

**STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE
PREMIER OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE HONOURABLE CHUPU
MATHABATHA TO THE SIXTH LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGI
SLATURE AT THE LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMB
ER.**

05 JULY 2019

Honourable Speaker;

Deputy Speaker of the Legislature;

Honourable Members of the Legislature;

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon Lechesa Tsenol
i;

Members of the Executive Council;

The newly elected President of SALGA, Mme Thembi Nkadime
ng and your Executive Mayors and Mayors;

The leadership of the ruling party, the African National Congres
s;

Leaders of opposition parties;

Chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders;

Our esteemed Majesties, Kings and Royal Highnesses;
Former MPs and MPLs;
Stalwarts and veterans of our struggle;
Provincial Commissioner of Police;
Heads of our Chapter Nine and Chapter Ten institutions;
Leadership of religious community;
His Grace, the Right Reverend, Dr. Bishop BE Lekganyane;
Leadership of organised business and labour;
Youth, women, community leaders;
Director General and Heads of Departments;
Members of the media;
Distinguished guests;
Comrades, ladies and gentlemen:

The New Dawn is upon us. The dark clouds of despair and hopelessness are retreating to settle in the comfort of a distant memory. The glimmers of sunrise which carry a promise of prosperity and a better tomorrow are within our embrace.

Our New Dawn is about being free and willing to forge a common destiny together. It is about rebuilding and restoring the dignity

of those whose lives were shattered by forced removals and land dispossession.

It is about weaving the tapestry of varied colours, tribes and nationalities in an effort to build a united, non-racial, non-sexiest and a prosperous country, Limpopo in particular. It is actually about doing away with the remnants of Bantustans and artificial divisions that separated our people from one another.

The New Dawn is about transforming the economy so that it can serve all people. It is about the economy that would reduce the levels of inequality, fight poverty and create more jobs.

Above all, the New Dawn is about building a province that we all want, a province we can all be proud of, and indeed we all deserve.

It is about moving from an **era of Policy Development** to an **era of radical Policy Implementation**.

Honourable Members;

The complexion of this august House today, is a direct result of the elections which took place on the 08th of May this year. In one loud voice, the people of this Province have once again renewed the mandate of the African National Congress to continue leading government.

The masses of our people have said to the ANC that as continue to govern, you must now focus on the following:

1. economic transformation and job creation,
2. education, skills and health,
3. delivery of reliable and quality basic services,
4. transforming human settlements and strengthening local government,
5. social cohesion and safe communities,
6. building a capable, ethical and developmental state and, above all,
7. Building of a better Africa and a better world.

ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members;

The recent StatsSA Labour Force Survey shows that our country, our Province in particular, is still struggling with structural economic challenges.

If performance in terms of labour absorption capacity of various sectors of the economy is anything to go by, the growth trajectory of our Province has been on a downward spiral.

Out of 3.7 million people who are legible to be employed in Limpopo, 1.4 million people are employed in the different sectors of the economy. The 5 largest employers in the province are

Community and Social Services, Trade, Construction, Agriculture, followed by Private Household.

The current unemployment rate in the province sits at **18.5%**. Although we are the lowest in the country, this is a noticeable increase from **16.6%** in the last quarter of 2018.

Nevertheless, through our Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) we have taken a conscious decision to build an economy that will be a major contributor to the national wealth by 2030. Underpinning this economic blue-print is the commitment to create and maintain an enabling environment that is conducive for economic growth, social justice and improved quality of life for all our people.

The New Dawn demands that we must build an economy that grows at a higher rate, create jobs, provides opportunities for SMMEs to thrive and promote equitable distribution of resources.

Madam Speaker;

I have got no doubt, whatsoever in my mind, that the New Dawn we are talking about will remain an empty shell without substance if our people remain in conditions of squalor, poverty and joblessness. We have to make a deliberate and a concerted effort to drive our people out of the dehumanising web of abject poverty.

