

**STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE  
PREMIER OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE HONOURABLE CHUPU  
MATHABATHA TO THE FIFTH LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL  
LEGISLATURE AT THE JACK BOTES HALL.**

*24 February 2017*

Honourable Speaker

Deputy Speaker of the Legislature;

Honourable members of the legislature;

Members of the Executive Council;

Executive Mayors and Mayors of our municipalities;

The leadership of the ruling party, the African National Congress;

Leaders of opposition parties;

Chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders;

Our esteemed Majesties, Kings and Royal Highnesses;

Former MPs and MPLs;

Stalwarts and veterans of our struggle;

Provincial Commissioner of Police;

Heads of our Chapter nine and chapter ten institutions;

Leadership of religious community;

His Grace, the Right Reverend, Dr. Bishop BE Lekganyane;

Leadership of organised business and labour;

Youth, women, community leaders;

Director General and Heads of Departments;

Members of the media;

Distinguished guests;

Comrades, ladies and gentlemen:

**Good morning, Goeie more, Thobela, Avuxeni, Lotshani, Ndaa,**

This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Oliver Reginald Tambo, a distinguished leader of our people who led the struggle for freedom and democracy for many years.

In honour and memory of this selfless servant of the people, the ruling party has declared 2017, the Year of Oliver Tambo and the Year of Unity in Action.

OR Tambo was indeed a selfless servant of the people and an embodiment of the struggle for democracy, non-racialism, non-sexism and unity.

On the occasion of the funeral of Oliver Tambo in 1993, President Nelson Mandela said “***...Oliver lived because he had surrendered his very being to the people... I say that Oliver Tambo has not died, because the ideals for which he sacrificed his life can never die.***”

There is indeed no doubt that OR, as he was affectionately known,

valued and prized the freedom of his people above anything.

In his own words, OR Tambo said “***The fight for freedom must go on until it is won; until our country is free, happy and peaceful.....***”.

### **Honourable Members;**

The befitting tribute we can all pay to this architect of our freedom is to jealously guard against any tendency that seeks to reverse our hard-won democracy.

We must continue to fight against corruption because Oliver Tambo hated corruption.

We must promote social cohesion because OR Tambo had a vision of a South Africa in which all people shall live in peace and harmony.

We must promote unity because Oliver Tambo was himself an embodiment of unity.

Above all, as he cautioned, we must continue to be vigilant against **abo-mmam’gobozi** who peddle lies which have the potential to destabilise good governance that has begun to take shape in our province.

### **Madam Speaker and honourable members;**

The persisting and deep-seated triple crisis of poverty, unemployment and inequality requires focused attention to the education and training of our children.

We have entered the era of knowledge economy, and therefore education must form the basis of our **second phase of transition**.

However, the challenges we continue to encounter in the provincial Department of Education have got a propensity to undermine our efforts in this regard.

Notwithstanding some of these challenges that I will elaborate later, the Turn-Around-Strategy we have put in place has begun to make the necessary impact.

I must announce that we have just appointed the Head of Department of Education, and the process of filling other senior management positions is well underway.

**Madam Speaker;**

As a measure of implementing this Turn-around strategy, the past three years saw us investing heavily in this sector to achieve universal access to basic education, including Early Childhood Development (ECD).

We have significantly expanded the provisioning of Grade R in public primary schools. To date, about 2 339 (**two thousand three hundred and thirty nine**) public Primary Schools offer Grade R. This translates to over 123 356 (**one hundred and twenty three thousand three hundred and fifty six**) children enjoying access to Early Childhood Development education. This is, indeed, a milestone achievement given where we come from.

**Madam Speaker;**

We are also intensifying and broadening our teacher development programmes with the view to achieve positive outcomes.

Between 2012/13 and 2015/16 Financial Years, we trained over 1 400 teachers through the Continuous Professional Development Centre (CPDC).

