

Sate of the Province Address Delivered by the Premier of Limpopo Province MR Cassel Mathale to the Second Session of the Fourth Democratic Legislature, Lebowakgomo

Theme "2010 a year of action"

18th of February 2010

Honourable Speaker;
Deputy Speaker;
Members of the Legislature and NCOP;
Members of the Executive Council;
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Judge President of the North and South Gauteng Justice Bernard Ngoepe;
Executive Mayors and Mayors of local municipalities;
Commissioner of Police;
Director General and Heads of Departments;
Leaders of Opposition Parties;
Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders;
Our esteemed Majesties and Royal Highnesses;
Former MPs and MPLs;
Provincial Secretary of the ANC Cde Joe Maswanganyi;
Stalwarts and Veterans of our struggle;
Leaders of Chapter Nine and Ten Institutions;
Leadership of various religious formations;
Leadership of business and labour;
Youth, women, community leaders and media representatives;
Distinguished guests;
Comrades, ladies and gentlemen

On the 2nd of February 1990, 20 years back, history was made in South Africa, the African Continent and the world over, when the African National Congress and all other political parties were unbanned. The moment that will remain in our memories and in the positive pages of history is when President Nelson Mandela walked out of the prison gates on the 11th of February 1990, in what is correctly captured as the major turning point of history in our struggle for freedom, democracy and equality for all.

History will judge us harshly if we forget that this year also marks the 20th anniversary of the return of the African National Congress President General Oliver Reginald Tambo after having spent more than three decades in exile waging and leading a guerilla warfare and diplomatic offensive against the oppressive system.

All these events occurred as a result of the epic fight and the resistance that our people waged against the apartheid regime.

When speaking to the people of South Africa, inside and outside the country, during the 78th Anniversary Celebration of the African National Congress, on the 08th of January 1990, a month before the unbanning, the ANC said in a statement:

"We observed 1989 as the Year of Mass Action for People's Power. We are proud today that we have, as a result of our mass actions, come much closer than ever before to the goal we set ourselves, that of transforming South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country. We salute all the patriotic forces of our country for this historic

achievement. Millions joined in action to bring this result about. The overwhelming successful general strikes, the historic campaign of mass defiance...all contributed in creating the mood of expectation that pervades our country today"

This year, we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the unbanning of the liberation movement and the release of political prisoners. We should seize this opportunity, not only to celebrate the 20th anniversary, but we must also make a thorough assessment of the strides registered in creating a non racial, non sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

On the 11th of November 2009 the international community acting through the United Nations voted unanimously, to declare the 18th of July every year to be Mandela Day. It is worth noting that this significant step is the first of its kind in the history of international politics. As the people of Limpopo, we are humbled by this global recognition, which is afforded to our matchless icon and stalwart who fought the oppressive system along side other heroes of our liberation struggle.

As the government of Limpopo and people of our province, we should embark on intensive community work programmes on the 18 July of every year to mark not only the Mandela Day, but also to celebrate the history of our struggle for freedom.

Our government would like to take this moment to salute the heroes of our liberation who put their lives on the line for our generation and many generations to come, to live in peace under a democratic banner. Our revolutionary message of gratitude is due to the sung and unsung heroes of our struggle particularly those who hail from this part of the country in the name of cde Sefako Makgatho, Peter Nchabeleng, Charlotte Maxege, Mark Shope, Peter Mokaba, John Phala, Uriah Maleka, Alpheus Malivha, Flag Boshielo, Lawrence Phokanoka, Pandelani 'Sparks' Ramagoma, Ngoako Ramalepe, France Mohlala, Norman Mashabane, Bachana Mokoena, Tracy Malatjie, Castro Pilusa, Wilson Tivana, Sophie Mogotlane and many others.

Honourable Speaker

Last year we saw our President, Jacob Zuma honouring one of the outstanding sons of our province, the former President of UDF and Commander of Umkhonto we sizwe, comrade Peter Nchabeleng. He was honoured with the Order of Luthuli in Gold. We thank you very much comrade President, and we believe this order could not have come at the right time. It comes at the time when we are celebrating 20 years of the release of comrade Mandela and his generation, including comrade Peter Nchabeleng, who served term with him on Robben Island.