It is in this context, that a sustained economic growth is crucial to enable government to defeat the persisting legacy of inequality, poverty and unemployment.

To that effect, we will build on a solid foundation which we have laid over the past 25 years of freedom and democracy. We will also introduce new and innovative programmes to stimulate the growth of our Provincial economy.

Honourable Members;

We have taken a deliberate decision to place our young people at the centre of our economic development program. It is for this reason that we will be using the might of state procurement to benefit enterprises owned by young people.

We have thus taken a decision that **20%** of state procurement should go to youth-owned enterprises. In the same vein, **20%** of state procurement will benefit women-owned enterprises whilst **7%** will go to businesses owned by people living with disabilities.

Madam Speaker;

Our flagship **Musina-Makhado SEZ** project is nearing implementation stage. In this regard, we are designing measures to ensure that a significant value chain to be produced in this SEZ remains in the Province.

Our focus is to ensure that a significant number of the projected jobs should be taken up by the people of Limpopo, particularly our young people.

It is also worth mentioning that due to the increasing investor appetite in this project; our initial target of creating 21 000 jobs is set to be revised upwards.

In an effort to ensure that young people are properly equipped to benefit from this project, we have thus far approved the Musina-Makhado SEZ **Skills Development Plan**.

Madam Speaker;

In an effort to get the construction work started at this SEZ, I have since directed the MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism to fast-track the finalization of the **Environmental Impact Assessment (IEA)** and the adoption of the **Internal Master Plan** by October of this year.

I can also report that the application for the **Tubatse SEZ** is at an advanced stage. Our business proposal will most likely be lodged with the Minister for Trade & Industry and Economic Development by the end of August this year.

Nevertheless, pending these formal processes, we will be continuing with the industrial activities within this envisaged

Tubatse SEZ. These include, but not limited to: the Mining Input Supplier Park and Construction Incubation.

In the same vein, we have established a partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training, TVET colleges in particular, for SEZ skills development purpose.

We are also establishing Limpopo Skills Academy through Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA). This academy is expected to feed the skills demands for these SEZ initiatives.

We are also happy to announce that we have completed the Youth Digital Skills Database. This has enabled us to digitise varied skills possessed by young people in our Province.

Honourable Members;

We are now giving more meaning to our earlier commitment to revitalise our Industrial Parks.

We have set aside a budget of **R150 million** for the revitalisation of the Shayandima, Nkowankowa and Seshego Industrial Parks. It is our firm belief that this will go a long way towards transforming the economy of our Province and creating the much-needed jobs.

Madam speaker;

In an effort to intensify trade and promote investment into the Province, we have begun the review of LEDA's capacity to deliver on its mandate.

This would include the strengthening of the project management capacity in LEDA to be able to fast track and ensure implementation of mega projects in the Province.

Over and above this, we have taken a decision to re-establish **Limpopo Business Support Agency (LIBSA)** as an independent entity from LEDA. LIBSA will deal with the whole enterprise development programme, business development and financial support. This will go a long way towards creating jobs through a tailored small business support program.

Madam Speaker;

We have laid a solid foundation to roll out the broadband infrastructure for the entire province. The construction of a data centre with voice and data capabilities has been completed. The Network Operation Control Centre and Call Centre have been completed. We have also connected 66 sites. Free Wi-Fi Hotspots are available providing access for the benefit of students, SMMEs and communities at large.

The Province is currently strengthening its partnership with national state-owned entities, mining houses and industry in rolling out broadband network infrastructure in line with the

National Broadband Policy (SA Connect). This will ensure the establishment of core access points in district municipalities and thus extend new fibre networks across the Province by expanding the coverage or footprint of the network into deep rural areas.

This investment in the broadband project will help in unlocking investments from both public and private sectors.

The infrastructure will promote efficiencies, cut costs and enhance service delivery.

It is also worth noting that the implementation of the Limpopo Science and Technology Park, in partnership with Polokwane Municipality, is well underway. This Park is central to the safe and smart city initiatives as it will establish an ecosystem that promotes innovation and enhances competitiveness.

