

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

23 February 2023

Speaker of the Legislature, Honourable Rosemary Molapo;  
Deputy Speaker, Honourable Tshitereke Matibe;  
Honourable Members of the Legislature, our MPLs;  
Members of the Executive Council;  
Executive Mayors and Mayors;  
The leadership of the ruling party, the African National Congress;  
Leaders of opposition political parties;  
Chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders;  
Our Esteemed Traditional Leaders;  
Former MPs and MPLs;  
Director General and Heads of Departments;  
Stalwarts and veterans of our struggle;  
Provincial Commissioner of South African Police Services;  
Heads of our Chapter Nine and Chapter Ten institutions;  
Leadership of our faith-based communities;  
Leadership of organised business and labour;

Youth, women and community leaders;

Members of the Media;

Distinguished Guests;

The people of Limpopo;

**Good morning, Avuxeni, Goeie morê, Ndaa, Thobela,  
Silotshile!**

I am deeply honoured to present the 2023 State of the Province Address to this august house.

February 2023 marks 33 years since the release of former President Nelson Mandela from prison after 27 years of unjust incarceration.

Of course, President Mandela was not alone in our struggle for democracy and social emancipation. There were countless others.

Some were killed. Others disappeared. Yet others have passed away, while others are still alive.

President Mandela was, however, the face of our democratic transition and its founding father.

He was like a giant baobab that village elders would gather under, to engage on all matters related to governance of the village, a shelter in which elders would store ancient drums of wisdom.

We pay tribute to him and every hero and heroine of our struggle for freedom and democracy.

Our democracy did not come on a silver platter. We should not take it for granted. Neither will it proceed without challenges.

What matters is our determination to triumph, towards a completely non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society.

**Honourable Speaker,**

Last year, we made a commitment to the people of Limpopo that, we shall rise from the devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We said our approach will involve embarking on a fresh journey seeking growth and development, as well as prosperity for the residents of Limpopo.

We said our economic recovery trajectory will be guided by the National Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan and the Limpopo Socio-Economic Recovery Plan.

Through these plans, our deliverables should be measured against the attainment of an inclusive developmental economy.

Today, we have gathered in this house to give an account of the work we have done, and to pronounce on the plans and programmes of the government for the year ahead.

We are also here following the delivery of the 2023 State of the Nation Address by His Excellency President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa two weeks ago.

After acknowledging the challenges, we face as a people, especially the energy crisis, President Ramaphosa reiterated that:

“If we work together and act boldly and decisively, leaving no one behind, we will be able to resolve our challenges...

We are a nation seized with the challenges of the present, but we are also a nation striving to fulfil the promise of our future.”

Therefore, our collective responsibility, moving forward, is to implement the policy directives pronounced by the President.

**Honourable Speaker,**

We are pleased to report that we have now recovered our lost ground after the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last year, on this occasion, we made a commitment to traverse the path of economic recovery towards a post-COVID-19 pandemic era.

Our plan has been guided by the path of economic renewal, geared strategically towards fighting unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Notwithstanding these positive developments in respect of our response to Covid-19 pandemic, we are convening here today amidst other harsh global and national economic conditions.

Indications are that geopolitical conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine and the wider impact of the sanctions associated with it, will affect other economies, including ours.

Already, our country has witnessed spikes in fuel prices, which have a negative impact on the production and transportation of many products, including food.

In addition, the rising cost-of-living has led to tightening financial conditions in most regions. This, together with the lingering COVID-19 pandemic in China, weighs heavily on the economic outlook.

Similarly, the State of the Province Address is taking place at a time when our country is grappling with the detrimental effects of the electricity crisis.

It is for this reason that we welcome the pronouncements by President Ramaphosa regarding measures the country is taking to mitigate the effects of this crisis.

As Limpopo, we will also ensure that we play our part, including in the just energy transition.

In making our contribution to help resolve the energy crisis and to build a just energy transition, we will need to prioritise the building of an uninterrupted electric power supply capability for essential services.

In this regard, the Office of the Premier is assigned to play a major and wider co-ordinating role, in giving guidance to our provincial efforts.

Key amongst these, is the development of a province-**specific and comprehensive energy plan** to ensure that we build a new **electricity generation capacity** in our province.

To this effect, the provincial government, and subsequently municipalities, must include in their plans the development of **energy production projects**.

These plans must encapsulate the possible retrofitting of **solar panels** to all government buildings. This will have to be done in a way that will complement Eskom.

**Madam Speaker,**

The provision of healthcare and education services should be amongst the first to be insulated from the electric power supply interruptions.

And it is in this context that as a start, I have mandated the MEC for Health to prioritise the installation of solar power to hospitals and clinics in the province.

In the same spirit, I am pleased to report about the launch of the **Renewable Energy Strategy** by Musina-Makhado SEZ in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development.

