

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

26 February 2016

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker;

Honourable members of the legislature and the NCOP;

Members of the Executive Council;

Executive Mayors and Mayors of our local municipalities;

The Governor of Gaza Province of Mozambique who has
graced this occasion

Members of the Diplomatic Corps; in particular the ambassador
of Venezuela and Deputy Ambassador of Cuba present here
today.

Acting Director General and Heads of Departments;

Provincial Commissioner the Police;

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;

Leadership of CONTRALESA, President in particular, Kgoši Setlamorago Thobejane, Ngwato wa Bauba;

Former MPs and MPLs;

Stalwarts and veterans of our struggle;

Heads of our Chapter nine and chapter ten institutions;

The Auditor General, Mr. Kimi Makwetu who is here with us today;

Leadership of religious community;

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

Archbishop EMM Mureri, of the United African Apostolic Church;

Leadership of organised business and labour;

Youth, women, community leaders and media representatives;

Distinguished guests;

Comrades, ladies and gentlemen:

It is my great pleasure to join all of you on this important occasion of the official opening of the provincial Legislature.

It gives me extra joy to note that so many of you take such an immense interest in the affairs of your government.

Your presence here today is more than a living testimony that ours is a government of the people by the people and for the people.

In the same vein, I should commend our Provincial Legislature under the leadership of Madam Speaker, Mme. Polly Boshielo, for having decided to bring this session of today to this hall, Jack Botes.

We appreciate this effort of taking parliament to the people. This is consistent with what the late Chris Hani once said, that **“popular involvement is the essence of democracy”**.

Madam Speaker

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the 1976 Student Uprisings. Young people from Soweto and other parts of the country fought against the gutter apartheid education system, especially the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in their schools.

In no uncertain terms, that historic march and the unwavering commitment of young people to the course of freedom accelerated the downfall of Apartheid regime. The bravery and tenacity with which they fought for free and compulsory quality education is worthy our accolades.

Today there is no child who can be denied access to education because of race or poor family background.

The befitting tribute we can pay to these young martyrs of 1976 is to jealously guard against the reversal of these milestone achievements.

We cannot afford to play with this freedom for it did not come free. We must defend it at all costs.

On our part as the provincial government, we re-commit ourselves to work together with the youth, both organised and unorganised, to put in place programmes that will make freedom and democracy more meaningful to our people.

The inputs that have been made by our people through various social media platforms have also been included in this speech. In this regard I would like to specifically thank the Speaker of our Legislature and the Youth League of the ruling party, the ANCYL, for creating a Facebook page for SOPA.

The majority of those who commented raised a whole range of issues including the acceleration of delivery of basic services, creation of decent jobs, skills development for youth, access to education, eradication of HIV/AIDS, and the fight against poverty, corruption, crass materialism and consumerism.

Madam Speaker

In response to these comments and also in view of the current

era of **Knowledge Economy**, our government will commit more resources towards skills development and job creation.

More emphasis will be on technology, integration of digital systems and zero wastage in line with this much-talked about ***Fourth Industrial Revolution***.

The former President of South Africa, President Nelson Mandela, once said, “***the youth of our country are a valued possession of our nation. Without them, there can be no Reconstruction and Development Programme. Without them there can be no future***”. It is with this understanding, that we have also assigned the Youth Development Directorate in the Office of the Premier to ensure that the youth empowerment programmes and policies are mainstreamed throughout the government departments and municipalities.

Youth empowerment is a non-negotiable imperative for this ANC government. It must be high on our developmental agenda.

Madam Speaker

It is also worth noting that over the past 22 years of freedom and democracy, young people have seized available opportunities to enhance their potential.

In this province we have South Africa's newest singing sensation, a young girl from Moletlane in Zebediela, Ms. Mmatema Moremi.

She flew the Limpopo flag very high during last year's Idols Competition. We are proud of her outstanding achievements.