Furthermore, the broadband and the Science and Technology Park will be major enablers for the 4th Industrial Revolution by promoting social impact, innovations and cooperation, particularly among the young people.

In the meantime, the connection of the Limpopo provincial departments is receiving an urgent attention between the Minister of Communications and the Premier. A high-level task team has been established to deal with both legal and

operational matters and is expected to present its report before the end of July 2019.

Honourable Members;

We have taken a conscious decision to position Limpopo amongst the top tourism economies in the country. Through targeted support to the sector, we hope to unlock the massive economic stimulation power of the tourism sector and create more jobs.

In this regard, the government intends to increase the number of tourists visiting Limpopo by implementing the **5 in 5 Strategy** that aims to receive **5** million tourists in **5** years. This Strategy also seeks to double the current 3% contribution of the tourism sector to the total national GDP.

According to the 2018 tourism performance report by **Tourism South Africa**, our Province is the second most popular destination for international tourists after Gauteng.

On the domestic tourism front, our Province still leads the pack with 3.3 million trips recorded in 2018. We hope to build on this positive trajectory in order to create even more jobs for the people of Limpopo. We will achieve this through tailoring and supporting events which promote a lengthy stay in the Province. In fact, we are packaging more tourism offerings for our visitors in all respects.

We are also responding to the challenge of a decaying tourism infrastructure across the Province. In this regard, we are taking steps to re-commercialise our Limpopo Nature Reserves through community-driven Public-Private-Partnerships.

We strongly believe that private equity partners will assist to turn around these Nature Reserves into viable and profitable entities.

Madam Speaker;

Mining will continue to play a central role in the economy of our Province. Currently, mining contributes almost 25% to the Provincial Gross Domestic Product.

As I said in February this year, our Province has 147 mining projects that are operational. A further eight projects are in the pipeline in the Capricorn and Sekhukhune Districts. These projects are expected to attract investments worth R2.5 billion and create around 3000 jobs.

It is in this context that we will be working with the mining houses to ensure that the Province maximises all possible returns from the mining activities taking place in Limpopo. To that end, we call on all mining houses to beneficiate their raw materials in the Province. This will undoubtedly help expand the productive capacity of the economy of our Province.

Honourable Members;

Agriculture remains one of the economic competitive advantages of our Province. However, we have not done enough to leverage on the potential of this sector to put the Province on a higher trajectory of economic growth and development.

It is against this background that we have taken a decision that in this 6th Administration we will focus on:

1. Supporting the revitalization of primary agriculture and agro-processing - targeting undeveloped lands in particular;
2. Revitalization of small scale irrigation schemes and ensure their sustainable operations;
3. Supporting Black farmers in order to increase their entry into the food value chain – this will be done through ensuring access to infrastructure and the markets;
4. Expansion agricultural skills base through training and skills development initiatives, and
5. Most importantly, facilitate transformation in the sector with a view to ensure a meaningful participation of women, youth and people with disabilities.

Madam Speaker;

The poultry industry remains one of the largest contributors to the agricultural sector in South Africa. The industry provides

direct employment for over 54 000 people and indirect employment to a further 58 000 people.

It is for this reason that we are going to re-operationalise the Lebowakgomo Chicken Abattoir. This will certainly bring about huge economic spin-offs for the people of Lepelle-Nkumpi and surrounding areas.

This facility, with a capacity of processing over 120 000 chickens per day, is envisaged to generate about 250 direct jobs on the first day of operation.

In the same vein, we welcome the progress made thus far for the optimal resuscitation of **production and business operations** at Zebediela citrus estate. This brings the much-needed hope to the community of Zebediela and surrounding areas who have since become the rightful owners of that piece of land following the restitution process. Once in full operation, this estate has the potential to create no less than 300 permanent jobs and 500 seasonal jobs.