The strategy, which will be launched next month in March, will serve as a blueprint to guide investments in our energy cluster, and also to promote sustainable development.

**Honourable Speaker,**

On the economic front, there has been some signs of recovery as we confront the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

It is also worth noting that the official unemployment rate in our country has decreased in six provinces.



We are pleased to report that the largest decrease was recorded in Limpopo at 5,3 per cent, that is from 36,3 per cent, down to 31 per cent.

A worrying trend, however, is that as per Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Force Survey, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2022, young people aged 15 to 24 and 25 to 34 record the highest unemployment rates nationally.

In that quarter, there were about 10,2 million young people aged 15 to 24 years across the country, of whom 34,5 per cent were not in employment, education or training.

**Madam Speaker,**

Notwithstanding these challenges, I am pleased to report that our Provincial Socio-Economic Recovery Plan, as anchored in our efforts to industrialise the province, has begun yielding positive results.

Last year during this sitting, we reported that we had to urgently start visible work at the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone.

I am happy to report that after the approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment, construction work in the North-Site has commenced with the laying of bulk infrastructure.

The construction of the 14 kilometres internal roads has already created immediate opportunities for work-seekers and local entrepreneurs.

Additional bulk installations, such as water, sewer, electricity, and integrated security infrastructure, will continue in 2023.

It is also worth mentioning that the appeal process, in respect of the Musina-Makhado SEZ South-Site Environmental Impact Assessment was concluded in July 2022.

This has paved a way for the completion of the township establishment and the roll-out of the requisite bulk infrastructure services.

Nevertheless, we are aware of the other parties that continue litigating against the development of the Musina-Makhado SEZ. We are confident that, as before, we shall overcome this hurdle.

In the recent past, there has, on the other hand, been an outcry about the unavailability of water to support the Musina-Makhado SEZ.

We are, however, pleased to announce that the Department of Water and Sanitation has given us an assurance that it will support the project with water on a short, medium- to long-term basis.

Among the proposed water sources, are ground water, imported water, and the development of new dams in the Vhembe District.

Just last night, I had a fruitful engagement with some of the main investors in the Musina-Makhado SEZ.

They welcome the progress we have made so far, and once more assured us of their unwavering support and commitment to this project.

**Honourable Members of the House,**

Another catalytic project we reported about during the State of the Province Address last year, is the Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ.

I am delighted to report that the Environmental Impact Assessment was granted. We have since allocated a budget for Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ infrastructure development.

We are now ready to submit the application for the designation of the Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ to Cabinet.

**Madam Speaker,**

We project to create over 6,000 jobs over through the implementation of the **Industrial Parks Revitalisation Programme** in all the five districts of our province.

The Critical Infrastructure Programme has approved R49,9 million funding for the Seshego Industrial Park to refurbish the top structures of 11 factories.

The plan is to start immediately with construction. We envisage that this construction will be completed in the next financial year.

## **The People of Limpopo,**

In 2021 we hosted the first Limpopo Investment Conference. Through this initiative, we raised R209 billion worth of investment pledges.

To date, more than seven major projects worth more than R50 billion are in the implementation phase.

Anglo-American has committed to advancing the hydrogen economy. Already, it has implemented R40 billion worth of their commitment in Mogalakwena.

President Ramaphosa had the opportunity to launch the nuGen Hydrogen Truck in 2022.

The development of the nuGen Truck Hydrogen Truck and its successful launch in the mining sector in Limpopo were an

important contribution in the global response to climate change, specifically the decarbonisation of energy, transport, and broader industry.

**Madam Speaker,**

Mining in our province is a major contributor to our production output. The sector is poised to play an increasing role given our mineral endowments.

It is my pleasure to announce that Mining Restoration Investment has made a significant investment in the mining sector, with a pledge of R700 million towards a chrome and Platinum Group Metal mine in the Thabazimbi.

I am proud to say that the company has already spent R140 million of the productive investment.

Sefateng Chrome Mine is revolutionising chrome mining with its unique underground shaft. They have invested a substantial sum of R1 billion to make this project a reality.

This investment has created 350 jobs during the construction phase and provided a long-term source of employment for 600 individuals once production begins.

Last year, we reported to this august house progress regarding the Corridor Mining Resources, which is a shareholder through Limpopo Economic Development Agency to the Mphahlele Platinum Group Element Mining.

In 2023, there will be further drilling to upgrade the resources. The equity partner, Sedibelo, is mobilising R1 billion to operationalise the mine.

Mozweli Engineering, which has pledged R115 billion investment, is paving the way in small-scale nuclear power.

Shekinah Lion and Game Lodge, which made an initial investment of R60 million, is now leading the way in eco-tourism.

Nalane Green Solar Energy Project, which has started implementing their R5 billion investment pledge, is providing a unique, socially responsible, approach to energy generation.

The Nkuna City Investment is creating a vibrant, dynamic community that seamlessly integrates business, retail, commercial, industrial, hospitality, institutional, and residential land use.