In the next financial year, we will train a further 80 Curriculum Advisors and 300 teachers in Science and Commerce. In the same vein, we will train 3 600 teachers in content and methodology in Mathematics and languages.

**Madam Speaker;**

School infrastructure is equally critical for the creation of a conducive learning and teaching environment.

In the 2015/16 Financial Year alone, we built 354 classrooms; we supplied 57 schools with proper sanitation facilities; we connected 33 more schools with drinking water and built 128 specialist rooms in our public ordinary schools.

We have also built 5 new schools to improve teacher-learner ratio in our province. These schools include the New Look Primary in Capricorn, Khubvi Primary in Vhembe, Mphengwa Secondary in Capricorn, Tshweele Primary in Sekhukhune and St. Patrick Primary in Mopani.

In the 2017/18 Financial Year, we intend to provide 210 more schools with portable drinking water; 185 schools with decent

sanitation facilities and connect 9 more schools to electricity.

**Madam Speaker;**

As a measure of ensuring that our children have easy access to education, we are expanding the network of our scholar transport from 194 in 2016 to 255 schools in 2017.

Again, as part of efforts to improve learner concentration and reduce malnutrition, this year we will be increasing the number of beneficiaries of our National Schools Nutrition Programme from 3 845 to 3 854.

In this regard we will contract 10 542 food handlers and employ 88 school-based monitors through the EPWP incentive grant.

In the same vein, we will also increase the number of learners benefitting from the **'No-Fee School'** policy from 1. 6 million to 1.7 million.

**Madam Speaker;**

As I have said during the presentation of Grade 12 results earlier this year, the pass rate of 62.5% is not in line with our provincial developmental objectives as captured in the Limpopo Development Plan.

The 3% drop in the overall pass rate is a serious indictment on all of us given the amount of resources that we commit to this sector.

Education is a societal issue and I therefore implore on all of us to help find a long-lasting solution to this problem.

I have also directed the MEC for the Department of Education to develop a comprehensive, coherent and workable plan to ensure that this downward trend is immediately reversed.

The Department must also move with speed to ensure that all vacancies of principals, school HODs and all related promotional posts are filled as a matter of urgency.

The strengthening of management capacity of district and circuit offices is a non-negotiable imperative in our effort to improve Grade 12 results.

**Madam Speaker,**

It is however not all doom and gloom as the class of 2016 could still produce shining stars amongst themselves. They are our little stars that shine bright even in our darkest hour. They have made us proud, and have solidified Limpopo's position on the national map.

Of the 22 top learners in the country, 12 of them are from this province.

Also to be proud of in our 2016 Grade 12 results is the very fact that we have managed to increase our pass percentage in both Mathematics and Physical Science. Oliver Tambo as a former Maths and Science teacher would obviously be very proud of Limpopo.

In this regard, I would like to specifically acknowledge the two school principals who are here with us today. Their efforts continue to make us proud as Limpopo.

Mr. Knox Makhafola of Dendron High School and Mr. Nyambeni Lidzhade of Mbilwi Secondary School have continued to distinguish themselves. These principals are not only managing their schools, they are also continuing to teach in the classroom.

I have got no doubt in my mind that if all principals were to emulate these two gentlemen, there is no reason we cannot achieve our 80% target.

**Madam Speaker;**

The delay in the delivery of textbooks to schools at the beginning of this year has made a dent on the good work we have done in restoring good corporate governance in this province.

Access to education is guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, and we must never do anything that undermines that basic human right.

As the Executive Council, we have since adopted a 10 Point Plan to ensure that this unfortunate incident never happens again.

According to this Plan, by the end of April 2017 all schools must have placed their orders with the Department of Education. By the end of May 2017 the Department of Education must have ordered books from publishers. These textbooks and the entire stationary must be delivered to the warehouses by publishers by the end of July 2017. The distribution of these textbooks to schools by the service providers must be concluded by the end of October 2017. Learners must receive all textbooks and stationary on the first day of schooling.