It is in this context that I have also instructed the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development to expedite the engagements with relevant stakeholders towards the finalisation of a workable operating model.

We would also like to commend the Mamphokhu-Makgoba Trust for their perseverance and ultimately managing to put together a board of trustees. We firmly believe that these developments will help unlock the full economic potential of this tea estate.

Madam Speaker

I must also hasten to mention that in this Financial Year, we will give infrastructure support to 577 farmers in the areas of poultry, livestock and vegetable farming. This support will include;

- Irrigation systems for potato development in Capricorn District.
- Irrigation system for fruit and vegetable production across all the five districts.
- Poultry infrastructure and production inputs for farmers in Sekhukhune.
- We will contract a packing facility to assist banana farmers of Matsikaand Tshikonelo. Construction for this facility is planned to commence in September 2019 and is expected to be completion by June 2020.
- We will also complete a tomato paste processing facility for Norjax by October this year. This facility will provide a market for about 3000 small tomato growers in Limpopo, with a production capacity of 750 tons per day.

We will provide production inputs and mechanisation support to over 13 700 farmers across the Province. This support aims to cushion and minimise the impact of high input costs on emerging and financially-needy farmers.

During this Financial Year, we will also finalise the revitalisation of the irrigation schemes in Tswelopele, Phetwane, Mogalatjane, Elandskraal and Zamerkom.

ON INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members;

Infrastructure is the backbone of economic development. It is in this context that we have put socio-economic infrastructure development high on the agenda of this government.

In this regard, we have established the **Infrastructure Development Working Committee** with a sole mandate of championing infrastructure delivery across the Province.

The Committee includes Provincial departments, national departments and state-owned entities that are responsible for infrastructure programmes in the Province.

Honourable Members;

One of the massive infrastructure projects currently being implemented in partnership with the National Department of Health is construction of the Limpopo Academic Hospital.

The construction work for this multi-phased project will commence in this Financial Year. The Minister of Finance has since allocated a budget of R3,9 billion to this project.

Similarly, an amount of R10 million has been budgeted to kick-start the long-overdue Limpopo Provincial Theatre. The project feasibility study will be concluded during this financial year.

Notwithstanding the work we have done in reducing the road infrastructure backlog in the province over the past 25 years, lack of proper roads in other parts of the province, especially rural areas, continues to be a cause for great concern.

In an effort to make a major dent in this regard, we are currently constructing a total of 114 kilometres of road network at a cost of R1 064 billion in various parts of the Province. These roads, which are being upgraded from gravel to tar, will be completed in this Financial Year.

A further R3 billion has been set aside over the next MTEF period for upgrading of roads from gravel to tar as well as maintenance of existing road infrastructure.

Fellow residents of Limpopo - Development is indeed a process. Where we have not constructed a road, we are

definitely going to construct one. We are working much harder to secure more funds so that we can significantly reduce the backlog of road infrastructure in the Province. There is no doubt that our people need and deserve quality roads for easy access to socio-economic opportunities.

Madam Speaker;

In relation to school infrastructure, we will, during the course of this Financial Year, be completing the upgrading of 67 schools across the Province. This will be done at the tune of R1.24billion.

We will also be commencing with the construction of 123 school infrastructure projects during this Financial Year. We have budgeted R1.62 billion for these projects which are expected to be completed during the current MTEF period.

We have also set aside an amount of R900 million for the construction of four special schools: the Asiphumelele in Sekhukhune, Rivoni in Vhembe, Pfunanani in Mopani and Mhinga in Vhembe.

Both Asiphumelele and Rivoni projects are expected to commence with construction during this Financial Year whilst the Pfunanani and Mhinga projects will commence with construction works in the next Financial Year.

We will also spend an amount of R192 million to address the backlog of school sanitation infrastructure in 100 schools across the Province.

Madam Speaker;

The development of healthcare infrastructure is also receiving our necessary attention. Amongst the key projects that we are focussing on is the revitalisation of Maphutha Malatjie and Letaba hospitals in the next Financial Year. This will be done at a budget of R526 million.