Ntate Peter Nchabeleng has distinguished himself as a fearless freedom fighter, unwavering in principle and undeterred in his commitment to the struggle for freedom. Those of us who are charged with the responsibility to lead should not fail but rather carry on with his legacy of selfless service to the people.

The best way to remember and celebrate the unparalleled contribution made by our heroes in the war for our liberation is for us to remain committed to the work of changing the lives of our people for the better.

Honourable Speaker

This year marks 55 years after the adoption of the Freedom Charter, which continues to be the blueprint that guides the policy direction of the country in general and the province in particular. In the same vein, our Constitution, which is the supreme law of the country and the cornerstone of our democracy, was found under the guidance of the Freedom Charter. As the current generation, we owe it to the 1955 generation that converged at Kliptown to produce a document that is still relevant

and alive today.

We must continue to ensure that the doors of learning and culture are open to all. We should pursue our determination to better the living conditions of the people. We have the responsibility to provide houses of an acceptable standard to people. The peace, security and comfort for all and sundry should remain part of our priority, which must be achieved through all means possible. The provision of decent work and job security is a course that cannot be deferred.

Our people should continuously be assured that their human rights cannot be tampered with, and that we are building a justice system that will secure the equality of all before the law. The wealth of the province must be equitably shared and distributed amongst the people. This must be done in a sustainable manner that will also benefit the future generations.

The land redistribution and restitution programme should also cover those members of the society who have been working on the land in the farming industry for ages. The establishment of peace and friendship with our neighboring countries in the SADC region, Africa and beyond is a course that must be pursued. We must create economic and political relations with other nations to build friendly frontiers that will improve the security and the living conditions of our people.

Since the dawn of our democracy, we have always ensured that our government is people driven as part of ensuring that the people are governing. The overwhelming participation of our people in the fourth nationwide democratic elections on the 22nd of April 2009 and the resounding victory of the democratic forces led by the African National Congress, assertively confirmed the fact that the people are indeed governing. This momentous achievement lays the base for next year's Local Government Election.

All these lessons are found in the Freedom Charter and they form the basis of our provincial five-year service delivery programme, which we are using to implement the electoral mandate bestowed on the African National Congress. We must celebrate the 55 years anniversary of the Freedom Charter in style and action never seen before.

Honourable Speaker

It was on the 05th of May 2004, but yet it seems it was just yesterday, when the country was officially confirmed as the host of the biggest sporting event in the World, the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup. Our people could not contain their joy when Limpopo was included on the list of provinces approved to host some of the matches. We are humbled by the confidence shown by the football family in us.

As Limpopo, we are ready and fully prepared for the World Cup. The newly erected Peter Mokaba Stadium is completed, officially opened and ready to be handed to the soccer world governing body, FIFA. Our road infrastructure that leads to the Stadium has been upgraded to ease access to the facility.

In line with FIFA requirements for infrastructure and related logistics we are proud to assert that our security measures are properly resourced, capacitated and in a state of readiness.

Medical and emergency services have been improved in line with the requirements of the tournament. The Polokwane/Mankweng Hospital Complex is ready and available to offer acceptable medical services during the soccer show and beyond. Our hospitality facilities have also been improved with some of the lodges and hotels already fully booked.

Batho ba rena ba dutše komana madula a bapile ba ikemišeditše go amogela dihlopha tšeo di tlogo

tšea karolo ka mo Limpopo. Re ba lakaletša mahlatse le mahlogonolo. Re holofela gore ba tla ipshina ka ketelo ya bona mo Limpopo.

We are wishing our national soccer team Bafana Bafana glory and triumph during the tournament. This message is also due to all other soccer teams that will be representing the African Continent at the event. We are fully behind you, Africa ke Nako!

In line with Football Friday campaign, we call all our people to show their unreserved and unwavering support to Bafana Bafana by wearing soccer jerseys every Friday.