In this regard, I would like to call on all school principals to ensure



that they provide the provincial Department of Education with accurate data of their needs.

The Districts, working together with principals, must also strengthen the textbook retrieval system and continue to monitor the enforcement of textbook and stationary delivery plan.

**Madam Speaker and honourable members;**

The tedious process of the redetermination of municipal boundaries was completed well on time before the 2016 Local Government Elections.

In the province, almost all the affected communities have embraced this process with the exception of some communities around the Vuwani area in the Vhembe district.

Whilst we respect the community's right to object to any process of government, we totally reject and condemn the tendency to use violence and destruction of property as a means to communicate any dissatisfaction.

Communities are, instead, encouraged to use legitimate community and municipal structures for engagement and dialogue.

**Madam Speaker;**

Our commitment to improve the financial viability of our municipalities by ensuring sound financial management has begun to bear fruits. The audit opinion on municipalities across the province is showing signs of improvements.

We have moved from 5 disclaimers in the 2014/15 financial year

to 2 disclaimers in the 2015/16 financial year. We also have improved on unqualified audit opinions from 10 in the 2014/2015 to 13 in the 2015/16 Financial Years.

Municipalities with unqualified audit opinions include Waterberg, Capricorn, Sekhukhune, Bela-Bela, Lephalale, Musina, Thulamela, Molemole, Polokwane, Makhuduthamakga, Fetakgomo, Greater Tzaneen and Maruleng.

**Madam Speaker;**

We have also convened a Provincial Local Government Summit with the view, amongst others, to assess the overall state of our municipalities. The summit acknowledged the gradual improvement in the areas of governance and financial management.

**Madam Speaker;**

Although there are some areas of concern, the spending patterns of our municipalities on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) are improving.

Despite the lag in performance by some municipalities, we are noting some encouraging performance from the following municipalities:

- Mogalakwena at 57.83%,
- Ba-Phalaborwa at 59.37,
- Elias Motsoaledi at 64.03%,
- LIM476 (Tubatse/Fetakgomo) at 75.82%,

- Makhuduthamakga at 78.4%,
- Greater Giyani at 78.53%,
- Bela-Bela at 80.44%,
- Capricorn at 80.46%, and
- Greater Tzaneen at 89.44%.

We, therefore, congratulate these municipalities that have already spent more than 50% of their MIG allocation by mid-term. We further urge all municipalities to improve on their MIG spending before the end of this Financial Year.

**Madam Speaker;**

The programme to reduce the housing backlog and restore the dignity of our people has intensified.

In this Financial Year as a province, we have managed to build 9 561 rural housing units. In the same period, we have also managed to build 211 disaster housing units. An additional 286 abandoned housing units were rectified, completed and handed over to the beneficiaries.

This is a milestone achievement given the challenges we had in the past two years which impeded us from delivering houses to our people.

Over the coming five years our focus will be on the programme to upgrade informal settlements around our mining towns.

**Madam Speaker;**

Our municipalities continue to carry out their constitutional mandate to deliver basic services to our people.

According to StatsSA's 2015 General Household Survey, we are well on track in providing our people with water. To date, 78.8% of our households are connected to functional water services.

In terms of electricity, 1.4 million households have been connected to the grid and a further 105 000 households are connected to the non-grid. This translates to almost 93% of households with functional electricity connection.

In relation to access to functional sanitation services, we have been able to move from a mere 38% in 2011 to 54% in 2015.

The recent EXCO Lekgotla has resolved, amongst others, that all vacant strategic positions at municipalities must be filled as a matter of urgency. These posts must be filled with people with requisite qualifications and skills.

**Madam Speaker;**

Finally, the long awaited recognition of the queenship of the Balobedu traditional community has been done. This is the first and only queenship in the country.