Madam Speaker

We are also privileged to be graced by the presence of a highly accomplished young scientist who was born and bred in the dusty streets of Mokopane. His Doctorate was awarded with Bronte Stewart Research Prize for the most meritorious thesis.

He represented South Africa at the Annual Lindau Nobel Laureate meeting in Germany, at the Commonwealth Science Conference in India, and at the World Economic Forum New Champions meeting in China.

It is my singular honour to welcome here today Dr. Mohlopheni Jackson Marakalala.

Madam Speaker

As we mark the 60th anniversary of the 1956 women's march to Union Buildings, we must work much harder to restore the dignity of women as equal citizens in the land of their birth.

They must be empowered to play a meaningful role in all spheres of life. The same attitude must apply to other historically marginalised sectors of society, people living with disability in particular. They too have a role to play in our developmental agenda.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members;

During the previous State of the Province Address, I referred to a newly adopted economic development blueprint of our province, the Limpopo Development Plan. I indicated that this plan is underpinned by 10 high-level targets to be attained by 2020.

Although I will report on progress we have made towards attaining these targets, a more detailed report is being finalised by the Planning Unit in the Office of the Premier.

We have since decided to convene a Provincial Economic Indaba in May this year, and the detailed progress report in question will serve as a basis for discussions.

This Indaba will finalise our Industrialisation Strategy, review the infrastructure budget priorities and, above all, assess the role of State-owned Enterprises in the mainstream economy of the province. The time has come for us to live within the means.

Our SOEs must be streamlined, rationalised, made cost effective, self sufficient and, above all, empowered to respond to the current realities of our economy and add the necessary value to our developmental agenda.

Madam Speaker

Mining, as one of the major competitive advantages for our economy, will also feature prominently during this Indaba. This is mainly because we must, in earnest, start to explore advanced measures to beneficiate our mineral deposits. The beneficiation must be throughout the entire value-chain, both upstream and downstream.

We must do this with the view to expand the **productive capacity** of our local economy, and more importantly, position the industry along a sustainable growth path.

We must also impress upon the national government to expedite the review of the current legislation to ensure that our communities are at the heart of mining matters.

Our people must play a critical role, including in the approval of mining licences. This will not only help in holding mining right-holders accountable, but will bridge the trust deficit between the host communities, mining companies and government

Mining has also become a driver of growth in many strategic economic sectors such as manufacturing and financial

services, and it must therefore be central in the development of our industrialisation strategy.

Madam Speaker

However, as we meet here today, we are, unfortunately, confronted with the reality of a very unfriendly local and global economic climate.

As the President of the country said during the State of the Nation Address on the 11th of February, **“The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank predict that the South African economy will grow by less than 1% this year”**.

The Reserve Bank has also adjusted the economic growth forecast for our country to 1.6% in 2017.

One of the reasons for the downgrade in anticipated growth is the slowing down of the Chinese economy. This situation impacts on South Africa by way of reduced demand for our commodities, such as coal, iron ore and platinum. Brazil and Russia which are our partners in BRICS are no exception.

Madam Speaker

As a province, we are directly affected by this reduction in demand because we are the primary exporter of these commodities. This drop in demand will negatively impact on our LDP average growth target of 3%.

We are therefore compelled by this global economic reality to become more innovative and not only rely on the tailwinds of favourable commodity markets.

It is in this context that the envisaged Economic Indaba must provide long-lasting solutions to these vexing questions.

Madam Speaker;

According to the Stats SA Labour Force Survey, Limpopo has created 147 000 jobs in the year 2015. In the third quarter of 2015 alone, we have created no less 59 000 jobs.

In the whole country, we are in the third position after KZN and Gauteng in terms of job creation. **“Ka nnete mošomo o tšhaba diatla”**

Whilst we are much better as compared to the national average of 25%, the rate of unemployment in our province remains unacceptably high at 18.9%.

Government Service and Trade, which includes tourism, remain the biggest employers in the province.

