COVID-19 has been



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severe in every sense of the word, but it will not break us. It has been severe also in exposing the depth of criminality and corruption in government when the crooks took advantage of the vulnerability of the system and the environment to go on a looting spree. But we shall not give up. We shall not yield to the wounds in our hearts, to the scars we carry in our bodies and to the continuous pain of the lingering symptoms of long-COVID. We shall not yield to that. For as long as we live, we shall carry on fighting. Our job as public servants is simple; it is to make life better in the service of the people. We thank God for giving us one more chance to continue to serve our people, our communities, the residents of our province and to continue to fix the problems of this province.

Let me return to this question of why I convened you here today. We are a wounded people both from COVID-19 pandemic and from losing our acting DG. We have come together to recollect our emotions and rekindle our spirits after suffering these incalculable losses because of the sudden, unexpected, and painful departure of our beloved Acting DG and Head of Government Communications.

We carry many wounds in our hearts and scars on our backs. The passing on of the Acting DG is an added wound to the many wounds we carry. Having lost many people, we know in our families and colleagues who were so dependable. It is hard to say we must just move on. We cannot just move on. Even though we have given Thabo a farewell befitting of a hero, we cannot just move on. We know we must recollect ourselves and rekindle our fighting spirit and determination to serve. We cannot just move on, when you have lost your loved ones, your mother or father, brother, or child even colleague or friend. Yes, as a manner of speaking we urge each other at funerals that we must move on and that the wounds must heal; that is a manner of speaking, but we are human.

It is difficult to just move on, in our case Thabo Masebe looms even larger in our daily work now that he is no more. I know many of you here today must also be struggling to move on with those you lost due to COVID-219 and others lost through car accidents and criminality. Even for those who were so sick that we often say they have now rested, it is still difficult to move on. So how are we expected to move on when Thabo just left us so suddenly? We can now really feel the gap he has left in the Office of the Premier. There is a deep sense of loss on board. It is like our world has just suddenly caved in. Emotionally, all of us have been crushed. We feel both the emptiness and the weight of his absence. I felt it when I spoke to the Executive Management Team (EMT) on Monday.

It will take a collective effort by all of us to re-group, get back on our feet and overcome the powerful destructive storm of death that hit us in our province, in the Office of the Premier, but also the storm of death that has hit us through the pandemic in our families. It will take a great deal of acknowledgement that people are hurting and feel vulnerable. I have got that sense of many who depended on the support and leadership of our DG who now feel vulnerable--- they are hurting. We are human and death is part of who we are. It is very unkind even to the kindest amongst us. We need to admit that many of us need counselling and that healing is a journey. So that we can move on steadily and carefully leaving no one behind because healing is a long journey, and no two people undertake this journey the same. Some will take much longer to heal. Others have a delayed response; some will feel it much later.

This is the reason I have called you today. I know that you're going through a tough time - even those who may not have been close friends or colleagues of Thabo Masebe. If you worked in the Gauteng Provincial Government, you had an opportunity to encounter him through communication or administrative work or just in the office. Everybody has been impacted by his departure. We are dealing with an emotional roller-coaster. I know and feel the emotional storm that has hit the OoP. I would like you to know that it's okay to emote, to unburden, to relieve yourself of this strenuous emotional overload by knowing that there are many who are feeling this way. I was saying to the EMT yesterday that we must not push people too quickly. Yes, we have got work to do because government never stops even on the day when you bury the head of state, government should not stop. But we should admit that we are human and there are some who will take a bit of time. We must carry each other along. I am not suggesting that people should not do the work, but we must acknowledge that it is going to be difficult for a while.

Just a year ago, I was reluctantly asked by the President Cyril Ramaphosa more than once to release our then DG, Phindile Baleni to go and assist the Presidency in keeping the Public Service together so that public servants can attend to the developmental and service delivery needs of citizens in the whole Republic rather than just in Gauteng. I know that the release of DG Baleni caused some worry and concern amongst people and the leadership in the Office of the Premier then. And I know what the concern was: would there be stability? The staff is not so concerned about the Premier. The Premier is always on the road. Some don't even get a chance to come face to face with the Premier except when we have these addresses. The staff work with their immediate colleagues. So, one of the concerns was whether the departure of the DG would bring instability in the Office of the Premier - but I had a plan then.