On behalf of the people of Limpopo, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the Republic, His Excellency, Jacob Zuma, for recognising Queen Modjadji, our rain queen.

In the same vein, we are pleased by the commitment of our

national government to build a memorial to preserve the history and the legacy of the Balobedu people.

**Rea le lebogiša Balotswi, rea lebogiša dikolobe tsa Dadzha, batho ba khedupudi kha bokhalaka, Balotswi ba Ranteme.**

**Ke zwa zweo!**

We have also begun providing the necessary support to the recently recognized Vhavenda Kingship. As we have reported last year, we have put aside a budget of no less than R5 Million to support the King.

We have already appointed support staff to assist the Vhavenda King.

**Khakhaumela, buka la mavhalavhala, muduhulu wa tshilwa vhusiku tsha'ha Ramabulana**

**Kha ri luvhe!**

**Madam Speaker;**

The traditional leadership continues to play a very important role in the reconstruction and development of our country. Traditional leaders are custodians of our culture and traditions.

It is in this context that we have since allocated vehicles to 178 Traditional Councils to help them execute their responsibilities.

**Madam Speaker;**

Limpopo continues to do well when it comes to the management of initiation schools. Last year we saw an increase in the number

of our schools from 205 in 2015 to 321 in 2016. Despite this increase, the province has managed to reduce the number of illegal initiation schools from 62 in 2015 to 07 in 2016.

Our success in this regard is owed to a good working relationship between government, traditional leaders and communities.

**Madam Speaker and honourable members;**

On the economic front, the average growth rate of the provincial economy for the period 1996 to 2015 is 2.8%. The last StatsSA growth rate analysis shows that our province grew by 1.1% in 2012, 2.4% in 2013 and 0.8% in 2014.

The latest StatsSA Labour Force Survey for Quarter 4 was released on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2017.

We are pleased that Limpopo has recorded the second highest employment gains. In the fourth quarter alone, Limpopo has managed to create 64 000 new jobs.

According to StatsSA's year-on-year analysis, a 103 000 people who were unemployed in the fourth quarter of 2015 had secured employment by the fourth quarter of 2016.

Jobs gained were mainly in the areas of construction, mining and agriculture.

With this increase in employment in Limpopo, the rate of unemployment has also reduced to 19.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 compared to 19.8 percent during the same period in 2015.

***Ke nnete gore lehono go phala maabane, re golofela gore ka moswane otlala phala lehono.***

As Nelson Mandela said ***“like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by actions of human beings”.***

It is in this context that we must sustain and improve this job creation path and economic development trajectory by positioning LEDA as a leading entity. The Limpopo Economic Development Agency must play its central role in growing, developing and transforming the economy of our Province.

**Madam Speaker;**

Last year during the State of the Province Address we announced that we had applied for Musina-Makhado to be declared a Special Economic Zone.

It is now my pleasure to announce that on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2016, Cabinet positively considered our application and approved Musina-Makhado as a Special Economic Zone.

We have also submitted that Tubatse, another strategic growth point in the Province, be declared a Special Economic Zone. We are confident that, like the Musina-Makhado SEZ, Tubatse will also soon be declared a Special Economic Zone.

As we have said, these two Special Economic Zones will attract investments of over R44 billion.

The Musina SEZ is projected to create about 20 800 direct jobs

whilst the Tubatse SEZ is expected to create approximately 2 000 permanent jobs for the people of the province.

**Madam Speaker;**

The private sector continues to play a major role in our effort to put Limpopo on a higher trajectory of economic growth and development.

Together with the private sector, we have identified 10 major projects for investment worth no less than **R46 billion**. This will obviously go a long way towards helping us to expand the productive capacity of our economy.

In this regard, the MEC for Economic Development Environment and Tourism will elaborate in more detail about these projects during the departmental budget vote.

**Madam Speaker;**

Access to broadband connectivity is the backbone of **knowledge economy**. It is in this context that we have assigned Limpopo Connexion, a subsidiary of LEDA, to begin in earnest with the rollout of infrastructure for the broadband telecommunication programme in Limpopo.