In just the first two phases of the project, it has created over 2,000 temporary jobs and 550 permanent jobs, with an estimated worth of R370 million.

I am honoured to stand before you here today, to share some exciting news regarding the ZZ2 Packhouse.

The company is undoubtedly committed to the growth and development of the agricultural sector in our province.

We are proud to announce that ZZ2's investment of R128 million into a cutting-edge agro-processing facility for avocados and tomatoes is now complete.

**Honourable Members of the House,**



This administration is serious about addressing the challenges facing the social stratum called the “missing middle”.

In human settlement terms, the “missing middle” refers to households who do not qualify for the government’s low-cost housing subsidy, because their income is above the eligibility level, while they do not qualify for mortgage bonds from commercial banks, because their income is below the qualifying threshold for the home loans they want.

In order to deal with this hindrance, RISIMA, our provincial housing finance agency, has partnered with the Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, to implement the Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme.

To date, a total of 147 people has benefited from this programme valued at R11 million. Through this programme, people will be able to secure housing finance at an affordable price.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The larger proportion of our population, mostly workers and work-seekers, depends on public transport, such as the Great North Transport buses, to commute daily.

The Great North Transport has been repositioned to achieve its mandate of providing affordable and reliable public transport to the people of Limpopo.

Having accepted its challenges, the Great North Transport had to adopt a Turnaround Plan, which is unfolding.

**Madam Speaker,**

We have also noted the challenges of transport planning on provincial economic nodes such as Tubatse, Musina, Lephalale and Polokwane.

The economic pressures of migration affect transport planning.

The Department of Transport and Community Safety will be tasked to build requisite capacity on transport planning at departmental and municipal levels.

**Honourable Speaker,**

Tourism is one of the key strategic economic growth-points in our province.

Nevertheless, this sector, like other sectors of our economy has been negatively affected by COVID-19 pandemic.

This has led to the Department of Tourism developing a plan to facilitate recovery in the sector.

The Limpopo Tourism Agency has made strides in implementing this recovery plan through its marketing efforts.

As a province, we have started regaining momentum in international tourist arrivals. From 0,6 million in 2021, we recorded over 1,5 million visitors in Quarter 3 of 2022.

This figure has by far surpassed the 2021 international annual performance. This puts Limpopo back to the top three performing provinces in international tourist arrivals.

In domestic performance, Limpopo had the greatest number of trips originating from the province with 1,53 million trips in

2022, compared to just over 57,000 in 2021. This is a tremendous growth, compared to the previous years.

Limpopo has recorded 1,62 million trips by Province of destination in Quarter 3 of 2022. Again, this puts Limpopo back to the top three performing provinces in domestic trips.

In the same vein, we are delighted at the performance of Hoedspruit Airport. It is reported to be amongst the busiest airports and a major competitor among its peers in the country.

Of the 78,000 passengers that land at that airport, 61,000 of them are European tourists.

The airport's ability to fly internationally allows many international travellers to have easy access the regional routes such as Vilanculo in Mozambique, Maun in Okavango delta Botswana and the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

It is in this context, that I have assigned the MEC for Transport and Community Safety, to work with ACSA, and coordinate a team to ensure development of a workable strategy for repurposing of this airport.

**Honourable Speaker,**

Our economic recovery route rests mainly, although not only, on the number of jobs we are able to create in our leading sectors and support for SMMEs.

We are pleased to report that, during the 2022/2023 financial year, we have exceeded our target for supporting SMMEs that helped to sustain up to 1,000 jobs.

In addition, a total of R4,4 million worth of loans were disbursed to support SMMEs and co-operatives. A total of just over 13,000 local enterprises received assistance throughout the province.

We shall continue to support 100 SMMEs and 100 co-operatives in the next financial year.

Our support for development of youth entrepreneurs has received a major boost.

In partnership with the National Youth Development Agency, we have set aside no less than R10 million, to support established and aspiring youth entrepreneurs in the province.

We are therefore inviting young people to apply in their numbers and take advantage of this opportunity so that they become meaningful role players in the mainstream economy in future.

We have in place a strategic partnership with EXXARO to operate a Satellite Office in Lephhalale Region.

We have also partnered with Impact Catalyst for the co-implementation of specific enterprise development programmes on behalf of the participating mining houses in Limpopo.

Further, we have a strategic partnership with Black Umbrellas for the co-implementation of enterprise supplier development programmes targeting the private and public sectors.

**Honourable Members of the House,**

In 2022, we reported about several agricultural projects that needed our focused attention so that we ensure food security for our people.

The Lebowakgomo Abattoir has received a boost, with an approval of R32 million by National Empowerment Fund.

We also reported about the interventions we planned to make in supporting the turnaround of the Zebediela Citrus Estate. Our intervention is bearing the fruits.