Madam Speaker

We have also reduced dependency index from 8 (eight) in 2006 to 6 (six) in 2014. This means that in our province, for every one person employed, there are, on average, 6 people who depend on the income of that person.

Although this drop in dependency signifies progress, it is still unacceptably high and we must therefore work much harder to reduce it to at least 3 (three). This will significantly improve household income.

Madam Speaker

Notwithstanding the slowdown in economic growth, the private sector investment into the mining has begun to see some improvements.

In the previous state of the province we announce a planned investment involving the South African Women Investment Holdings, Jidong Development Group and China Africa Development Fund.

This R1.65 billion investment was for a Mamba Cement Manufacturing Company in Thabazimbi.

It is with great pleasure to announce that the construction of the plant is now complete. It created 231 permanent jobs and 550 temporary jobs. The project has been commissioned with the final 30 day plant test due in March this year.

50 South Africans will be trained in China on how to operate this type of plant. They will be sent in groups once the commissioning of the plant is completed.

It's my pleasure therefore to welcome one of the investors in this plant, Mrs. Gloria Serobe and her entourage, who have graced this occasion.

Madam Speaker

Last year, I also announced another investment worth R38,8 billion for the establishment of a South African Energy Metallurgical Base Project in the Musina Special Economic Zone.

I am happy to announce that our SEZ application, one of the first in the country for that matter, has successfully served before the National SEZ Advisory Board in January this year. We are awaiting the final approval by Cabinet before the end of next month.

We are also hopeful that our second application for the establishment of SEZ in Tubatse will enjoy similar support.

Once approved, these Special Economic Zones will attract more investments, and obviously put our province on a higher trajectory of economic development.

Our trade and investment mission to Russia in October last year was also a success. The Bashkortostan Province of Russia expressed keen interest to invest in our envisaged Special Economic Zones.

In this regard and in an effort to strengthen the existing economic relations with Russia, a cooperation agreement on areas of common interest between Limpopo and Bashkortostan Province is being finalised.

Madam Speaker

Last year I made a commitment to convene a Provincial Water and Sanitation Summit to deal with water management and related challenges in the province.

I am happy to announce that the Summit has since been convened. The summit, amongst others, resolved that a Limpopo Water Master Plan should be developed as a matter of urgency. The development of this plan is at an advanced stage and will be finalised before the end of April 2016.

Madam Speaker,

I must also hasten to indicate that the Minister of Public Works has convened a high-level technical team. This team will assist the province with the implementation of water reticulation to communities adjacent to mega-projects affecting the Sekhukhune District Municipality, Polokwane City and Mogalakwena Local Municipality.

The success of this intervention would also have a major impact on the economic potential of the identified municipalities. It will also go a long way towards responding to the challenges of drought in the province.

Madam Speaker

As part of the process to unlock the Northern Mineral Belt with Waterberg as a catalyst, Medupi Unit 6 achieved commercial operation last year in August.

We expect the first synchronisation of the 2nd Unit, that is, Unit 5, to take place in the 2nd half of this year and to achieve full commercial operation in the 1st half of next year.

The contribution of Medupi Power Station to the National Grid has brought much needed relief in terms of energy supply in the country. Load-shedding has indeed become a thing of the past.

Madam Speaker;

The tourism sector remains one of the strategic economic competitive advantages of our province.

Despite the economic challenges I have already alluded to, this sector has recorded a steady growth and managed to employ more people.

Limpopo is currently enjoying the number one spot in the domestic tourism market space. Most South Africans enjoy visiting Limpopo.

We are also happy to announce that we have since restructured Limpopo Tourism Agency to have an exclusive and focussed attention to tourism as an industry. Our natural scenic beauty and new tourism offerings are the necessary stimulants for the market.

All the role players in the sector, must therefore work together to ensure that Limpopo becomes a preferred destination of choice for many.