After resisting for a while and negotiating with the President about releasing DG Baleni, I later agreed that we would release her at the end of the financial year. I had a plan. Thabo Masebe would be acting DG and I knew then that the transition would be seamless in moving forward. He understood everything we had been trying to do. He understood the transformation, modernisation, and re-industrialization plan. He understood how it links to the previous plans of our great province. He understood the Growing Gauteng

Together 2030 Plan, our forward-looking plan. He worked out how it should be communicated. When Thabo was appointed acting DG, there was stability and overall leadership of the entire administration.

So, President Ramaphosa had consulted me; I didn't just wake up one day to hear that the DG has left. But God did not consult me when he took Thabo during that Easter weekend. You know how God works. God does not consult anybody because he knew I would have said no. God doesn't consult. He calls us one by one, at his own time. But God does not act without a plan. So, we have a plan and my immediate responsibility colleagues is to assure you that there will be a seamless transition. There is no doubt that our team is limping at the moment because the captain of this team at the administrative level is no more and this is felt all levels, the managers, the unions, the general staff, parliamentarians and our partners in civil society.

My administration team is limping. Yesterday I met with the EMT to say I know what they are going through emotionally and professionally. The meeting became a therapeutic session. When a general who commanded the army of public servants is lost in the middle of a battle, it becomes hard. What we are facing is a battle for better life to improve service delivery, the battle against the corrupt in our ranks, who are determined, the battle against poverty, crime, gender-based violence and all discrimination against other human beings. The entire army experienced an emotional crush. The spirit of battle cannot be broken. Your spirit of selfless service must not be broken. We must continue to mourn but we must not be broken. We cannot snap under this strain when we have the collective strength to rebuild our emotional state of being. Even in the most difficult circumstances we faced, Thabo Masebe is one of those people who will say to me: we must remain focused on our work and our message must remain consistent.

This sixth administration has a lot of work and there are many expectations from the people of our province. We are left with only two years to complete our mandate. We will soldier on because that is what Thabo would have wanted us to do. We must remain focused and on-message. That was Thabo's personality.

**Even though we have given Thabo a farewell befitting of a hero, we cannot just move on.**

During the funeral, I had the privilege and honour to deliver the eulogy in which I have said a lot about my experiences and interaction with the late Acting DG Thabo Masebe since 1989 when I first met him as a young student activist at the University of Limpopo. I don't want to repeat that message. Today I am concerned about you, the colleagues, and staff in the OoP. Many of you saw him as a mentor and father figure. He was a manager, leader and public servant with a conscience and impeccable sense of integrity.

So, I understand why the Office of the Premier is still going through the trauma. Rightly so, there is personal trauma as well as professional anxiety about whether we will be able to ensure a seamless transition that will create stability in the management and leadership of the Office which is central in the functioning of the entire administration of the Gauteng Provincial Government. I have called this meeting to acknowledge the trauma of loss and anxiety about the stability of the Office. I want to assure you that as your Captain, I know that the loss of Director General Masebe leaves you vulnerable and anxious. I am here to steer this ship to safer shores after the deadly storm of the untimely departure of our DG.

As we continue to mourn his death and honour his deeds, we must pull the team together and put our people first. As we mourn this passing of the acting DG let us also be sure to support each other. We should find our strength in numbers, in our collegiality. We had a capable and able leader who leaves behind a great legacy. This legacy will continue to live if we up our game. Besides being a capable manager and a focused leader, DG Masebe was knowledgeable about government workings. More than anything, he was composed, personable and incredibly kind. I am sure this personal touch he possessed excites feelings of anguish in us for a long time.