Honourable Speaker

According to the Medium Term Strategic Framework, we are expected to initiate concrete programmes that are aimed at making available affordable houses to the people; and also take further steps to ensure that human settlement in the province is structured on a new democratic spatial planning that responds to service delivery targets and improve the quality of life of our people.

We have already handed 16 433 houses in 2009/10 financial year exceeding the target of 13 978. This project benefited more than 90 000 people. It is cardinal to indicate that it is the first time we reach this number in a year since the ANC government started to roll-out RDP houses. Consistent with our resolve to provide shelter suitable for human settlement we will build 15 400 houses in this financial year.

Honourable Speaker

We have developed a clear strategy to redress the poor work that was done by some of the RDP housing contractors, by employing new service providers to finish the work within stipulated time lines. We have also completed the process of canceling the contracts of 42 contractors who did shoddy work by building poor quality RDP houses or abandoning the projects. We are finalizing the next phase of blacklisting them from the central database of government, in order to bar them from providing any service to government and the people of Limpopo.

Any company providing service to our government will be required to sign a document that allows for the uplifting of the corporate veil of the individual members of the company to allow the government to blacklist and sue the members jointly and severally.

Our people have been cheated long enough and it is time to take a strong action against these unscrupulous contractors responsible for providing poor services to our communities.

On the other side, we are recording progress in the battle against people who are getting RDP houses fraudulently. With the help of the law enforcement agencies, one hundred and thirteen (113) cases were brought forward for prosecution and in 102 cases people were convicted. It is worth to note that we have also managed to recover one and a half million Rands (R 1 494 153.15) from some of the people who defrauded the RDP system and we are determined to recover every cent due to government.

All government employees found guilty of defrauding the system of RDP by the courts of law shall also be subjected to internal disciplinary processes of their respective departments.

Honourable Speaker

The provision of basic services which ensures access to water, sanitation, and electricity cannot be

compromised. In the financial year 2009/10 we have managed to provide water and electricity to more than one million - thirty two thousand -one hundred and two, (1 032 102) households.

Furthermore, six hundred and twenty one thousand – seven hundred and forty nine (621 749) households received sanitation facilities. We are aware Honourable Speaker that much still needs to be done in this regard.

Ndisedzo ya madi i do dzhielwa ntha kha muvhuso washu. As a measure of responding to this challenge, we have planned to provide one million - seventy eight thousand - seven hundred forty three (1 078 743) households with water in this financial year. The focus will be on areas identified as in distress such as Giyani where will be constructing a waterpipeline from Nandoni to Giyani.

Additionally, we have planned to provide one million – sixty eight thousand – two hundred and forty six (1 068 246) households with electricity in this financial year, 2010/11. This will increase the number of people with access to electricity from 83% to 86% in our province. Furthermore, seven hundred and thirty seven thousand (737 000) households will be provided with access to sanitation.

Honourable Speaker

We take pride in the significant strides and milestones in the provision of Free Basic services. We have provided Free Basic Water service to 701 191 homes, whilst 263 889 families benefited from the Free Basic Electricity programme.

In this financial year, 2010/11, we will supply seven hundred and forty seven thousand – three hundred and seventy one, (747 371) homes with Free Basic Water and three hundred and one thousand – twenty (301 020) with Free Basic Electricity.

Honourable Speaker

E ka tiñhweti leti hundzeke, hi ndlandlamukise timasipala ta hina ku va ti kota ku fikelela swilaveko swa vaakatiko. Mfumo wa swifundza wu tshame kusuhi ni vaakatiko ku kota ku fikelerisavukorhokeri hi xihatla.

Informed by the assessment of the state of the municipalities and the subsequent Local Government Indaba held on 21st to 22nd October 2009, all municipalities are expected to complete the development of their respective Municipal Turnaround Strategies (MTAS) between January and March 2010 this year.

The Provincial Technical Support Unit composed of the Department of Local Government and Housing, Office of The Premier, Provincial Treasury and SALGA Limpopo, will provide the necessary assistance in this regard to ensure that each municipality emerge with the required turnaround strategic document. In our province, Molemole and Lephhalale Municipalities have been identified to be part of the MTAS pilot programme.