Madam Speaker;

The Limpopo Development Plan highlights the importance of SMMEs and Cooperatives as game-changers in job creation, redistribution of economic assets and poverty reduction.

We will continue to support SMMEs and Cooperatives to obtain growth, increase skills levels, and more importantly create more jobs.

We remain committed to ensuring that at least 10% of government procurement goes to SMMEs and Cooperatives. All major projects must have localisation procurement thrust to ensure that SMMEs and Cooperatives are developed into credible suppliers.

In this regard we have assigned LEDA to provide the necessary support to both these sectors. An emphasis should be on business to cooperatives in our villages and vast farmlands of Limpopo to stimulate the rural economy.

Madam Speaker;

On the issue of knowledge economy alluded to earlier on, we are in the process of implementing the broadband infrastructure project in line with the National Broadband Policy.

The planned rollout of the broadband infrastructure programme is expected to cover over 80% of the provincial population, including government institutions such as health and educational facilities.

LEDA has also been given a responsibility to establish a dedicated unit to rollout the programme in the province.

Madam Speaker and Honourable members of the House;

Road infrastructure continues to play a significant role in the economy of the province and the country as a whole.

In the previous state of the province address, we committed an amount of R1.2 billion to roll out more than 12 major road infrastructure projects across the province.

We are proud to announce that we made significant progress in this regard. The projects we have constructed include 4

bridges, the upgrade of 407 km gravel roads to tar, and the rehabilitation of 173 km of tarred roads.

It is also worth mentioning that we are in the process of upgrading the following roads from gravel to tar:

- Ga-Phasha, Mampuru, Tukakgomo to Makgabane
- Mmotwane/Legolaneng, Mohlalotwane, Moeding, Serithing to Ramogwerane
- Makuya to Masisi
- Apel to Mmabulela
- Morebeng to Sekgosese
- Matsakale, Altein to Shangoni Kruger National Park Gate
- Marken, Segole to Gilead; and
- Settlers to Witlaagte

It is also my pleasure to announce that by the 1st of April 2016 the contractors of some of the remaining “Bermuda” roads will be on site.

Madam Speaker and the House;

The Limpopo Development Plan identifies industrialisation as the backbone for economic development in the province. It is however important to note that this cannot be achieved without a thriving agricultural sector.

Agriculture is important both for the creation of the much needed jobs and for our food security.

However, as we all know, the current drought in the province has had unpleasant consequences on the sector.

This drought condition has also affected our ***Fetsa Tlala*** programme. As a result we had to revise down our targets and focus only on those areas where there is sufficient water for irrigation.

In this regard, it is important to emphasise two points. The first thing to note is that Limpopo is a water scarce province which faces challenges of drought from time to time; secondly, drought is a natural phenomenon that cannot be prevented.

It is in this context that we have declared our province a **disaster area** in November of 2015. Notwithstanding our limited resources, we have set aside an amount of R3 million to assist affected farmers through the provision of livestock feeds.

We believe this will go a long way towards relieving the burden and also help maintain the provincial food security and employment.

An additional amount of R51 million was also reprioritised from the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme, CASP, and ***Illima/Letšema*** allocations to catch up with the demand for

fodder and livestock water required for the communal small scale and subsistence farmers in the Province.

Madam Speaker;

Last year we announced that we have managed to open Madzivhandlila and Tompi Seleka Agricultural Colleges. The student enrolment for both colleges has since increased from 140 in 2015 to 222 in 2016.

The colleges are indeed fully functional and have begun to make an impact in skills development in the agricultural sector. There is no doubt that we are well on track towards producing crop and animal scientists in the province.

This year, the focus will be on developing the infrastructure and administrative systems of the colleges to keep up with the standards set by the Council on Higher Education.

Madam Speaker and honourable members;

Over the past 22 years of freedom and democracy we have made significant inroads in increasing the literacy levels of our people, the African majority in particular.