Preparatory work on the development of a comprehensive Master Plan for Zebediela in partnership with Impact Catalyst has started, following the conclusion, and the signing of a Co-operation Agreement in October 2022.

Thus far, and despite the challenges experienced, mainly financial constraints from lower-than-expected income, the production of oranges is well on course.

Preparations for harvesting are underway, scheduled to start later this month.

The contribution made through the Social Employment Fund, which is implemented by Impact Catalyst, has managed to create more than 600 jobs.

Notable progress has been made through the Farmer Production Support Units Programme.

The building for Masala Farmer Production Support Unit in Mopani District has been completed. This will benefit no less than 110 farmers producing food on the 2,203 hectares of land.

Since Project Koba-Tlala Production Brigade was initiated in 2022/2023, the South African National Defence Force procured over R1 million worth of fresh produce from the farmers involved.

Similarly, 32 collection points have been established to ensure active participation of small-scale farmers close to military establishments.

**Madam Speaker,**



Infrastructure development has and continues to be one of the key economic focus areas of this government.

During the State of the Province Address in 2022, we made a commitment that the government, through the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, will continue with its infrastructure support for other departments.

We gave focused attention to some key infrastructure projects across the province. These include the construction of the Provincial Theatre.

To date, the design of the theatre is at an advanced stage, after the Polokwane Local Municipality made a portion of land available for the theatre.

**Madam Speaker,**

We are also pleased to report about progress we are making in the construction of libraries in the province.

To date, Runnymede, Mavalani and Seleteng libraries have achieved practical completion. We shall continue with the

planning and design of four new libraries in Tshaulu, Sekhukhune, Botshabelo and Vleifontein.

**Honourable Members,**

The province has been hard at work, to deliver quality school infrastructure in the 2022/2023 financial year.

We are pleased to report that the Alldays Primary School in Blouberg and Leduma Mahume Primary School in Phokwane have been completed.

We shall continue in the 2022/2023 with the construction of 25 new school projects, 10 of which will be completed in the 2023/2024 financial year.

**Madam Speaker,**

Our partnership with the mining sector in the provision and construction of more road infrastructure for our people is beginning to take shape.

The total value of our current twelve partnerships we have with the mining houses, is no less R1.1 billion.

Two days ago, the MEC for Public Works, was at Ga-Malekane, handing over the contractor for the construction of the long-awaited Steel-bridge.

Whilst creating lot of jobs for our people and opportunities for local business during the construction phase, there is no doubt that upon completion, this project would have radically redefined the economic landscape in that part of the province.

Also worth mentioning is that for this project, eight mining houses in the Eastern-Limb Cluster in Fetakgomo-Tubatse municipality contributed, R127 million.

This is the total cost for the construction of this bridge, which means the mines are effectively constructing this bridge.

Thanks to Anglo American Platinum, Glencore Alloys, Booyendal (Northam Platinum), Two Rivers Platinum,

SAMANCOR Chrome, Dwars River Chrome, Rhakhoma Mining and Tjate Platinum.

In the same breath, we call upon the rest of the private sector to emulate the good example set by these mining houses, to come on board and help develop and grow the economy of our province.

**Honourable Speaker,**

In the 2022 State of the Province Address, I made commitments about rehabilitation and upgrading of roads in the province. I can now confirm that those projects have since been completed. They include;

- The rehabilitation of 11 kilometres on Road D1589 from Ga-Kgobokanang to Ga-Makgato and De-Vrede in the Capricorn District.
- The rehabilitation of 7,3 kilometres on Road D2537 road in Penge in the Sekhukhune District.
- The rehabilitation of 9 kilometres on Road D11 from Ga-Mamaila Kolobetona connecting the R81 in the Mopani District is complete. To ensure the entire D11 is in a good condition, we have also appointed another contractor for Phase 3 in November 2022. When Phase

3 is completed, the entire D11 will be in a good condition to ensure that the districts of Mopani and Vhembe are connected.

- The rehabilitation of 27 kilometres on Road D3840 from Giyani to Phalaborwa in the Mopani District is at 67 per cent. I can confirm that Phase 1 of the project has been completed. We have recently appointed a contractor for Phase 2.

I would also like to announce that we have made significant progress on the other projects I pronounced on in 2022.

- We have completed the construction of bridge 6116 in Makuleke;
- We completed rehabilitation of 5 kilometres on Road D3200 Lebaka to Mohlabaneng;
- Phase 2 of the rehabilitation of 30 kilometres of Road D4, Elim to Malamulele; has reached practical completion. We have seen that the condition of the road from N1 to Elim is in a dire state. We appointed a contractor to do major rehabilitation on the road.
- The rehabilitation of flood damaged Road D4240, Maseven in Sekhukhune is at 70 per cent;

- Phase 1 of the rehabilitation of 40 kilometres on Road D1483, Musina to Pongorwa in Vhembe is complete. We have appointed another contractor for phase 2 who is currently at 75 per cent progress. Upon completion of Phase 2, we will appoint another contractor for phase 3 to ensure the road leading to Mapungubwe Nature Park is in a good condition.
- We have completed the upgrading of 13 kilometres on Road D2922, D2919 from Keerom to Tshikanosi.