In order to build a strong and sustainable capacity and capability at the local governments, acting together with Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and other key stakeholders we will strengthen municipal skills development programme, which will enhance amongst others the training of officials on the accredited Integrated Development Programme (IDP) training, Executive Training programmes and Local Government Accounting programme.

Last year we committed ourselves to improve the capacity and the efficacy of the state by piloting and rolling out the Province-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (PWMEs). In this regard the task team has been formed to look into the review of the monitoring and evaluation framework in

line with the directive from the Presidency. To that effect no less than 100 staff members have been trained as Monitoring & Evaluation practitioners by Public Administration, Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA).

Honourable Speaker

During the last State of the Province Address, we made a pledge to the people of Limpopo that we will reduce the number of qualified audit reports in the province. This means that when the audit process is completed for the year 2014, all the 11 government departments, five district municipalities and twenty five local municipalities would be sitting with clean audit reports.

This is achievable as other municipalities have shown and we would therefore like to take this opportunity to congratulate and salute the Polokwane Municipality, Waterberg District Municipality, Musina Municipality, Fetakgomo Municipality, Marble Hall Municipality, Mopani District Municipality, Letaba Municipality and Aganang Municipality and, more importantly, our eight provincial departments for acquiring clean audit reports during the period 2008/09 financial years. We are building on this achievement in our determination to attain unqualified audit reports for all government components in four years time.

Honourable Speaker

The Freedom Charter asserts that all the doors of learning and culture must be opened. In keeping with the letter and spirit of this undertaking, we have increased the number of No Fee Schools to 71 % in 2009. We have surpassed the 60% national mark for No Fee Schools and it is our plan to increase this number.

We are continuing to enhance skills and capacity of the teachers for the purpose of offering modernized programmes that comply with the current needs of our societal development. Moreover, we will be recruiting new teachers to fill vacant posts and train those that are already in the system to enhance their skills. We have already advertised posts of principals, deputy principals and heads of departments to improve school management, teaching and learning. The posts will be filled by competent and dedicated men and women who are passionate about success.

Central to our effort to bring about quality education is to redress the social-economic developmental imbalances between rural and urban schools. The rural schools will be modernized and equipped with technological devices, such as computers and laboratories.

The 2009 matric results are not something to be proud about. It is on this note that we are declaring 2010 "a year of intensive learning in Limpopo". We will convene an education summit to seek a solution to the problems faced by our education system.

Over and above these initiatives, we will continue to work very closely with higher education and Further Education and Training Institutions based in the province and elsewhere to ensure that we produce skills relevant to the present and future socio-economic demands of our province.

Honourable Speaker

The improvement of public health care in general is one of our priority areas of focus. We have long acknowledged the unpleasant state of most of our health facilities. And we have made a pledge to develop health care centers in the province to an acceptable level that will suit the needs of the people. We have made an undertaking that we will expand the capacity of our health care infrastructure by building new facilities.

Insufficient maintenance in most of our health institutions contributes to a speedy deterioration of the health system in the province. There will be upfront budgeting for routine and annual maintenance to ensure that regular maintenance is done by competent and accredited service providers.

HIV and AIDS epidemic continues to be a great cause of concern to this government. Although we have made a significant progress in our fight against this disease a lot needs to be done. To date we have been able to provide Antiretroviral Drugs to HIV and AIDS sufferers at the approved sites despite resource constraints. It is however, important to mention that in this financial year 2010/11, we are going to increase the number of sites approved to offer the Antiretroviral Drugs.

We are making great strides in curbing and reducing TB infections amongst our people. TB cure rate went up from 61% to 65.8% and we will decrease TB default rate by 6.5%. Sugar diabetes, cancer, malaria and cholera will also continue to receive special attention. We are also confident that the introduction of National Health Insurance Scheme will make a meaningful change in the lives of many South Africans in particular the historically marginalized people.