This finds an expression in the number of historically marginalized individuals playing a meaningful role in the mainstream economy.

There is no doubt that we are on track towards fulfilling the dream of our forebears when they met in Kliptown in 1955 and said that, “***the doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all***”.

In 2015 Limpopo alone registered an unprecedented student enrollment of 101 575 sitting for Grade 12 examinations, an increase of 39.2% from 2014. This is a massive achievement, particularly for an under-resourced province such as ours.

Although in percentage terms our 2015 Grade 12 results have decreased by 7%, the actual numbers confirm that we have passed more learners than ever before. In qualitative terms, we have also increased the number of learners with bachelor pass from 16 325 in 2014 to 20 992 in 2015.

The focus this year will largely be on Sekhukhune and Waterberg Districts that have performed below both the national and provincial averages.

We have set ourselves a target of 80%, and we simply cannot afford to regress any further.

In this regard we call on all stakeholders, parents, educators, learners and organs of civil society alike, to join government in its efforts to provide an uninterrupted learning and teaching in all our schools.

All of us must have zero tolerance for any disruptive behaviour in our schools. However legitimate the demands could be, you must never interrupt and interfere with the education of our children.

Madam Speaker;

The creation of a conducive environment for learning and teaching is also high on the agenda of this government.

To that end, we have prioritised addressing such critical issues as the inappropriate school infrastructure, the repairs to storm damaged schools, the provisioning of additional classrooms to areas experiencing growth, and the provisioning of water and sanitation in all our schools.

Madam Speaker;

As part of a temporary relief, we are providing mobile classrooms where immediate accommodation is needed.

Over the past three years we have spent R2.9 billion on school infrastructure to address the areas I have already mentioned. We have also budgeted R2.4 billion over the next three years to continue with this infrastructure delivery work in our schools.

For this year the focus will be on teacher development, with more emphasis subject content, methodology and assessment in all of our districts. Priority attention will also be given to Maths, Science and technology subjects.

Madam Speaker;

The provision of integrated and sustainable quality services to the vulnerable groups such as children, people with disabilities, women and older persons is the centre-piece of our development agenda.

It is in this context that I have assigned the MEC for Social Development to establish a coherent and solid partnership with Community Based Organisations and other relevant stakeholders.

In this regard, we have capacitated 3 248 Community Based Organisations, thanks to our good working relationship with the National Department of Social Development.

In the same vein, an amount of R4 million was transferred to the National Development Agency in the province to capacitate no less than 200 Non-Profit Organisations.

I must also announce that in the next financial year, we will be providing similar training to another 200 Community Based Organisations. We firmly believe that this will go a long way towards making the Community Based Organisations adding the required value to the sustainable livelihood and safety nets of our people.

Madam Speaker and honourable members;

Our public health system has experienced significant improvement over the last two years. It is making a remarkable recovery from the widely-reported challenges of shortage of emergency vehicles, shortage of healthcare professionals, dilapidating infrastructure and general shortage of critical equipments.

Our **Health Turnaround Strategy** has indeed begun to take shape.

As we promised, we have bought no less than 150 state-of-the-art ambulances in this financial year.

The next financial year will see us purchasing more ambulances, including Planned Patient Transport and mobile clinics to assist in those areas where we still have shortages.

These ambulances will bring much relief to Emergency Medical Services in the province and save more lives.

By December 2015 over 38 healthcare facilities had undergone major refurbishments. We will be continuing with this infrastructure development work across our hospitals, clinics and health centres.

To improve the availability and accessibility of medicines, we have approved direct deliveries of medicines to two tertiary institutions and four regional hospitals in the province.

Madam Speaker;

In 2014, His Excellency, President Jacob Zuma announced that Limpopo is going to have its own medical school. Subsequently, I committed the provincial government to offer bursaries to the first intake of these medical students.

Today I feel proud to announce to the people of Limpopo that a medical school in the province is no longer just a pipe-dream. It is a reality.