**Madam Speaker,**

In the same speech I pronounced on the appointment of contractors by the end of 2022. I would like to give a progress report as well, in this regard:

- Following the completion of designs for Road D4180, Atok Mine to Ga-Selepe to Modimolle in Sekhukhune, the construction work will commence in the next financial year, 2023/2024.
- Designs have also been completed for Road D4260, Malope to Phokwane in Sekhukhune and the construction work will commence in the next financial year.
- The construction work for D4090, D4093, D4094, D4096 Malimate Roads in Capricorn District will commence in next financial year.

- Finally, the construction work for D4199 Apel to Ga-Nkoana to D4190 in Sekhukhune District will commence in the next financial year.

In the same vein, we have prioritised other roads in the province, and, to this end, contractors have been appointed:

- D3278 Blouberg Hospital to Buffelshoek in Capricorn.
- D3561 Segole 1 and Segole 2 (Masebe Nature Reserve to N11 Waterval) in Waterberg.
- D3669 Mavhunga access road in Vhembe.
- D3734 Tshatshama road in Mopani.
- D3436, D3428, D5007 Ga-Ramoshwane, GaRammetlwane, Ga-Ramotlwana in Capricorn.
- D3248 Thapane access to Nwamitwa in Mopani.
- D4283 Glencowie to Malaka in Sekhukhune.
- D3671 Musekwa to Maranikwe in Vhembe, and
- The upgrading of the 10 kilometres Road D4109 from Mmamatonya to Road D885 in the Capricorn District.

I would like to further mention that 83 maintenance and rehabilitation projects will be attended to in the province to fix the ailing road network in the 2023/2024 financial year.

I am also glad to announce that we have appointed 41 Engineering Consultants to design roads in all five districts of the province.

The designs are expected to be completed over a period of twelve months.

This forward planning approach will help us ensure that whenever funds are available for construction, we implement without waiting for designs to be completed.

**Honourable Speaker,**

Water provisioning is high on the agenda of this government. During the State of the Province Address last year, we presented a detailed report about progress and challenges regarding water supply in Limpopo.

Major projects for water resource development will be implemented by the Department of Water and Sanitation.

These include the raising of the Tzaneen Dam wall, Olifants River Water Resources Development, Musina-Makhadzo SEZ bulk water supply and Nandoni Water Treatment Works.

Municipalities who are responsible for reticulation require the bulk resource to complete supply of water to communities.

I am pleased that during our engagement with the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr Senzo Mchunu, it was agreed that we have to expedite these bulk water infrastructure projects, especially the Nandoni-Nsami



Bulk pipeline, Giyani Water Treatment Phase 1, Giyani Water Services, and the Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply.

This we must do without hesitation because the people of Giyani have been waiting for water for a long-time. They must drink water before the end of the financial year.

I am happy that Mopani District Municipality did not wait for the pipeline to be completed. They have just appointed contractors to commence with the work of laying infrastructure for reticulation.

**Madam Speaker,**

Municipal infrastructure development is a key enabler for growth and development.

We expect our municipalities to invest more in the development and maintenance of water, sanitation, electricity, and road infrastructure.

In the past years, our municipalities were performing above expectations in Municipal Infrastructure Grant spending. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Municipal Infrastructure Grant spending negatively.

Nevertheless, there are still municipalities which have performed well regarding their Municipal Infrastructure Grant.

They include,

- Maruleng Municipality at 91,2 per cent.
- Ephraim Mogale Municipality at 80,9 per cent and
- Elias Motsoaledi Municipality at 72,1 per cent.

This is not mere spending, it is, most importantly, infrastructure development and maintenance, which involves the provision of work as well.

It is also worth noting that the Municipal Infrastructure Grant was allocated to other important infrastructure development project besides water:

- A total of 25 kilometres local access streets has been added into the provincial road network.
- 8 community services projects were completed.
- The community facilities constructed include community halls, sports facilities, cemeteries, and high mast lights.
- One bulk water project was completed in the Capricorn District to benefit 2,745 households.

By the end of the financial year, municipalities had spent R2,8 billion.

That amounts to 92,3 per cent of the total Municipal Infrastructure Grant allocation.

These, of course, are encouraging signs and I therefore call on the municipalities to sustain the momentum.

**Madam Speaker,**

Underspending and completion of water and sanitation projects remain another challenge in municipalities.

We have noted that access to water has declined by 9.4 per cent between 2015 and 2021 (from 78.8 per cent to 69.4 per cent).

This has mainly been caused by ageing infrastructure, affecting sustainable and reliable water supply, as well as by changes in climatic conditions.

However, there was a 4.5 per cent increase in sanitation between 2015 and 2021.