In the same vein, we will be fast-tracking the delivery of low-cost housing to our people. During this Financial Year we will complete a total of 3 921 housing units which were carried over from the previous Financial Year. This will be done at an amount of R348 million.

In addition, we will construct 6 535 more houses at an amount of R762 million in this Financial Year.

Honourable Members;

Chapter 12 of the Constitution enjoins us to support the institution of traditional leadership. It is against this background that we have put aside an amount of R62 million for the

construction of 7 traditional council offices across the Province. Six of these projects are at construction stage and we hope to complete them in this Financial Year. Another project is at a planning stage and we intend to commence with construction works soon.

In an effort to increase the knowledge base of our people, we are rolling-out a programme of well-equipped modern libraries to our rural communities. To that effect, we have set aside an amount of R90 million for the construction of new libraries in Seleteng, Dumela, Mavalani and Runnymede villages.

EDUCATION FOR ALL

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members,

As our international icon, President Nelson Mandela said, **“the power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success; education can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation”**.

President Mandela goes further to say that **“young people must take it upon themselves to ensure that they receive the highest education possible so that they can represent us well in future as future leaders”**.

It is in this context that our socio-economic fortunes and aspirati

ons must be directly linked to the outcomes of our education system.

In an effort to improve the outcomes of our education, we convened an Education Lekgotla earlier this year. The Lekgotla produced a clear-cut and workable Roadmap that is underpinned by the following pillars:

- Universal access to quality Early Childhood Development;
- A qualitative high learner attainment strategy;
- High quality standardised common assessments;
- Effective educator development;
- Efficient, effective and inclusive education; and
- Innovation through e-Education.

During his State of the Nation Address, President Matamela Ramaphosa went to details about the significance of the Early Childhood Development (ECD).

As a Province, we have since aligned our plans with the President's vision. We have begun to invest resources into this area of Early Childhood Development.

Our target is to see all our primary schools offering Grade R. This will ensure expanded access and an improvement of quality of our Early Childhood Development efforts.

We have put aside resources to ensure the training and re-training of ECD educators across the Province.

In the short-to-medium term, we will be facilitating the movement of the ECD function from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Education.

With regard to our basic education outcomes, we remain committed to our target of 80% Grade 12 pass rate. This must be supplemented by not less than 20% of Bachelor Passes.

Madam Speaker;

Limpopo has a significant number of schools which have been declared No-Fee schools. This progressive policy of our government is geared towards improving access to basic education. The idea is that no child of school-going age should be denied access to education simply because the parents cannot afford.

I am happy to announce that in this academic year, over 1.6 million learners in Limpopo are benefiting from this policy. We will continue to improve on these figures for as long as the need remains.

In the same spirit, we will continue to provide scholar transport to all the learners who reside over 5 kilometres from the nearest school. Our medium-to-long term plan is to progressively abolish the need for scholar transport by building more schools.

We will continue to monitor our School Nutrition Programme to e

nsure that learners who are supposed to benefit from the Programme do indeed benefit.

We will also be working hard to improve the quality of education in our Special Schools. I am pleased to say that access to education for learners with special needs is on the continuous increase. Our system is currently accommodating over 8 400 learners with special needs. In addition to the existing 34 special schools , we are building two more special schools to accommodate the anticipated increase.

ON ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members;

A healthy nation is a productive nation; a healthy nation is a winning nation. In this Financial Year and going forward, we will continue with our multifaceted healthcare approach. This approach is anchored on health promotion, preventative healthcare, curative and rehabilitative services.

When people visit our healthcare facilities they expect adequate staff, good infrastructure, sufficient supply of medicine and good administrative processes. Anything less than this will not be acceptable.

Madam Speaker;

The face of public healthcare in the Province is fast changing fo

r the better. Gone are the days of horror stories of medical negligence, lack of care and empathy.