This medical school which is at University of Limpopo admitted its first group of 60 students last month.

As the provincial government, we have since offered these students full bursaries to the tune of R10 million for their studies.

I would like to take this opportunity therefore, to congratulate these students for making this history, especially the 15 year old Junior Mkhombo from Thulamahashe. Let me also take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Mkhombo who is with us in the gallery.

Madam Speaker

We are also delighted to announce that finally the province will have its own academic hospital. The process of appointing a

developer is underway. The construction should commence by November this year.

These major developments will obviously go a long way towards improving access to primary healthcare in the province, and more importantly, the training of medical professionals.

These also complement successful programme of sending young people to Cuba to study medicine. In September last year we sent yet another group of 110 students to Cuba. To date we have 394 students who are at various levels of study in Cuba. We expect 19 of these students to return to the province next year for their final clinical training.

Madam Speaker;

According to the National Antenatal Sentinel HIV Prevalence Survey released in December 2015, Limpopo has in the last five years shown a slight yet very important decline in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

The prevalence rate in our province has decreased from 22.3% in 2012 to 20.35% in 2013. This means that our efforts have shielded thousands of our young people from contracting this disease.

To date a total number of 248 578 is on the ARV programme. This represents a massive increase of over 16 000 more patients.

We urge our youth not to rush into sexual relationships; those who are already in this type of relationships are encouraged to remain faithful to their partners and to condomise.

We are also happy that province is winning the war against maternal mortality. We have reduced incidents of maternal death from 226 in 2014 to 145 in 2015. Our aim is to completely eradicate these preventable deaths.

No woman should lose her life for simply bringing life to this world; on the contrary, they should live long enough to see their children grow. It is also with this understanding that we have recently converted about 20 ambulances to obstetrics ambulances.

Madam Speaker and honourable members;

In a few months time South Africans will participate in fourth democratic local government elections. This is yet another platform created by our freedom to elect government of our choice.

The Independent Electoral Commission has announced the 5th and 6th of March this year as voter registration dates. I therefore call on all eligible citizens, especially first time voters, to seize this opportunity to ensure that your names are on the voters roll.

In the same vein, the National Municipal Demarcation Board has announced the new municipal boundaries. These new boundaries have since been gazetted, and this has obviously changed the face of local government in our province. The affected areas are in Vhembe, Sekhukhune, Capricorn and Waterberg.

Some of the municipalities in these areas will amalgamate whilst others will be disestablished after the 2016 local government elections.

On our part as the provincial government, we have put in place a **Transition Committee** to help provide leadership and ensure a seamless transition from the old dispensation to the new.

Madam Speaker;

Over the past twelve months we have worked in partnership with South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to ensure successful implementation of Back-to-Basics Strategy in all our municipalities.

The focus was largely on the area of financial management, infrastructure delivery, institutional capacity, public participation and good governance.

Nevertheless, the recent audit outcomes in municipalities suggest that a lot still needs to be done.

Waterberg District Municipality continues to lead by example. The District Municipality together with Bela-Bela and Lephalale have received unqualified audit opinion.

We also have the Capricorn District Municipality leading by example. The District with its local municipalities of Polokwane and Molemole has also received unqualified audit opinions.

The Sekhukhune District Municipality and its local municipality of Makhuduthamaga have both received unqualified audit outcomes.

Nevertheless, we have noted that there are some municipalities that continue to get unacceptable audit opinions despite these

concerted efforts to support them. I am particularly concerned that these municipalities continue to be qualified in the same issues.

These issues include poor record management, lack of proper asset management and non-compliance with supply chain policies.

Of particular concern are municipalities that continue to perform below par by receiving disclaimers and adverse opinions. These include Mopani District, Vhembe District, Ephraim Mogale, Thabazimbi, Mogalakwena, and Greater Tubatse.

This is unacceptable, and must come to an end.