We would do well to remember this side of him as we wade through this mourning period. I am sure we can also take a leaf from his book, this supremely humane side, as we move on. Many in our team in the OoP are still coming to terms with this shock and we need to give ourselves a bit of time. Naturally, we deal with grief in different ways. DG Masebe was an integral part of our own lives. It is difficult for the family and for many of us who have worked with him in different areas. Those who were accustomed to his leadership will miss



him for a time to come. The emotional turbulence is real. But as a collective we will focus on our work. If we provide a support system in the way we manage this situation we will find closure with time.

We must carry on. One thing DG Masebe would have liked to see happen is the OoP continuing to get things done. I was informing the EMT yesterday that during this month of May I will be immersing myself in the administration to ensure that we fill all the vacancies of Senior Management Service – DG, DDGs, Chief Directors and Directors in the OoP. The DG would be very happy that everything he wanted done is completed. By the end of May I do not want a vacancy in the OoP, unless it is a budget issue. I am going to have an engagement with Marie-Louis as the acting DG.

I wish to repeat this point I made yesterday: to emphasise that every player must play in the area of their strength. Our work on fighting corruption, our policy work, our Ntirhisano work can only upscale. Our work on the economy is gaining momentum. Our communication work has improved tremendously. I am not going on any international trip until this ship is sailing away in full steam. We need to sort out the OoP and to stabilise our institutional environment. We are going to make sure that the senior management posts are filled by the end of this month. We have to make sure that all the vacancies are filled and that there is no more acting capacities for those positions.

I am going to attend all the EMT meetings during the month of June. I am going to draw DG Baleni into the selection process of the new DG. We need to fill the post of the DG by the end of this month. We have too many people acting at SMS level, and this creates some risk regarding the stability of the OoP and I will personally attend to this with the EMT and ensure that by June we are back on track and properly constituted. Due processes of the law shall be followed but there will be urgency to stabilise the Department and other Departments that have similar challenges of acting senior officials. We have already completed the appointment of the Head of Department, Deputy Director General (DDG) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Gauteng Department of Health.

Acting DG Masebe demonstrated model leadership in acting on these matters. We need not slack off. We have lost a soldier, a general who was providing solid leadership. We are building on this legacy. For this forbearance and fortitude are key ingredients. We will stabilise the administration in the office of the Premier. We will steer this ship to safer shores by the end of the month. One of the big disruptions has been the issue of the building. When I met you in March 2020, we had gone to see a building. We were supposed to go back to the old building in 30 Simmonds Street. I was excited when DG Masebe briefed me. But the team has gone there and there are things that still needs to be sorted there.

In the meantime, the work continues. We have scaled up in some of the areas of work, including integrity management where we are on the verge of completing the work. We are pleased that the Office has successfully completed the eDeclaration processes. DG Masebe's leadership epitomised and championed ethical governance. We have started new work around young people; we are going to have a Youth Directorate. Once we complete the last lap of Ntirhisano in Ekurhuleni, we need to think of what is next.

Colleagues

Acting DG Masebe passed on at a time that when some of the biggest achievements of the Sixth Administration were about to be registered. This past week we have signed into law the Township Economic Development Bill. This is a landmark development for the GPG. This will count among the most important Bills to have been passed in this province. the TEDB is one of the outcomes to whose realisation DG Masebe contributed his exceptional leadership. How I wish he were here with us to celebrate this milestone. It is a decisive policy intervention aimed at economically empowering local communities at a time when the devastation of COVID-19 is pervasive. For those of us who believe in the higher power, we are hopeful that he is watching this and nodding his head in delight.

We are pleased that in the fourth quarter, the OoP has made some good progress, thanks to the hard work of you, the staff. One of the key highlights is that fact that the Programme Management Office (PMO) has won the silver award in the Category Best Responsive Government Institution of the Year. The PMO and the workstream have led the way in terms of accessibility and approachability of the leadership.