The shortage of medicines, medical professionals, mainly doctors, nurses and emergency personnel has been on both the provincial and national agendas for some time now. Additionally, working conditions of our medical professionals require an urgent improvement. We will also be increasing the number of clinics providing 24 hour service.

It is our firm belief that these initiatives will go a long way in improving equitable access to quality health care for all particularly those in the remote areas of our province.

Honourable speaker

On the economical side, despite the fact that our provincial economy is continuing to make recovery from the economic meltdown that engulfed the global village, the province is still faced with a myriad of economic challenges which include, amongst others:

- Inadequate promotion of labour-absorbing industrial sectors, with an emphasis on tradable labour-absorbing goods and services that catalyze productive employment creation.
- Limited promotion of a broader based industrialization path that is characterized by greater levels of participation in the mainstream of the industrial economy by our historically disadvantaged people and marginalized regions.
- Lack of targeted interventions to broaden and diversify the provincial industrial base.
- Lack of productive capacities to move out of the poverty trap of high unemployment; and low levels of income, gross fixed capital formation, and growth; and
- The continued exclusion and marginalization of women, youth and disabled entrepreneurs from the mainstream economy.

It is against this background that we have convened the economic summit on the 8th of October 2009 to review the preceding Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS) with a view to develop a long term strategy for the province. In this regard the Executive Council has adopted the new Limpopo Provincial Employment Growth and Development Plan (LEGDP). In the absence of a long term strategy for the province, the LEGDP is designed to form a solid base line such that it is constructed as an implementable plan which will culminate into a long term strategy.

In alignment with the currently recognized framework that requires a long term planning, the LEGDP will make every effort to move towards the development of a 2030 provincial growth and development strategy, The Limpopo Vision 2030.

Limpopo Employment Growth and Development Plan is underpinned by 14 of the following key action programmes as strategic economic growth points. These programmes include:

- Integrated industrial development programme;
- Enterprise development: SMMEs and cooperatives development programme;
- Regional economic development and integration programme;
- Public infrastructure investment programme;
- Water resources development programme;
- Agriculture and rural development programme;
- Education and skills development programme;
- Health care development programme;
- Safety and security programme;
- Environment and natural resources development programme;
- The green economy and green jobs programme;
- ICT and information society development programme;
- Cooperate governance programme and, most importantly,
- Building the capacity of the state to deliver.

During the recent State Of The Nation Address, President Jacob Zuma said: ***“Now is the time to lay the groundwork for stronger growth going forward, and for growth that gives rise to more jobs”***. In line with this call by the President, our new LEGDP equally creates a new paradigm shift that emphasizes sustainable and quality jobs that leads to a more competitive and inclusive economic growth. The LEGDP will further create conducive conditions for the attraction of domestic and foreign fixed capital investments.

Honourable Speaker

We will therefore like to take this opportunity to announce that this plan, the Limpopo Employment Growth and Development Plan, will be launched on the 05th of March 2010. At the same time The Provincial Employment Growth and Development Advisory Council will also be having its inaugural meeting.

It is also worth mentioning that the province is at an advanced stage to review and plan targeted supply side interventions that would seek to design the Provincial Growth Fund. This fund will be significant in unlocking and achieving the initiatives and the strategic implementation action plans.

In strengthening the implementation of the Limpopo Employment Growth and Development Plan, we are going to re-align all agencies that are under the department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism mandate before the end of this financial year 2010/11.

Honourable Speaker

Limpopo is heavily endowed with minerals resources and it is for this reason that our LEGDP reaffirms mining and minerals as one of our comparative advantages. This industry has, however, portrayed the traditional mining culture with little commitment to industrialization and industrial development. In this regard the imminent construction of the Mining Inputs Supplier Park in Tubatse municipality in Steelpoort could not have come at a better time.

We are pleased to note the positive commitment by Xstrata; Samancor and Implats who are the key anchor partners in the establishment of Mining Input Supplier Park. We further implore on other mining houses to join hands with their counterparts in this massive local industrialization drive that has a potential to create 1 000 permanent job opportunities during the first phase of its operation. The Mining Input Supplier Park will be operational by end of 2010/11 financial year.

