

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE OFFICE OF THE PREMIER DELIVERED BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO MR CHUPU MATHABATHA AT THE LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, LEBOWAKGOMO (VOTE 1)

27 March 2018

Madam Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Limpopo Provincial Legislature;
Members of the Executive Council;
Chief Whip of the Ruling Party;
Chairpersons of various Portfolio Committees;
Esteemed Members of the House;
Distinguished guests;
Ladies and gentlemen;

We meet here today approximately a year before the whole South Africa goes into yet another milestone event---the democratic national elections of 2019. These elections are a yard stick that determines the legitimacy of those who rule and those who are ruled.

It is on that reason that the ANC government have found it prudent that the year 2018 is dedicated to Isithalandwe, the founding President of a democratic South Africa, President Nelson Mandela. We celebrate this year 100 years of his life and dedication to the freedoms that we cherish this much.

We have also said during the State of the Province address a few weeks ago that we are dedicating 2018 to another stalwart of our freedoms, Mama Albertina Sisulu. She could have been 100 years old, should she still be alive.

Last week thousands of Limpopo people gathered at Mnghonghoma village near Giyani to celebrate Human Rights day. You could see from the joyful faces of young and old that the Human Rights are not only enshrined in the Bill of Rights, but embedded in their hearts.

They told us in not so many words, that the restitution of land without compensation is the greatest gift this government has ever given to them.
Honourable Speaker,

The Office of the Premier is the heartbeat of the Province, and we are not oblivious that all eyes, including those of this honourable house are on this Office with all scrutiny and expectations.

It is therefore without doubt that we understand that if the engine ceases, the whole vehicle stops. If the head suffers, the whole body suffers. It therefore goes without saying that we have dedicated all efforts that the Office of the Premier functions to the optimum. That it produces the best audit results

and functions efficiently and effectively in assisting the entire provincial administration.

The memories of President Nelson Mandela and those of Mama Albertina Sisulu cannot be preserved and fulfilled if we fail on this front.

Honourable Speaker,

As we enter the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the demands for efficient service delivery becomes more desperate.

There's therefore no doubt that the modern civil servant needs to be capacitated to meet any demand expected of them. They need to be active cadres ready for service at all times.

In view of this, the Office of the Premier in consultation with the Public Service Commission has initiated an SMS capacity building program. This program will improve their overall skills, and therefore realise that audit outcomes are of high standard within the Provincial administration.

We have also commenced with a high level program with an institution of high learning to offer us with training in Governance and Risk, Supply Chain Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, Finance and Fiscal management and also Project Management. Thus far, 107 SMS members have already participated in this program.

The Office will continue coordinating the programme during the financial year 2018/2019 to capacitate more SMS members in the soft and hard skills to improve the overall delivery of services.

Honourable Speaker,

I have instructed the Director General that more efforts are made to ensure the Province attain the Public Service and Administration 50% female representation target at SMS level within the administration.

Although we have improved our female SMS equity status to 40% in the Office of the Premier, the numbers should be balanced provincially.

I am also glad to report that we have so far managed to fill all HODs vacant positions that existed within the Provincial Administration. We consider this a milestone achievement considering the fact that in 2013 we did not even have a Director General.

The vacancy that occurred in the Public Works department, because of the resignation of that HOD at the end of December 2017, will be filled soon. The shortlisting has been finalised and soon there will be an appointment.

Honourable Speaker,

The Office of the Premier has developed a Strategic Frame Work that supports Departments in addressing some weaknesses within the administration. This after various bodies and institutions had raised concerns in this financial year. These bodies include amongst others, the Public Service Commission, the Auditor General, Audit Committees and Portfolio Committees.

The Strategy we have developed, aims at supporting departments to fulfil their legal and Constitutional mandates. It also provides mechanisms and platforms for providing both professional and administrative support to departments in order to improve compliance with basic and minimum regulatory and legislative framework.

Through this framework, the Office of the Premier will ensure that the capacity of the Provincial Administration is enhanced and administrative processes and procedures are improved to ultimately ensure service delivery excellence. To this end we have just completed the development of an automated Monitoring & Evaluation System that will be used at different levels to monitor, manage and to take informed decisions towards improving service delivery.

Honourable Speaker

In 2015 I launched a Limpopo Anti-Corruption Forum comprising of esteemed members of communities including business, labour and faith based organisations.

On that front, we have suggested that the Chairperson of the Anti-Corruption Forum be appointed from the civil society as a way of strengthening the fight against this scourge. We cannot be referees and players at the same time. To show that we are serious on issues of corruption, the Office has already commissioned forensic audits to deal with corruption in the Province. Some of the forensic audits that we have commissioned include, investigations of irregular expenditures in procurement within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Department. We are also eagerly waiting on a report of the Tubatse land acquisition case, which should be concluded as soon as possible.

There are many other cases in the pipeline, and I should assure this house that you will be updated as soon as they unfold.

Our commitment, Honourable Speaker, is to act decisively against corruption, both in the public and private sectors. Both the corruptor, corrupted and corruptee should know we are coming for them.

This, we will do using the strong anti-crime and anti-corruption institutions which we have at our disposal.

Honourable Speaker,

The Presidential and Premiers hotlines continue to be vehicles that our communities can report and expose service delivery complaints. Through these lines, we also acknowledge compliments and accolades we continue to receive when have done better.