The PMO facilitated the development of risk based workstream intervention plans as per the behaviour of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also facilitated and supported the development of the Vaccine Rollout Plan in the province. Furthermore, the PMO provided strategic project management support to the Project Management of the Gauteng Department of Infrastructure Development and the Gauteng Department of Health on Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital refurbishment due to the fire that affected the hospital. The Gauteng COVID-19 response was supported by a robust, open, and transparent communication strategy, providing up to date information on the behaviour of the pandemic in Gauteng, hotspot areas and general information on the pandemic and recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions.

As a result, coordination between different workstreams and governance structures was made easier. In turn, this facilitated the flow of information and collaboration between the workstreams. Congratulations are in order. We hope that going forward this exceptional performance will serve as a baseline to be exceeded as we strive for even high achievements.



***Emotionally, all of us have been crushed.  
We feel both the emptiness and the weight of his  
absence.***





## Colleagues

Our work on the Tshepo 1 Million programme exceeded its Pillar 1 target of 26 000 and achieved 40 483, and on Pillar 2 the target was 13 025, and achieved 20 859. This is the result of some hard work.

As part of realising a capable, ethical, and developmental state, the Office of the Premier successfully administered the Internship Programme for 2020/21- 2021/22 financial years. Sixty-three (63) interns were appointed in the OoP across all branches. Sixty-seven (67) OoP employees are registered to study in various institutions for the 2022 academic year, which constitutes 12% of staff that are pursuing life-long learning education. We are also pleased to announce that there are no precautionary suspensions for the period under review for both SLI-12 and SMS.

In terms of service delivery interventions, the complaints management process has been finalised and approved. It encompasses and integrates the complaints and service request management process, the case response process, quality process and dispute management process.

68.34% (17 102 out of 25 048) cases were resolved across the province during the fourth quarter. Gauteng citizens (communities, households and individuals) can communicate with the provincial contact centre through various channels such as: Phone, SMS, USSD, eMail, the Web, social media (Facebook and Twitter) and WhatsApp. The Community and Health workers are making use of the USSD channel to register service delivery issues while interacting with citizens.

Furthermore, in the last quarter, The Office of the Premier has established the LGBTIQ+ Directorate. During the period under review, a Director and Deputy Director were appointed. The Directorate engaged with all Gauteng Provincial Government Departments through analysis of the Annual Performance Plans (APPs) of each department. This process allowed to identify the gaps within the APPs of the departments and provided an opportunity to provide input to indicators that spoke directly to mainstreaming LGBTIQ+ and other issues.

In addition, a business case to develop an LGBTIQ+ strategy for the Gauteng Province was finalised. This process will include appointing a service provider and engaging members of the LGBTIQ+ sector to formalise the plan.

The process of re-establishing the Youth Directorate and appointing the Youth Advisory Council is on course and will be completed this month. The OoP has successfully conducted consultations on the establishment of the Youth Advisory Council. The Council will provide independent oversight, advice, advocacy, and civil society mobilisation on all efforts towards Youth empowerment in the Gauteng City-Region. We will unveil the Youth Advisory Council during the month of June which is Youth month in our country.

In the fourth quarter, our work on the war-rooms gained steam. The OoP supports the work on war-rooms, aimed at enhancing multisectoral coordination across the Gauteng Provincial Government. This important work brings both national and local government to respond to the problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality that continue to face the people of our province. The war rooms are an addition to our cabinet system. They do something we have never done before. They create a platform for us to have partners.

The war-rooms will also bring the private sector, civil society, institutions of higher education and development partners to improve social compacting in implementing the GGT2030 plan and addressing the perennial socio-economic issues. The war- rooms support includes the War-room on Crime, Poverty and Food Security, Infrastructure Delivery Projects and Jobs and Economic Opportunities.

Colleagues, while we are pleased with the progress made during this quarter, we wish to emphasise the need to up our game. Most of the great achievements reported above happened on the watch of DG Masebe. We cannot afford to lose this momentum. I cannot emphasise this point enough.

Let me also conclude by thanking the OoP for the sterling work done during our DG's funeral preparations. In yesterday's EMT a suggestion was made that we find a creative way of memorialising DG Thabo Masebe's life by naming one of the physical spaces or awards in his honour.