In this regard I have directed the MEC for COGSTA to ensure that necessary remedial actions are taken.

I must emphatically stress that there must be consequences for poor performance.

Madam Speaker;

In the previous State of the Province Address I announced that we have assigned the Provincial Infrastructure Development Hub to develop a mechanism to help municipalities improve on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant expenditure.

We are pleased that most municipalities are beginning to increase their MIG expenditure. For an example, last year we only congratulated two municipalities that had spent above 50% by the end of the 2nd quarter of the financial year. These municipalities were Bela-Bela at 55% and Giyani at 78%.

Today we have a sizable number of our municipalities that have spent above the 50% mark at the end of the 2nd quarter.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to congratulate the following municipalities:

- Greater Tzaneen at 60.15%
- Greater Giyani at 62.93%
- Blouberg at 68.16%
- Fetakgomo at 69.52%
- Makhado at 71.91%
- Ephraim Mogale at 73.32%
- Bela-Bela at 74.285
- Maruleng at 92.28%

- Lephalale at 98.24%
- Ba-Phalaborwa at 98.78%, and lastly;
- Modimolle at 100%

I have directed the MECs for CoGHSTA and Provincial Treasury to provide hands-on comprehensive support on financial management and infrastructure project management to the municipalities that are still lagging behind.

Madam Speaker;

In the previous State of the Province Address, we reported on the challenges that affected our plan to build houses for our people.

We have since adopted a multi-year **Human Settlement Delivery Turnaround Strategy** that is anchored on four pillars. These pillars include *beneficiary management, geo-technical reports and foundation designs, partnership with material supplier, and contract management.*

Our capacity to deliver on human settlement has since increased phenomenally.

I am pleased to announce that as at the end of January this year, we have managed to build no less than **7740** houses for our people. This represents a 74.2% increase compared to 2000 houses we built in the previous financial year.

As promised, we have also handed over the Seshego Community Residential Units to deserving beneficiaries. By this we have ensured that these families have their dignity restored.

Madam Speaker

The government has listened to those of our people who are too rich for an RDP House yet too poor for a bond from a commercial bank (the gap market). The partnership between DPISA, CoGHSTA and RISIMA is ensuring that we are able to provide housing for the gap market.

We will ultimately not have people, who despite working, are unable to provide shelter to their families.

Madam Speaker;

The institution of traditional leadership has and continues to play an important role in nation building, reconstruction and development of our country.

The majority of our people are under the leadership of traditional leaders.

It is against this background that I announced last year the introduction of a Medical AID benefit to our traditional leaders. I also made a commitment to purchase vehicles for traditional leaders as a way of assisting them to carry out their responsibilities.

It is my pleasure to announce here today that we have since delivered on this commitment. 105 vehicles have since been purchased for our traditional leaders.

For the first time our kings will have a budget allocation to discharge their responsibilities. We have allocated no less than R5 million to two kingships in our province.

Other challenges relating to the institution of traditional leadership, including the appointment of headmen and the establishment of traditional councils, are receiving our priority attention.

I must also announce that we have extended the term of the Kgatla Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims with another two years to deal with outstanding disputes and claims.

Madam Speaker and honourable members;

The National Development Plan visualises a society where people are living safely without fear of crime; a society where women, children and all vulnerable groups feel protected.

Our approach to fighting crime is through community mobilisation and cooperation. We continue to engage communities through outreach programmes which are necessary to foster the culture of trust and cooperation.

The SAPS in the province continues to engage in anti-crime community mobilisation programmes which include, crime awareness campaigns, Imbizos, exhibitions and schools visits.

Madam Speaker;

As we have said during the last State of the Province Address, the fight against corruption remain high on the agenda of this government.

We also called on all organs of civil society to join hands with government to fight and defeat this social ill that compromises the moral fibre of society.

It is in this context that we have re-launched the Anti-Corruption Forum in the province.