Let me report here that, our Province is being commended as one of the best performing Provinces as over six thousand service delivery cases have so far been resolved. The majority of these cases include, lack of water, and conditions of our roads.

The Office is currently finalising the Water Management Plan and as I said during SOPA, a Water Summit will be held soon to adopt this, and develop strategies to curb several water challenges.

As government we have also made progress in implementing programmes aimed at improving the Quality of life of the vulnerable sectors of our society including Women, Youth, Children, Older persons and People with disabilities.

We have implemented policies to ensure women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities continue to enjoy the protection of the law against abuse. We have also improved access to education, health care and economic development opportunities to ensure that we reverse the marginalisation and social exclusion of the majority of our people. Our social security net continues to shield the poor from the indignity of abject poverty.

It is therefore my pleasure to announce that, in terms of the employment of people with disabilities, the Province has reached and complied with the 2% equity target at SMS level.

We have also heightened our grip in repositioning the Youth Development Plan to the centre of the government agenda with the finalisation of the Limpopo Youth Development Strategy.

The implementation of this plan should therefore be finalised within the coming few months, as we move towards the youth month. This we do in full recognition that, our Youth are the epicentre of our future.

Honourable Speaker,

The Office of the Premier has also made significant strides in assisting the 12 Provincial Departments in saving on the Microsoft Software Licenses. We have so far managed to save over R27 millions of tax payers monies, over a three (3) year period.

On this front an e-Government Strategic Workshop was held this financial year and the province's e-Government Strategy will be finalised in the 2018/2019 financial year.

All these are aimed at making Limpopo accessible by all citizens. We are also reducing duplication of systems and applications, developing and implementing an ICT infrastructure where citizens can access government's services without travelling long distances.

These should include availability of free Wi-fi for all people within the central business district of Polokwane where a lot of people including several colleges are based. We are also aware that most business centres in the Province already offer free Wi-Fi services, and we therefore applaud them.

Honourable Speaker,

The Office of the Premier is striving to meet the demands of a developmental state. To do that, we have finalised a number of legislation that include;
Election date for Local House of Traditional leaders,
Recognition notice in terms of the Traditional leadership institution Act, 2005,
General notice of Limpopo Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Bill of 2017,
Limpopo Unauthorised Expenditure Act, 2017,
Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Act of 2017,
Limpopo Appropriation Act , 2017;
Limpopo Economic Development Agency Act, 2017.

Honourable Speaker,

In terms of the monitoring and evaluation by this office, we managed to identify a few areas of weaknesses and those that needs improvement.

Together with institutions such as SASSA, SAPS, Health, Driver Learner centres, Education, Justice and Municipal Customer Care Centres we have established intervention mechanisms which will stand the test of time.

We have also set aside funds to evaluate two more projects in this financial year. These would include the models of laundry services in public hospitals and to evaluate our overloading control measures on our roads especially on the N1

highway road.

Although issues of International Relations rests with the Ministry at National level, my office will continue to lead the Province in creating mutually, rewarding relations in the areas of trade and investment, including social and cultural issues within the region.

The recently concluded MOUs and Action Plans between Limpopo and the four Northern Regions of Namibia, as pronounced in SOPA, will go a long way in growing the economies and creating the much needed jobs in the Province.

My Office is also in the process of collaborating with the political leadership of Matebeleland District and the City of Bulawayo with the aim of resuscitating an MOU signed in 2001.

The intent of the collaboration is amongst others, to facilitate the Limpopo Spatial Development Initiative.

Once concluded, this Initiative will come in handy as we develop the Musina/Makhado Special Economic Zone development.

Our final aim is that several thousands of our people should soon get the much needed job opportunities within the Province

Honourable Speaker,

Whilst appreciating the separation of powers, The Office of the Premier will continue to work hand-in-hand with the Legislature and cooperate fully with its suggestions and oversight duties.

I wish therefore to thank the Speakership, Chairpersons of all Committees and honourable members for their continuous advice. I also wish to single out Portfolio Committees such as the Public Administration, Quality of Life and Status of Women, Youth and Disability, Standing Committee of Public Accounts and their Chairpersons for their relentless work and oversight.

Let me also thank the Office of the Auditor General, the Provincial Treasury, the Chairperson of the Provincial Central Audit Committee, Ntate Maja and their teams for several unbiased advices.

Indeed the improvement of the 2016/17 audit outcomes have been a relentless team work, and I thank you.

I also wish to urge all MECs and HODs to ensure that the 2017/18 Audit outcomes are better than before. We cannot afford to regress anymore.

Lastly, but not the least, I wish to thank the Provincial Director General, Ntate Nape Nchabeleng and his team of dedicated men and women, and to them I wish to say, if we continue in this trend, Limpopo will soon be counted amongst the best in this country.

Honourable Speaker,

As at the end of February 2018, the Office had spent 89% of its allocated budget of R 405,060 million, compared to 87% spent on the final budget of R379, 766 million at the same time in the previous financial year.

The Office is allocated a budget of R420, 680 million for the 2018/19 financial year. The Medium Term estimates for 2019/20 and 2020/11 financial years are R437, 276 million and R461, 326 respectively.

It is therefore, my honour and privilege to table before this esteemed House, the 2018/19 budget vote for the Office of the Premier for appropriation:

I thank you.