The programme implementation has been planned in two phases, with the first Phase commencing in quarter two of the 2017/18 financial year. This phase will roll-out the broadband infrastructure in Polokwane including the identified key provincial growth points.

The second phase of the programme will cover over 80% of the



provincial population, as per the provincial spatial development framework.

**Madam Speaker and honourable members;**

Notwithstanding the gradual decline in the contribution of agriculture to the GDP, the 2015 StatsSA General Household Survey shows that we are doing well in terms of household access to basic food.

This survey has shown that 91,8% of households in Limpopo has adequate access to food. This is quite encouraging, given the rural nature of our Province.

It is in this context that the provincial government has embarked on an aggressive drive to encourage communities, in particular rural communities, to go back to farming.

We have also supported over 3 000 households to produce their own food in their backyard gardens by the end of the third quarter of 2016/17. We hope to increase this intervention and support to over 5 000 households in the coming financial year.

**Honourable Members;**

The **Ilima/Letsema conditional grant** continues to be one of the funding sources to improve productivity of emerging farmers in Limpopo.

By the end of the second quarter, the Ilima/Letsema conditional grant had supported 47 projects benefiting a total of 2 333 beneficiaries. A total of 680 farmers was assisted to access the

markets.

For the 2017/18 financial year, the Ilima/Letsema conditional grant will be utilised to support a total of 90 projects with an estimated budget of over R67 million. The grant will benefit 15 538 emerging farmers. Included in this will be 2 718 smallholder farmers, 12 791 subsistence farmers and 29 black commercial farmers.

**Madam Speaker;**

The implementation of the Fetsa Tlala programme was adversely affected by drought and climate change in the Province in the 2015/16 Financial Year. As such, targets were revised to consider only farming areas with enough irrigation water.

The MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development will provide more detail with regard to the implementation of this programme in the light of the revised targets.

**A re boeleng mašemong re ye go lema!**

**Madam Speaker;**

As we were busy implementing measures for recovery from the 2015 drought, we are once more affected by another natural invasion, the infamous **Fall Army Worm**.

The government has convened and instructed a team of experts to further trouble-shoot this problematic situation and we are receiving frequent reports and update.

We also call upon our farmers to promptly report any strange pest

on their fields for urgent intervention.

**Madam Speaker and honourable members;**

Last year I spoke of a commitment to establish the Provincial Infrastructure Hub which will help coordinate the delivery of strategic social-economic infrastructure across the province.

I am proud to announce that the Infrastructure Hub is in place with 68 professionals already appointed.

The work to improve our road network infrastructure is continuing. With regard to the commitment we made during the previous SOPA to upgrade and rehabilitate certain roads, I can report that the construction in Ga-Phasha, Mampuru, Makuya, Masisi, Pelangwe-Atok, Ga-Nchabeleng-Mphanama-Jane-Furse, and Mabuella is in progress. This road network will obviously facilitate easy access to socio-economic opportunities for our people.

**Madam Speaker;**

On the commitment to eradicate the **bermuda roads**, I can report that last year we handed over two new construction projects in the Settlers and Legolaneng-Monsterloos areas. Four more roads are to be completed before the end of the 2017/18 financial year.

Over the next 3 years, the Road Agency Limpopo will upgrade 296 kms of gravel roads to tar, and further rehabilitate 303 lane kms of surfaced roads.

We are also continuing with the improvement of infrastructure at various traditional councils across the province. As we speak, the

construction is progressing well and we hope to finish this work in the coming Financial Year.

I must add that these construction projects are implemented using in-house teams that are augmented by EPWP recruits.

**Madam Speaker;**

Investment in the development and maintenance of water infrastructure is top of our priority list as government. Adequate and reliable water infrastructure will bring a multitude of economic and social benefits.