Honourable Speaker

Limpopo has continued to distinguish itself as a key tourism destination. In the midst of the economic recession, our province managed to record growth of 1.9 %, with a foreign direct spent of R900 million in quarter 2 of 2009 as compared to R800 million of quarter 2 of 2008.

On the 1st of September 2009, we launched the Limpopo Wildlife Resorts brand to provide much revamped and accessible tourist destinations for both domestic and international visitors, whilst at the same time, boosting the economic profile of the province.

The Limpopo Wildlife Resorts has created 320 temporary jobs and 120 permanent jobs with annual revenue of R10 million and an estimated generation of R30 million in the next five (5) years. The refurbishment work of 14 resorts is already underway and four (4) have been completed. It is important to highlight that tourism employment in Limpopo is estimated at 22 414.

Honourable Speaker

The enterprise development programme in LEGDP highlights the importance of cooperatives base to be established and the province wide procurement expenditure of goods and services. We need to involve our cooperatives in areas such as school feeding schemes, school uniform projects, hospital and school furnishing, road and building maintenance, and other such economic activities which can enable our cooperatives to retain the bulk of the provincial expenditure.

We will continue to support SMMEs in any way possible with the available resources, in order to obtain growth; increase skills levels and most of all create sustainable jobs. All mega projects will have a triple localization procurement thrust to ensure that SMMEs are developed into credible suppliers.

Honourable Speaker

The principal objective of the Provincial Gambling Board is to ensure that the gambling operators contribute to the economic development of the province. During the 2010/11 financial year, the Board will be inviting potential Casino Operators to apply for a Casino license for the area of Burgersfort in Greater Sekhukhune District. It is our strong conviction that this move will create more direct job opportunities in the province and also attract more tourists.

Honourable Speaker

The demographics of our province indicate that women are in the majority. Accordingly, central to our efforts of transforming the provincial economy, we should bring women at the center of this economic growth path. Women of our province have a role to play in this economic development. We remain committed to our cause of empowering and emancipating women from the scourge of poverty and marginalisation.

Honourable Speaker

The former President of ANC, comrade Nelson Mandela, once said that ***“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 made youth development the center-piece of our programme to reverse the frontiers of poverty and improve the lives of our people for the better.

Last year we committed ourselves to repeal the Youth Commission Act to be in line with the new Legislation that merged the former Youth Commission with Umsobomvu Youth Fund. We have amended the Act through this house and we will inaugurate the first Limpopo Youth Development Agency by the end of this year.

The Agency will be central in the development, advocacy and formulation of policy on matters affecting young people in our province.

Honourable Speaker

Agriculture is one of the contributing sectors to our economic growth and food security in the province and the country as a whole. It is very important for us to continue investing in agriculture so that we can be able to create jobs and at the same time, strengthen our economic muscle. As part of the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), eleven projects have been completed and supported with irrigation infrastructure.

We have completed 8 micro-projects with the intention to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty amongst the poor and vulnerable households in rural areas. Thirteen (13) other micro-projects are nearing completion and 4 of them will be completed by the 1st of April this year.

Honourable speaker

We have initiated the Mechanization Revolving Credit Access Scheme (MERCAS) with the aim of enabling agricultural entrepreneurs and rural food producers to access funding to purchase farm machinery such as tractors and related implements.

We have a duty to enhance technical skills of agricultural scientists and extension officers in order to sustain and accelerate our farming production. We have awarded bursaries to several individuals to study, and specialize in the streams required to propel our agricultural industry forward.

Land degradation and deforestation pose an environmental threat in several parts of our province, especially in the rural areas. The situation is imputable to the cutting down of trees for household reasons and others. We are proudly leading and supporting initiatives that seeks to urge people to plant trees in order to improve the environment, whilst at the same time contributing to food security and job creation.

Honourable speaker

Last year President Jacob Zuma identified Muyexe in Giyani as a pilot project for comprehensive rural development programme in the country. The project has begun to take shape and there are significant signs of improvement in the lives of the people of Muyexe.