We have since encouraged municipalities that are water service authorities to utilise a portion of their Municipal Infrastructure Grant to refurbish or replace ageing infrastructure.

We shall continue to align all these projects through the Premier's Inter-Governmental Relations Forum, so that the District Development Model can shape the manner in which we provide services to our people.

**Madam Speaker,**

Government has since developed a turn-around strategy, to address the Human Settlement portfolio, which has been of great concern to us because of its performance.

The implementation of the strategy is already yielding results and the current level of performance in the delivery of housing units is now at 3,881, excluding the 35 units delivered through the Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme.

We envisage that the Human Settlements Development Grant Budget allocation, mainly earmarked to deliver 4,973 housing units in 6,055 sites, will create housing opportunities for 3,150 qualifying job seekers.

**Honourable Speaker,**

Today we have another good reason to celebrate. There is no doubt that our journey towards our target of 80 per cent Grade 12 pass rate is well on track. The Class of 2022 has shown us that it is doable.

Through resilience and dedication, the Grade 12 Class of 2022 has attained 72,1 per cent pass rate. This represents 5,4 per cent improvement from 2021.

As the Minister of Education has said, Limpopo is the second most improved province in the country. What a milestone!

Limpopo set a new matric record in 2022. It improved the number of candidates who obtained bachelor passes from over 28,000 (26.7 per cent) in 2021 to approximately 33,000 (29.8 per cent) in 2022.

To team Education under the Honourable MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya and all the stakeholders, Limpopo says thank you once again.

There is no doubt that the intervention plan we adopted at the Education Indaba last year has made a huge impact. We must therefore intensify the implementation of this plan.

**Madam Speaker,**

School infrastructure remains high on the agenda of this government as it is prerequisite for conducive learning environment.

To this effect the province will build an additional 150 classrooms in the next financial year. This will go a long way towards reducing classrooms backlog at our schools.

On the other hand, we have made great strides in addressing the challenge of schools with inappropriate sanitation facilities.

The next phase is to attend to those schools that have inadequate sanitation. About 150 of such schools will be provided with additional sanitation facilities over the next Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period.

**Honourable Members,**

In keeping with the dictates of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and demands of knowledge economy, the project of providing our learners and educators with appropriate ICT resources is well on track.

In the previous financial years, we provided Grades 1 and 8 learners in quintile 1 to 3 select school with tablets and their educators with laptops.

There is still a lot of work we need to do to complete the shift, inclusive of building **learning and teaching interactivity** on the e-Learning platform and **securing digital connectivity** across the province.

Similarly, we recognise the critical role that the Early Childhood Development programme plays.

Cabinet took a decision to transfer this function to the Department of Education with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2022.

We have since put in place systems to ensure that 105 000 children aged 0 to 4 years access registered ECD programmes in community-based centres throughout the province.

### **People of Limpopo,**

Today, we are in what is now commonly referred to as the ‘post-COVID-19 pandemic’ era. It is worth noting that more than 2.5 million people above the age of 12 have been vaccinated in Limpopo.

We invite those who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 to vaccinate. In the same breadth, the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria continues.

Through vaccination of children, we have also made significant strides in our continued fight against measles.

We therefore encourage parents to make sure that their children are vaccinated against measles.

**Madam Speaker,**

We are very excited that finally, the long awaited Limpopo Academic Hospital is going to be constructed this year.

The Minister of Finance yesterday announced in Parliament that the construction of this 488-bed Hospital will begin next month.

Of particular importance is that this massive project, will not only help towards improving the provision of health services in the province, but will also create job and business opportunities for our people during and post-construction.

**Honourable Members,**

Earlier this month, Turkey and Syria experienced a devastating earthquake. No less than 46,000 lives were lost, whilst many are still unaccounted for.

On behalf of the people of Limpopo, I convey our heartfelt condolences to all the families that lost their loved ones.



Please allow me to take this opportunity to applaud the five members of the **Limpopo Emergency Medical Services Rescue Team** who volunteered to go to Turkey and Syria to help with their expertise and services.

They are a true resemblance of what has always defined us, solidarity with fellow people during the time of despair.

**Honourable Members,**

The province realised the decrease of road fatalities up to the third quarter of 2022/23 financial year by 1,8 per cent.

One hundred and seventy-nine fatalities were reported. For the same period during 2021/22 two hundred and twenty-six fatalities were reported.

Fatalities dropped significantly by 47 which converts to 20,8 per cent. Most of the victims were the pedestrians, followed by passengers.

Just a few days ago we sadly witnessed a horrific accident on the N1 in Makhado Municipality where we lost 22 people.

We send our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and wish speedy recovery to those who were injured.

In my consultative meetings with stakeholders prior to this address, the South African Council of Churches, had impressed upon the need to convene **a prayer session** in response to this and other fatalities.