With the support of the National Department of Water and Sanitation, major water projects valued at approximately R1.5 billion are currently being implemented in the Province. These include:

- Mooihoek/Tubatse Bulk Water Scheme
- Sekhukhune Bulk Water Scheme
- Moutse Bulk Water Scheme
- Mogalakwena Bulk Water Supply
- Mametja Sekororo Regional Water Scheme,
- Nebo Bulk Water Supply,
- Sinthumule Kutama Bulk Water Supply
- Giyani Water Services, and

- Giyani Bulk Water Supply Drought Relief

**Madam Speaker and honourable members;**

We are guided by the Sustainable Development Goals in our continued efforts to ensure healthy lives and promote the well-being of the people.

In line with the imperatives of the National Health Insurance initiative, we are currently implementing the **Ideal Clinic Programme**.

This Programme is meant to ensure a systematic improvement and to correct deficiencies in public healthcare facilities.

To this end, 77 of our healthcare facilities are meeting the Ideal Clinic status. This means that these facilities have good infrastructure, adequate staff, adequate medical supplies, good administrative processes and adequate bulk supplies.

We are also continuing with our aggressive programme of the acquisition of the state-of-the-art ambulances.

Last year we reported that we had delivered an additional 50 of these ambulances to our healthcare facilities. We further committed to acquire and deliver more for the year under review.

It is my pleasure to report that we did deliver on this commitment. 50 state-of-the-art ambulances have since been delivered to various health facilities across the province.

Once more, we are committing to procure yet another batch of 50 ambulances. In the same vein we will recruit more skilled

paramedics, especially the Advanced Life Supporters.

This acquisition of modern ambulances and the recruitment of Advanced Life Supporters will indeed go a long way in saving lives.

**Madam Speaker;**

After a four-year long battle, the Province has managed to reduce the maternal HIV vertical transmission from 2% to 1.1% against a target of 1.4%.

Our TB treatment success rate is at 82%, whilst our Multi Drug Resistance TB treatment success rate is at 87.7%.

We have also managed to reduce the malaria case fatality rate from 1.68% in the year 2014/15 to 1.04% in the year 2015/16. In the same period, malaria cases declined from 8 045 to 1 538.

As part of the National Health Insurance pilot programme, the province has also started with the implementation of the Centralized Chronic Medicine Dispensary and Distribution Programme in the Vhembe district.

**Madam Speaker;**

As we have said last year the programme to ensure a fully-fledged Medical School in the Province is well underway.

The undertaking by the Minister of Finance during the presentation of his budget speech on Wednesday is much welcome. His commitment to work with his counterparts on the planning of both the Limpopo Academic Hospital and the new Medical School will

help us move with the necessary speed.

Equally pleasing is the fact that Polokwane Municipality has now made the land available for the construction of this Academic Hospital. This will go a long way towards achieving our commitment to ensure quality healthcare in the province.

In the same vein, the construction of the Siloam Hospital has begun in earnest.

**Madam Speaker and honourable members;**

The fight against crime and corruption is high on the agenda of this government. We are relentless in our commitment to fight crime and corruption, both in the private and the public sector.

It is in this context that we are strengthening the Provincial Anti-Corruption Forum with a view to bring all stakeholders in the fight against corruption on board.

I also call on the municipalities to implement all the findings from commissioned forensic reports.

**Madam Speaker;**

Our approach in fighting crime is also to address the social enablers of crime. Amongst those, we have identified the rampant mushrooming of liquor outlets in our communities, some in close proximity to schools and places of worship.

Related to this is the proliferation of illegal substances such as dagga and the deadly **nyaope** in our communities.

However, the war against the illegal sale of alcohol and the pushing of illegal substances is in full swing. By September 2016 we had closed about 250 unlicensed liquor outlets in this province. In the same period, we had conducted 44 894 inspections at licensed liquor outlets to ensure continuous compliance with the law.