As at yesterday, the number of houses built in Muyexe stands at 321. It is worth mentioning that these houses were built in just three months. We have managed to create 534 jobs from the projects that have been launched in the area, over and above we have also built a clinic in Muyexe.

Other areas where we have made meaningful impact in changing the lives of the people of Muyexe for the better includes sanitation, land care, early childhood development and health services.

Honourable speaker

Achievements in the area should not be measured by how long the tar road is, but by what kind of change has the development brought to the lives of the people of Muyexe.

Honourable speaker

On the same note, another success story in terms of our focused interventions on rural development is the improvement on the lives of people in Ga-Kgatla, in the Blouberg municipality. A case in point is an 83 year old man Mr Wallet Lebogo who is seated in our midst here in the legislature this morning. Mr Lebogo never had decent shelter but after our intervention in Ga-Kgatla he now has a decent home.

As we speak today all households in Ga-Kgatla have access to running water, electricity and sanitation. The contribution of business community in this regard cannot go unnoticed and we are inviting the rest of the business community to emulate the good examples set by their counterparts in these projects. These kind of interventions will be spread to other parts of the rural areas of our province.

Honourable Speaker

As the ANC led government, we have introduced the Expanded Public Works Programme to provide unemployed people with income, work experience and training opportunities. As a provincial government we have put in place a provincial five year business plan, which is being implemented across all government departments and municipalities.

Eleven Extended Public Works Programme tenders have been awarded to the service providers for labour intensive, road maintenance and construction projects at the expected cost of R54m.

As part of our contribution to the President's commitment to create 500 000 job opportunities, Limpopo has created no less than forty nine thousand job opportunities (49 071) under the EPWP programme. In the next financial year of 2010/11, we are planning to create 59 733 job opportunities.

Honourable Speaker

The safety and security of our people on the roads continue to receive priority attention by this government. In order to ensure sufficient inspection of vehicles that are using public roads and enough patrol to secure compliance from the motorists, we have made additional three traffic stations in areas of Moutse, Thohoyandou and Mokopane bringing the total number of our provincial traffic stations to 25, with 208 newly recruited traffic inspectors deployed across the province.

The rapid growth of Burgersfort and Lephalale as a result of mining activities has subjected the road infrastructure in these areas to unprecedented constraints which requires our immediate attention as government.

In the interim we have procured road maintenance machinery and vehicles to enhance the maintenance of our provincial roads, which includes cleaning of road reserves, pothole repairs and replacement of road signs and more still needs to be done in this regard.

In the long term we need a freight and logistics plan that will divert freight away from roads onto rail thereby increasing the Burgersfort/Lephalale mining and industry competitiveness.

The construction work for the widening of R33 road is expected to commence in March this year at an estimated cost of R200m. The rehabilitation of the surfaced roads is also scheduled to commence in February this year at a projected cost of R550m.

The first phase of the provincial passenger rail plan has been completed by the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA). Routes have been identified for feasibility studies. A speed passenger rail service between Polokwane and Gauteng has also been identified for a feasibility study.

The process of improving the living conditions of our rural communities cannot be completed without real construction and upgrading of roads facilities where our people live. The process of unveiling the rural transport plan is at an advanced stage. The rural transport plan is expected to make an immense contribution to the comprehensive rural development programme of the country and the province by improving access to rural transport services.

Honourable speaker

The role and economic advantage of an international airport can enhance the economic competitiveness of our key growth sectors including tourism, additionally this can also strengthen establishment of a regional trade hub. To that effect, we will be improving the infrastructure and equipment at the Polokwane International Airport. It is in this context that the need for continued investment in our airport cannot be over-emphasized.

Honourable Speaker

Many families, people and juristic persons have been victims of crime in various ways and continue to live in fear in their work places and homes. Those who have chosen to be criminals perpetuate a terror of crime at a large scale with a clear intention to steal, harm and kill innocent people. We are also losing members of the police force to criminals and this is not acceptable.