Madam Speaker;

When we met last year during the opening of this Legislature, the Cabinet had just taken a decision to move Limpopo from Section 100(1) (b) to Section 100 (1) (a).

As we meet here today, we are happy to announce that the Cabinet has just taken a decision to completely withdraw Section 100 administration from our province.

This is a sign and vote of confidence in our provincial administration.

By the end of next month there will no longer be Section 100 in this province. The only department where the Cabinet has considered conditional withdrawal is Education. This is mainly on account of the outstanding challenges in respect of supply chain and overall financial management.

Nevertheless, the Cabinet is happy with the progress we are making in this department since our intervention through Section 18 of the PFMA.

Madam Speaker;

If the comments of the Auditor General, Mr. Kimi Makwetu, are anything to go by, we are well on track towards reclaiming good corporate governance in our province.

In his words the AG says:

“...there has been improvement in the area of consequence management where the provincial leadership took action against poor performance, which led to officials bearing consequences for poor performance and transgressions....”

The AG went further to say that:

“..There was notable reduction in reported irregular as well as fruitless and wasteful expenditure of 41% and 34% respectively....(that)..the Provincial Treasury and the Office

of the Premier play a critical role in the drive towards clean administration..”

Madam Speaker;

In his State of the Nation Address, President Jacob Zuma urged all of us to undertake to spend public funds wisely and to cut wasteful expenditure.

The President further announced a package of measures tailored to assist government to curb unnecessary and wasteful expenditure. These measures, which we fully agree with and would be implementing in the province include:

- Curtailing of overseas trips
- Putting restrictions on conferences, catering, entertainment and social functions.

I must emphasize the point that these measures are not only directed at government departments. Our municipalities and State Owned Entities will also be subjected to these restrictions.

Madam Speaker and honourable members;

Young people of this province, particularly those in the art and entertainment business have been calling on us as government to create a platform for them to showcase their talent and skills.

I am happy to announce that the government has listened to the pleas of these young people; we have already secured a site for the construction of a Provincial Theatre.

We have allocated a budget to this project and we are currently busy with a feasibility study.

This Theatre which is expected to be constructed in Polokwane will not only assist in unleashing the potential of our youth but will also create job opportunities.

Mapungubwe Art Festival continues to play a major role in nation building and social cohesion. In this regard I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Limpopo and the rest of others from other regions who had joined us in the last year's week-long Mapungubwe festivities.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture will also resuscitate both the Literary Competition and the Literary Awards. This will encourage our young people to contribute towards knowledge production and preservation, through the art of writing.

The Department will also bring back to life the once popular “**I can sing project**”. This will assist to unearth raw singing talent amongst our young people.

Just like art and culture, sport also plays an important role in uniting our people.

I therefore wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Baroka FC who are doing exceptionally well in the National First Division. They are currently number one in the National First Division.

The Chairman and members of the technical staff have joined us in this chamber today.

I also wish Polokwane City well in their important fight to remain in the Premier Soccer League. We want to say to them that like true soldiers they must never retreat from the battle to remain in the PSL.

Also requiring our support is Black Leopards whose fight for survival in the NFD is just as important.

Our wish is to have all these teams enjoying a solid presence in the PSL.

Honourable Members;

Working together we have come this far; united in action we can do more.

Our collective efforts have accelerated the advance towards a dream of a better life for all.

This is not the time to be despondent; neither is it the time to relent.

As Comrade Moses Kotane has said:

"At this hour of destiny, your country and your people need you. The future of South Africa is in your hands and it will be what you make of it".

In the same vein, Abraham Lincoln says;

"Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of the Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honour or dishonour of the latest generation. We say we are for the Union, the world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We, even, we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free-----honourable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth. Other means may succeed, this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just--- a way which if followed the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless".

There is no nobler a course than to serve humanity.

Mogoma ga o tsene temeng, gobane lehono go phala maabane, ka moswane go tla phala lehono

Molete Sekuba!