To that effect I have directed the MEC for Transport and Community Safety to work together with faith-based organisations to convene a Provincial Prayer Day, before the end of March 2023.

I have no doubt that we need to come together with all organs of civil society, converge under one roof to develop a **social compact**.

Underpinning this social compact should be a commitment to confront these social ills that afflict humanity.

Gender-based violence and femicide, as well as other forms of crime, that continue to rear their ugly heads in our public life must be the highlights of this envisaged social compact.

## **Honourable Members,**

Last year we recommitted ourselves to make life very difficult for criminals, especially those who wish to use Limpopo as a haven for their nefarious activities.

This was largely because peace and stability have always been defining features of our province.

However, as of December 2022, the province experienced an increase in various categories of crime. The total number of crime statistics reported at that time was 242, which was an increase from the previous statistics.

There is however, a notable decrease in reported cases of both sexual offence and attempted sexual offence.

This indicates that the province, through SAPS and other partners in the safety and security cluster, are confronting gender-based violence head-on.

Whilst noting this provincial decrease, we are concerned that incidents of gender-based violence continue to rise in Thohoyandou, Mankweng, Seshego and Giyani.

For us to win the battle against gender-based violence, we need everyone to play their part.

**Honourable Members,**

Last year, there were numerous **inter-sectoral campaigns** through face-to-face, print and electronic media in an effort to intensify our fight against crime.

All districts held dialogues wherein NGOs, Traditional Leaders, Interdenominational and sector departments participated. This platform has brought about a renewed commitment to fight crime on the part of our people.

We shall therefore put mechanisms in place to ensure that departmental coordination and stakeholder collaborations are strengthened.

**Honourable Members,**

We continue to enjoy cordial relationship with the institution of traditional leadership in the province.

In this regard, we appreciate the work done by our Traditional Leaders in the resumption of the initiation schools after a two-year break.

In line with the new legislation, the Traditional Leadership and Khoisan Act, the traditional leaders fully participate in the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC).

This committee which has since been established, is charged with the responsibility of coordinating and ensuring the smooth-running of initiation schools.

**Madam Speaker,**

Last year we made a commitment to commence with the construction work at some traditional council offices. I am pleased to report on the progress we have made in this regard.

The construction work is well underway at Bakone ba Matlala in Capricorn District, Raphahlelo in Mopani District, Bakwena

ba Matsepe in Sekhukhune District, Manoke in Sekhukhune District.

The construction sites at Davhana in Vhembe District and Majeje in Mopani District have been established.

I am also pleased to confirm that the Mogashoa Traditional Council Office, which had encountered some problems in its initial stage, has now been completed.

**Madam Speaker,**

It is worth mentioning that we have set aside a budget to purchase motor vehicles for Senior Traditional Leaders in the next financial year. These motor vehicles will enable traditional leaders to carry out their work as they lead our communities.

The institution of Traditional Leadership also has a role to play in the continued reconstruction and development of our country.

It is in this context that I call on municipalities to work closely with Traditional Leaders on issues of rural economic development.

Nevertheless, of concern to us is the continued referral of traditional leadership disputes to courts of law.

***Magoshi a rena***, we always had a customary way of resolving these disputes without resorting to courts.

It is within this context that I once more implore you to resolve these matters on your own.

### **Honourable Members,**

Last year we recommitted ourselves to acknowledge the pivotal role played by our military veterans in the struggle for freedom and democracy in our country.

We know and understand that the plight and the welfare of the military veterans is our collective responsibility.

Following the consultative visit by the Deputy President of the Republic and the subsequent establishment of the Provincial Inter-Ministerial Task Team, we began the process of

implementing deliverables aimed at improving the living conditions of our military veterans.

I have subsequently directed MECs to put specific departmental plans in place to support military veterans.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture has specifically been directed to profile historical contributions made by the military veterans towards the liberation of our country.

**Madam Speaker,**

The Provincial Government has made significant inroads towards the building a capable, ethical, and developmental state.

As part of this important journey, we committed ourselves to fight against corruption in government, wastage, and mismanagement of public resources.

During the State of the Province last year, we gave a report to this august house on the work of Special Investigating Unit into COVID-19 funds.



To date, the provincial government is implementing the SIU recommendations. We are also supporting the SIU where investigations are still going on.

At least five officials are facing internal disciplinary processes in this regard. One former official is facing criminal investigation.

We are sending a strong message to all those in the public service, who are prone to commit corruption, fraud and maladministration, to avoid being on the wrong side of the law!

### **Honourable Members,**

We are well on track in restoring corporate governance and improving financial administration in Limpopo. Sustained audit improvements over this period attest to our commitment to clean governance.

In 2021/2022 alone, Limpopo Provincial Government attained four clean audit opinions. We have also received nine unqualified audit opinions, while only two remain qualified.

Our immediate task is to sustain the quality of these audit outcomes, implement all the audit action plans, and ensure that we move Limpopo towards clean audit status.