We are now telling a new tale of innovation, commitment and discovery. **Re phethagatša lela la mogologolo ba re go “feta k gomo o sware motho, gobane motho ke moriri wa hlogo o a hloga”**

Just recently, our Province performed its first Open-Heart-Surgery in more than 23 years. This groundbreaking operation was performed in one of our public hospitals, Mankweng Hospital.

Since then, no less than 11 patients have undergone successful open heart surgeries in this facility.

I would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to congratulate a dedicated team of health workers led by Professor Lucas Mohlala, a cardio-thoracic surgeon, and Professor Thanyane Mariba, the first Black cardiologist, for this historic milestone.

Both Professor Mohlala and Professor Mariba are my guests today and they are in the House.

Honourable Members;

Statistics shows that lifestyle diseases are amongst the leading causes of death in our Province. These include diseases such as Diabetes, hypertension, HIV/AIDS and various forms of heart illnesses.

It is in this context that we will be focussing most of our energy and resources on health education and preventative services.

Our fight against the scourge of HIV/AIDS is beginning to bear fruit. In the previous Financial Year we recorded our lowest Mother-to-Child infections. The current rate of Mother-to-Child infections is at 0,77%. Our target remains 0% Mother-to-Child transmission rate.

We will also be stepping-up HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns amongst our youth. We will target mainly young people at colleges and universities where the prevalence rate is unacceptably high.

We must and will once again re-popularise the ABC message through mass media and targeted campaigns. We will ensure that our youth understand the significance of abstinence from sexual activities at an early age, the need to be faithful to one partner and the usage of condoms.

Honourable Members;

The provisioning of effective and efficient Emergency Medical Services is at the heart of a functional healthcare system. We are oiling our EMS machinery to be able to respond swiftly to all forms of medical emergencies.

In this regard, we have entered into a partnership with the University of Limpopo for the training of EMS personnel. This is an im

portant partnership which is designed to ensure a sufficient supply of well-trained EMS personnel.

We will also be continuing with our program to procure EMS vehicles to supplement our existing fleet. In this Financial Year, as it has become our ritual, we will procure another 50 new ambulances. This is done to improve the ambulance-population ratio.

ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members;

The agenda for youth development is at the apex of this government's agenda.

When pessimists say that the young people of today are a lost generation, we say that our youth are our ambassadors of change and our nation's greatest assets.

Our youth continue to fly the flag of Limpopo and our national flag on international stages. Young people are seizing the opportunities provided by our freedom and democracy to claim their rightful place on the international stage.

We take this opportunity to congratulate a young woman from the dusty and small Shirley village in Vhembe, **Sho Madjozi**, for being the first ever African woman to win the B.E.T award.

Just recently, a youth choir from Doornkraal in Moutse left judges at the America's Got Talent wowed and mesmerised. The colo

urful and powerful performance by the **Ndlovu Youth Choir** left the name of Limpopo imprinted on the world's biggest talent search stage.

We congratulate these children of Limpopo and many more who continue to overcome difficulties to embrace opportunities.

Madam Speaker;

Over the next five years, we will accelerate programmes and initiatives with a view to improve the socio-economic conditions of our young people.

We will also work with young people themselves to create a conducive environment to support youth entrepreneurship. This will also include skills development, employment opportunities and implementation of all programmes aimed at youth empowerment.

Honourable members;

We can no longer afford to watch a terrible episode of young lives being destroyed by drugs. Our **Operation Swara-Tsotsi**, as led jointly with the SAPS, is in full swing. We are waging a vicious war against drug abuse, drug peddlers and kingpins. It is going to be the mother-of-all-wars; we are going to spring-clean our streets and push out drug dealers from our villages and townships.

We will also improve our support to the NGOs and other entities dealing with young people who have fallen victim to drug and substance abuse.

ON ACCESS TO QUALITY BASIC SERVICES

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members;

STATS-SA highlights the milestones we have covered with regard to the task of delivering basic services to our people.