As government, we have a constitutional duty to respond in any manner legally possible to protect members of our population. Communities have a huge responsibility to play in this regard, by working closely and together with law enforcement agencies. Acting jointly, we must expose and prevent crime whenever and wherever it is perpetrated. Community members must ensure that Community Policing Forums are effective and supported in their duty of assisting in the prevention of crime. We will also be working on the schools safety plan to rid our schools of criminal activities.

We will be starting the process of assessments for the possible building of new police stations and satellites in order to deal with the challenge of criminality. We have responded head on to the challenges presented by criminals and many of them are behind bars and crimes syndicates have been busted by our men and women in Blue. We wish to take this opportunity to salute the leadership of the police; their management and police on the ground. Keep up the good work to make our province a safe place to stay.

Honourable Speaker

The public service must be capacitated with skilled personnel that understands the values and the importance of providing quality services to the people. The process of filling vacant positions in the provincial administration remains a key priority. We have also begun with the process of realignment of the structures of government with the current MTSF mandates to conform to our service delivery targets.

It is important for people to receive services at government institutions in a respectable and dignified manner. Our response to the challenges of the people must be prompt regardless of the status of the person affected. We want public servants who understand and work according to the Batho Pele principles and other important policy documents of the administration. Special words of

appreciation have to be directed towards the Director General, Heads of departments and the public servants in general. We must commend them for the good work that they have done and continue to do in the service of our people. All the achievements that we are speaking about came as a result of their relentless efforts.

Honourable speaker

Corruption delays development and compels people to lose trust in the structures of government. We will continue to fight against corruption through all means available. We are appealing to members of the society to join the battle against corruption in order to ensure that the mission to accelerate service delivery is not digressed or deferred. Corruption wherever is practiced remains a criminal offense in this country and its perpetrators must be charged and prosecuted.

Last year, we committed ourselves to establishing a hotline in order to unravel service delivery bottlenecks. To date we have put in place systems to expedite the establishment of the Premier's hotline. These include the public liaison services units in the Offices of The Premier and the appointment of modifiers and investigators in all our departments and municipalities.

In the meantime we are working with the Presidency through the Presidential hotline in dealing with issues that concern our people on daily basis.

Honourable Speaker

On the morning of the 27th of January 2010 the country woke-up to the sad news of the passing on of the well renowned and internationally acclaimed sculptor Mr Jackson Hlungwani who was born and bred here in Limpopo. We will miss his immense contribution to our heritage and the development of arts and culture in this province, the country and the world as a whole. Etlela hi ku rhula Tatana Hlungwani.

Honourable Speaker

Allow me to take this opportunity on behalf of the provincial administration and the entire population of our province to congratulate the sons and daughters of our soil who represented the province and the country in an outstanding manner in various fields. We congratulate our daughter Caster Mokgadi Semanya and our son Mmbulaheni Mulaudzi for their heroic performance at the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) in Berlin.

We are also congratulating Mr Serobi Maja the Chief Executive Officer of our Provincial Gambling Board for his election as the Vice-Chairperson of the International Association of Gambling Regulators for the 2009/10 year.

Honourable Speaker

Our sincere words of gratitude are also due to the religious community. They are always there to shower us with wise words of counsel and prayers when we need them most.

We are indeed humbled by their continuous prayers for our administration and the entire population of the province to prosper and succeed. We have come this far working together with you, and united in action we can do more under your guidance.

Honourable Speakers

Traditional leaders continue to make an immense contribution in the general administration of the

province. Notwithstanding the fact that they personify our heritage, they also serve as an important component in the course of bettering the living conditions of the people. We will forever depend on their assistance in the development of their respective communities. Le a tseba gore monyatša kgoši o wa tloga.

Honourable Speaker

We must all feel proud about our past; jointly work on the present and shape the future. We have a duty to design our tomorrow in a manner that will benefit our descendents and all the subsequent generations.

**There is no nobler a cause, than to serve the people of Limpopo.
Working together, we can do more!**

Ndaa!

Inkomu!

Thank you!

Baie Dankie!

Re a leboga