We have also impressed upon the Provincial Liquor Board to review the licences of all liquor outlets that are near our schools and places of worship. To that end, I call upon this august House to expedite the amendment of the Limpopo Liquor Act.

### **Honourable Members;**

Just last week I woke up to the news of young people in Dan Village outside Tzaneen who were traumatising the community.

I wish to report to this august House that after our swift intervention about 14 gangsters have thus far been arrested. The people of Dan and surrounding villages are now living in peace. I am therefore imploring police to work much harder to eradicate gangsterism in all manifestations at Dan Village.

### **Madam Speaker;**

Our focus is also on the crimes of the violation of traffic rules. In this regard, we are increasing our capacity to deal with traffic transgressions and to make our roads safer and reliable.

It is for this reason that we have set aside an amount of **R252 million** for the refurbishment of the Limpopo Traffic College. We look forward to what will be a modern facility to serve the needs of Limpopo and beyond.



As we committed last year, we have almost completed the recruitment of 250 young people for training as Traffic Officers.

We have already appointed a number of Driving Schools to offer driving lessons to about 1 500 Grade 11 and 12 learners across the Province.

**Madam Speaker and honourable members;**

Limpopo is the home of tremendous talent in the family of sport, arts and recreation.

The footprint of Limpopo is all over the national and international stage - thanks to our talented and forever hardworking athletes and artists.

At the recent Rio Olympic Games, our golden girl, Caster Semenya won gold in the 800 meter race. In the process she set a new national record by convincingly winning the race in one minute 55.28 seconds.

She was later bestowed with the South African Sportswoman of the Year Award in Bloemfontein. ***A deserving honour indeed!***

Another one from our shining galaxy of stars is known simply as Bra Hlompho Kekana.

This Limpopo born-and-bred soccer maestro, who has graced this occasion, put us on the world map. He is the first South African whose goal was nominated for the prestigious FIFA Puskás Award in 2016.

Last year we also saw our youngsters from Benny's Sports

Academy in Makhado representing our country at the Danone Nations Cup in France. This is the world's biggest football tournament for children aged between 10 and 12. Mr. Benny the founder of Benny's Sports Academy is also in our midst.

On the musical front, Limpopo artists are dominating the national stage. Last year visitors from outside the country would have been forgiven to think that the country had adopted a new national anthem in the form of '*ska bhora moreki*'.

We congratulate our son, Khutso Kgale, otherwise known as King Monada, for putting Khelobedu music and Limpopo on the national map. King Monada is also here with us today.

Our very own Dr Tumi is also ruffling the feathers in the music industry. This super-talented son of the soil has recently won six awards at the SABC Crown Gospel Awards in Durban. While Dr Tumi dazzles Gospel music fans, he continues to practice medicine, making immense contributions to our country's healthcare services. We are blessed with the presence of Dr. Tumi who has graced this occasion.

### **Madam Speaker;**

Last year during the State of the Province Address I expressed our intention to construct a state-of-the-art provincial performance theatre.

Today I can announce to the people of Limpopo that this state-of-the-art provincial performance theatre will finally be built in Polokwane. This theatre will be constructed at the corner of Oost

and Grobblers streets.

This project will amongst other things help ignite cultural industry, promote our rich and diverse cultures and create jobs opportunities.

**Madam Speaker;**

The Mapungubwe Festival is becoming a signature event in the country's entertainment calendar.

This festival promotes social cohesion, provides a platform for artists to display their artistic talents and ensures economic spinoffs for the province.

During the last Mapungubwe Festival, a number of crafters who had an opportunity to display their crafts, generated substantial income.

Another striking event on the province's social calendar is the Annual Marula Festival. The popularity and success of this event has reached monumental proportions. Last year, the festival attracted about 30 000 people.

This year's celebrations started a week ago, and will culminate in a Jazz Festival next Saturday. This festival always draws hundreds of visitors from our neighbouring countries such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia. This year's guest list includes people from as far as South America.