The proportion of households with electricity connection is continuously on the increase. The number of households with electricity connection is at 94.13%. In this regard, we have actually exceeded our own 2020 LDP target.

The same statistics shows that the Province has managed to significantly increase the sanitation delivery from 27% in 2001 to 57% in 2016.

Regrettably, the number of households with access to potable drinking water has been reduced from 80% in 2011 to just above 74% in 2016. This is certainly very far from our LDP target of ensuring that 80% of our households have access to drinking water by the year 2020.

In this regard I have directed the MECs for Provincial Treasury and CoGHSTA to develop an **Intervention Plan** to respond to

this persisting challenge of water provisioning in the Province. The plan should be finalised by the end of September 2019.

ON STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Honourable Members;

Local government is the strategic anchor in terms of building a developmental state. This sphere of government plays an important role in coordinating provisioning of basic services and ensuring participatory democracy.

The recent audit outcomes paint a picture of deep-seated challenges of capacity in terms of leadership and management, as well as service delivery backlogs.

It is in this context that the 6th administration would have a focused attention on the strengthening of the capacity of municipalities to fulfill their constitutional mandate. These measures will include:

- Supporting municipalities to attract and retain the best skills, particularly in the areas of engineering, town planning, financial and project management.
- Building the capacity of municipalities to provide basic services, and
- Working with municipalities to support local economic development through sound and flexible regulatory regime.

Honourable Members;

Notwithstanding the picture I have just painted, most of our municipalities are doing relatively well with regard to MIG spending. By May this year, our municipalities had spent over 77% of their MIG allocation. By that time, municipalities such as Capricorn District, Blouberg, Greater Letaba, Fetakgomo-Tubatse and Collins Chabane have already spent more than 90% of their allocation.

While we commend this spending, there must be value for money, our people must feel and see where the money went. Actually, our focus and interest will now be on ensuring that the spent resources can be accounted for in terms of tangible impact on the lives of our people.

Madam Speaker;

As I have said earlier, our municipalities are still not performing as expected with regard to financial management. This poor financial performance undermines the confidence of our people in this important sphere of government. It also perpetuates the perception of corruption in the management of the municipal affairs.

The fact that not even a single municipality or municipal entity in this Province managed to receive clean audit is a matter of great

concern. Even more worrying is the fact that the number of adverse and disclaimer audit opinion have increased.

We simply can no longer proceed in this fashion.

These negative audit outcomes are a result of the slow response by the municipal leadership in improving internal controls. These also include poor implementation of audit remedial plans and lack of consequence management.

Nevertheless, we take note of the improvement in terms of an increase in the number of unqualified audit opinions. In this regard I want to take this opportunity to commend the following municipalities for sustaining unqualified audit opinion for three consecutive Financial Years – these are Capricorn District Municipality, Sekhukhune District Municipality, Thulamela Local Municipality, Molemole Local Municipality and Maruleng Local Municipality.

I also want to commend Greater Letaba Local Municipality, Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality and Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality for having received unqualified audit opinions for the first time. I am urging them to sustain this commendable performance going forward.

The other area of concern for the Provincial Government is the increasing debt owed to ESKOM and Water Boards by

municipalities. Municipalities must pay to Eskom and respective Water Boards what is due and payable.

This is the only way that Eskom will continue to have the financial muscle to provide bulk electricity to municipalities – it is also the only way to ensure that our Water Boards equally have the necessary capacity to supply bulk water to municipalities.

I have instructed the MECs for Provincial Treasury and CoGHSTA to work with the municipalities to address this challenge in an equitable and sustainable manner.

Madam Speaker;

In line with our commitment to build a developmental local government, the Provincial Executive Council has adopted a targeted support programme, for 10 municipalities. These are municipalities that are either Water Service Authorities, Priority Provincial Growth Points or distressed as per our Back-to-Basics Approach.

Key focus of the plan is to strengthen support and oversight, particularly in infrastructure delivery, financial management and long-term planning.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members;

We will not relent in our commitment and effort to build an ethical, reliable and capable state.