This is something we will apply our collective minds to. As you will know, this is not a done thing for officials as a matter of tradition. But exceptional circumstances warrant it. Extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary measures. In a way, we need to say to the current and future cohort of the OoP staff, there once was a leader in this office who has left imprints of excellence on the texture of this institution. This memorialisation will be urging all of us to keep up this tradition of excellence.

Let us look to the future with hope. Let us be proud that there once was an individual among us of such rare breed of character who ennobled our lives. Very rare does an individual embody both management excellence and leadership exceptionalism.

Let us be a workplace and an organisation that supports our people. We need to show proof that we have supported them as managers. We must have compassion. Every human being has the capacity to give the best. We must always give the best to humanity. Let's build a great organisation. We are multi-skilled people. We cannot build a better society if we cannot build a better workplace. Yes, there should be disciplinary processes, but you must show support. We must also invest in people, train people. The younger ones in particular those who come in as an interns. We must recruit them in the public service. I want to urge you managers that your job is also to develop people.

I will be gone soon as the Premier, as a matter of course, one cannot be the Premier for life, our Constitution doesn't allow it but I want us to build the best organisation. We must make sure that there is no corruption in our machinery. We cannot talk about integrity and ethics, and you find the corrupt hanging around in the highest office. The crooks must have no peace. Also, we must have the best, and the best are made, they are not born the best. The OoP must be the place for great minds and big hearts. It doesn't matter whether your job is to sweep; you must be the best sweeper in that floor where you are and be proud that you work in the OoP.

I want to say to you that you must pull together from this sense of grief, pain and hurt that we have gone through as a people, as individuals and as a nation, in our personal and our professional lives. We have a mission, whether you believe in God or not, we have a mission to continue to make this world a better place and to make Gauteng a better province. We cannot lose momentum. I want to thank all of you as staff in the OoP regardless of rank; titles do not matter. Titles are for those have not established their worth. When you have established your worth, a title is something you outlive. Leadership is about the ability of a person to rally people around during their greatest moment of need. Leadership is also about rallying people to solve problems, outside your specific area of training and comfort zone. Great Leadership is a combination of quiet compassion, humility and deep thinking.

To our people, you are all leaders regardless of your titles; do not act the title, act leadership. Let us help those who are feeling broken because of the emotional harm of losing their loved ones and colleagues. Instead of punishing those who are vulnerable, let us support them. We need to support even officials who do not seem to perform. Some people fall into bad habits which affect their performance but others are so because of family circumstances where they are not coping with pressure. We should not be judgemental. We should not compete about who is really the best. We must have compassion. I demand a lot from you. I expect a lot because every human being has the ability to do the best. We must give the best to Africa, to humanity, while being compassionate. Let us build a great organisation that cares; let us not be confined to what we were trained to do. Workers must also be proud to work in the OoP.

I want to conclude by saying, let us look to the future with hope. Let us be proud that there was once an individual amongst us in this government that we have lost who was special, a rare breed, who enriched our lives and made us better people. Thabo was one of those very exceptional people.

Management consultant, Peter Drucker, says that 'Management is doing things right; and leadership is doing the right things.' C.S Lewis says: 'Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching'. DG Masebe will be remembered as someone who did all the three.

We have imbibed this spirit of doing right things and doing things right. Let us move on inspired by his memory and spurred on by his inimitable legacy! We will continue to make sure that we pull the full weight of the OoP. We will pull ourselves out of this sense of grief and carry each other along. I expect from all you of to embrace the spirit of Thabo Masebe and dedicate yourselves to the service of our people, as you heal your wounds, find your feet and re-group.

Let us go back to work and bring Thabo's uncompromising professionalism and deep compassion.

Let us carry those who are still reeling with shock and trauma as we continue to push forward with our programme of transformation, modernisation and re-industrialisation and the mission of Growing Gauteng Together as embodied in the Township Economic Development Act.

Thank you.

**When Thabo was appointed acting DG, there was stability and overall leadership of the entire administration.**