The economic spinoffs of this festival are unrivalled. More than 13 Cooperatives under the Mukumbi Industries will brew 12 000 litres of marula beverages for the public throughout the festival.

Apart from marula beverages, local entrepreneurs will also be selling other bi-products of marula, such as jam, cooking oil, soap, hand and body lotions and nuts.

A festival of this nature ***ke sentšwela-kae***.

I therefore take this opportunity to invite all the people of Limpopo to make time, and be part of this year's Marula festivities.

**Madam Speaker;**

As OR Tambo once stated "***the children of any nation are its future. A country that does not value its youth does not deserve its future***".

Over the past 23 years of freedom and democracy, the ANC government has put youth development at the centre of the reconstruction and development of this country.

Last year alone, various institutions of Limpopo Provincial Government gave bursaries to no less than 2 135 young people to study in various fields.

In terms of the Artisan Development Initiative, we set aside R17 million to cater for no less than 420 learners in electrical, bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing, road supervision, building and civil construction.

The other area of focus was on the Air Traffic Controller Bursary Training Programme. No less than 35 learners have benefitted from R34.5 million that we set aside to empower young people in this regard.

## **Honourable members;**

Through the Services SETA Skills Development Programme, we have seen no less than 190 young people placed on learnerships in electrical and diesel mechanical trade at a cost of R7.5 million.

I am also proud to report that in 2016 we placed no less than 3 298 young people on learnership, internship and experiential training programmes in various government departments.

I must also hasten to indicate that this year we will be recruiting about 500 young artisans to be stationed at our healthcare facilities across the province. These young people will assist us on electro-mechanical, plumbing, carpentry and all maintenance-related work.

I have also directed LEDA to commit more resources towards developing and empowering cooperatives led by youth, women and people living with disabilities.

## **Madam Speaker;**

We have begun with the process of crafting the Limpopo Youth Development Strategy. This Strategy will clearly define the youth development agenda in the province.

In this regard, we will convene the Provincial Youth Development Summit, by no later than October 2017, where young people will come together under one roof to determine their own future.

I have also read on the ANC Youth League **social media page on**

**SOPA** about the dire need for sanitary towels for our young girls. This is one of the many challenges that confront young women, particularly those of the school-going age.

I am, therefore, directing the MECs for Health and Education to advise the Executive Council on how government can intervene as a matter of urgency in this regard. No girl child must be denied an opportunity to learn because of conditions beyond her control.

I, therefore, wish to applaud the ANC Youth League for this initiative.

**Madam Speaker;**

Our efforts to build administration that is responsive and sensitive to the needs and aspirations of our people have begun to take shape.

We are also stabilising governance by putting systems to ensure that we are able to discharge our constitutional mandate.

We have just appointed a Director General for the Provincial Administration. We have also appointed HODs for all provincial departments with the exception of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.

We should be able to finalise the appointment of the HOD for the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture by the end of March 2017.

These appointments should assist us to improve on overall governance, in particular the audit performance of departments.

## **Madam Speaker;**

A harmonious working relationship between the employer and organised labour is also a critical ingredient for good governance.

It is in this context, that in our engagement with organised labour, we have committed to working together to promote labour stability at workplace.

## **Honourable Members;**

Our collective task for the year ahead is well defined. Let us work in unity for the good of our province and its people. Let us master the art to subject our personal ambitions and aspirations to the broader ambitions of the people as a whole.

In line with the National Development Plan ‘we have to ensure that poor people have the environment, services and skills to improve their lives. At the same time, government must create the conditions and environment for higher levels of public and private investment to create jobs’.

We have come this far working together as a people of this Province, we must continue, united in action, to make Limpopo a better place to live in.

***Tau tša hloka seboka di šitwa ke nare e hlotša!***

**Ke tšhaba mediti!**