We will maximise efforts to sustain the credibility of the Provincial Government. We will do this through a concerted fight against corruption, wastage of public resources and, more importantly, promote good governance.

We will continue to take decisive steps against those who are engaged in maladministration, corruption and all forms of wrong doing.

We are finalising performance agreements which will be signed with all the MECs by the end of August. Part of the deliverable for our MECs is the issue of service delivery, and good governance. The annual assessment of MECs' performance will, therefore, include the issues of sound financial management in their respective Departments.

I have also instructed the MEC for Transport and Community Safety to work together with Civil Society to ensure the revival of the Provincial Anti-Corruption Forum. This will go a long way in combating corruption, raising awareness and building the integrity of the state.

ON SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR ALL

Madam Speaker and programme director;

As government we will not abdicate our responsibilities to ensure that our people live in conditions of safety and security.

We will continue the partnership with our social partners and the SAPS to ensure that Limpopo reclaims the reputation of being the safest province in the country.

We will achieve this by strengthening community safety and policing structures. We will also wage a vicious war against drugs, gangsterism and violence against women and children.

We will continue the work to strengthen Local Community Safety Forums and ensure that these structures are functional in all our municipalities.

I also want to commend our courts in the Province for really coming on board with regard to the fight against violence and crime, particularly gender-based violence.

In this Financial Year alone our courts have already handed down 49 life sentences against perpetrators of gender-based violence. We believe that these harsher sentences will go a long way in complementing our efforts to end gender-based violence.

I must emphatically stress that government alone cannot win the battle against crime in all its manifestations. The fight against crime, abuse of women and children in particular, is a societal issue. I therefore call on all of you to join government in our fight against crime and related ills.

Madam Speaker;

To respond to the challenge of the increasing number of fatal accidents on our roads, we will, over the next five years, be employing and placing more traffic officials on all major roads across the Province.

During this Financial Year, we will appoint 238 young people who are currently on traffic learnership as fulltime traffic officials.

We have also set aside an amount of R43 million for the refurbishment of Limpopo Traffic College so that we can increase the College's capacity to train even more young people.

It is in this context that we welcome the recent announcement by President Ramaphosa for the commissioning of a high-speed train between Johannesburg and Musina. This initiative will come in handy as an alternative mode of transport for the Province. This will serve as a game-changer and catalyst for the transformation of the spatial economy of the country and SADC region given our strategic location.

In this regard I have directed the MEC for Transport and Community Safety to initiate discussions with the Minister of Transport to expedite the implementation of this high-speed train initiative.

Madam Speaker and honourable members;

The journey ahead will obviously be a protracted one, the task ahead is daunting – we only have one choice - to conquer and win. We will and must win the war against poverty, unemployment and inequality;

We must and will win the war against wastage of public resources, maladministration and corruption;

It is our collective task to wage a war and win against the scourge of crime and in particular gender-based violence;

We are going to win the war against the abuse of alcohol and drugs by our youth population;

We must and will succeed in the necessary effort to build the Limpopo we want;

We are going to work together as different political parties, Civil Society, academia, business and labour.

Each and every single day of this Administration, we will make sure that we put shoulder to the wheel to ensure that Limpopo becomes an oasis of our dreams.

Madam Speaker;

As we do the work that we are mandated to do, we continue to be guided by the judicious words of an African revolutionary, Thomas Sankara when he says to us that:

Our revolution is not a public-speaking tournament. Our revolution is not a battle of fine phrases. Our revolution is not simply for spouting slogans. Our revolution is, and should continue to be, the collective effort of revolutionaries to transform reality, to improve the concrete situation of the masses of our country.

Fellow residents of Limpopo, let me conclude by reiterating that our challenges are not greater than our opportunities. We have great opportunities and better days ahead of us. Our tomorrow is far much brighter than our yesterday and today.

Together, we will build a Limpopo we want and deserve.

I thank you!