The latest audit results by the Auditor General in local government also show an improved trajectory. We have come a long way since the days of adverse and disclaimer audit opinions. We dare never go back.

Out of the twenty-seven municipalities, two received clean audit opinions. Thirteen received unqualified audit opinions. Eleven received qualified, whilst one had a disclaimer opinion.

Let me therefore take this opportunity to congratulate the Capricorn and Waterberg District municipalities for achieving clean audit opinions.

Well done Executive Mayors, Your Worship Cllr Mamedupi Teffo and Cllr Moris Mataboge, as well as your entire municipal councils.

Nevertheless, I am particularly concerned that Mopani District Municipality has received a disclaimer audit opinion for the second time in a row.

I have since directed the MECs for COGHSTA and Provincial Treasury to continue intervening and provide necessary support.

I have no doubt that this intervention will go a long way towards improving good governance and financial accountability in the municipality concerned.

**Honourable Members,**

We are confident that we have stabilised the provincial government. This was confirmed by the Auditor General when she said:

“The province improved its overall audit outcomes over the three years since the previous administration.... The province improved its compliance with laws and regulations over the administration period, with 12 auditees (71 per cent) having material non-compliance findings in 2021-22, compared to 16 auditees (94 per cent) in 2018-19. We find it encouraging that

improved compliance translated into a notable reduction in irregular expenditure incurred.”

I would also want to welcome the Cabinet decision to adopt the framework on the professionalisation of the public service.

We accordingly commit ourselves to implementing this framework.

We equally call upon municipalities to embrace this effort to professionalise this sphere of government.

The call for professionalisation of public service will help us intensify good governance.

### **Honourable Members and Distinguished Guests,**

During the State of the Province Address last year, we committed our provincial departments and municipalities to play a leading role in executing the District Development Model.

We are pleased with the progress regarding the implementation of this model, especially the alignment of plans.

In Limpopo, all the district municipalities have adopted the DDM approach.

**Madam Speaker,**

Sport, arts and culture are key drivers towards building unity and social cohesion. In the year under review Banyana Banyana won the Women's Africa Cup of Nations 2022.

Once again, we congratulate the entire team for having made South Africa proud. That winning team included six players from Limpopo.

We could not miss the opportunity of hosting them, welcoming them back to the heartland of Southern Africa, the home of the baobab tree in South Africa, Limpopo.

In the same wavelength, we will not tire from celebrating the achievements of the legendary Vakhegula Vakhegula, a football team from Limpopo comprising grandmothers up to the age 84.

They have gained international recognition. Could this be an indicator of where the players in Banyana Banyana from Limpopo come from, socially speaking?

Similarly, Limpopo has seen an increase in football clubs participating in the Premier Soccer League and National First Division.

There are seven teams in the two apex league from Limpopo Province.

This progress has made imperative the development of FIFA-compliant stadia and hospitality sector facilities in our districts.

**Honourable Speaker,**

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the sons and daughters of this province who continue to place Limpopo on the map, especially in the field of arts and culture.

We congratulate our daughter, Ndavi Nokeri, the reigning Miss South Africa who went on to contest for Miss Universe last year.

Nokeri hails from Tzaneen and she follows after other illustrious daughters of the soil, former Miss South Africa, Bokang Montjane, former Miss South Africa Shudufhadzo Musida, all from our beautiful province.

We are also excited about our super musicians who continue to wow the world with their story telling music.

When King Monada won the best song of the year with his song '**A ye kuwa**' on ThobelaFM, and in the same vein, we saw our national rakgadi, Makhadzi collaborating with King Penny Penny with a powerful song, '**Milandu Bhe**', on PhalaphalaFM and Munghana lo Nene FM.

When **Idols 18** closed the curtain last year, the whole South Africa came to a standstill, when Thapelo Molomo became the Idols 18 winner. Thapelo Molomo comes from Diratseneng village, in Bakenberg .

On the other hand, we continue to be entertained through wedding songs such as 'Moleta Israel ga a robale' by our very own Pleasure, Ramadimetja Peta.

How can I forget our shining stars Sho Majozi and Master KG, who continue to shine and put Limpopo on the map?

I am pleased that some of them are my guests of honour in this special sitting today. It is my singular honour and privilege to request Papa Penny and Pleasure Tsa Manyalo to please take a bow.....I thank you and congratulations.

**Madam Speaker,**

When we said that Limpopo shall rise, it was like a myth. However, today, we are seeing tangible and meaningful progress unfolding.

We are like the trunk of a baobab whose multi-purpose bark is a friend to a hunter, a friend to a builder and a companion to a woman who has come to collect firewood. Its bark produces strings that tie multiplicity of items.



Whilst the baobab may look like it is temporarily bleeding, in no time it regenerates and allow the whole tree to continue producing fruits and shade in scorching summer.

With these few words:

**I Thank You!**

**Ndaa!**