

# **STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY LIMPOPO PREMIER MR SELLO MOLOTO TO THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE THIRD DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURE OF LIMPOPO**

**14 FEBRUARY 2008**

Mr. Speaker and Deputy Speaker,  
Executive Mayors and Mayors of local municipalities,  
Honourable Members of the Executive Council,  
Honourable members of the Provincial Legislature,  
Honourable members of the National Assembly and NCOP,  
Speakers of Municipalities,  
Leaders of Opposition Parties,  
Chairperson and members of the House of Traditional Leaders,  
Our esteemed Majesties and Your Royal Highnesses present,  
Former MPs and MPLs,  
Leadership of ANC and other political organisations,  
Stalwarts and Veterans of our struggle,  
Our Director General and the senior management of our provincial  
administration,  
Leadership of Chapter nine and ten Institutions,  
Leadership of various religious denominations,  
Youth, Women, Business, Labour and Community leaders present  
here,  
Media representatives,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,  
The people of Limpopo

We have just completed yet another eventful year of joy and tribulations. Tribulations in the sense that this august house has once more lost two of its distinguished members and leaders of our people. We would like once more to pay homage and respect to Honourable members Flora Masakona and Norman Mashabane, who are no longer with us in this house as we report back to the people of the province on the mandate we have been given. Included in the list of leaders and selfless servants of our people who died in the line of duty are Tryphina Bvuma and Elvis Mavuso from Mopani district, Thompson Ramantswana from Vhembe district, Billy Sehlapelo and Billy Scheepers from Capricorn district, Abraham Makgai, Jane Mathime and Clement Sekhaolelo from Waterberg district and Rachel Maleka from Sekhukhune district.

We mourn their passing, and once again extend to their families, friends, colleagues and comrades, our heartfelt sympathies and condolences on behalf of our government and the people of the province. We would like to take this opportunity to call on the people of the province to recommit and rededicate themselves to the vows and resolve they have made at the gravesides of these gallant heroes and heroines who would never have betrayed the ideals of freedom and democracy. *A ri nga do vha hangwa, vhahali vhahashu! A hi nge swikoti ku rivala tinhenha ta tiko ra hina! Re ikana go tswetsa pele dikeno ka moka tse bagale ba ba di lwetsego!*

We salute them and thank them dearly for dedicating their lives to the struggle for liberation and for always being there when our people needed them. It is also with deep regret to learn of the devastation which befell the people of Lephalale following heavy rains which left them without shelter. We equally note the devastation in Tubatse where people were cut off after the river burst its banks. We sincerely extend our deepest condolences to everyone affected, including the family of Messrs Sonnyboy Mokgotho and Jan Mojela who passed away as a result of the disaster. Government has made an undertaking to continue providing support and shelter to these residents including those of Penge and Mafefe villages. This serves as a constant reminder about the enormity of the challenges and backlogs we still have to confront.

Honourable Speaker

Indeed, it was an eventful year full of joy and tribulation, joy because we are able to stand here in front of this august house and account on the mandate in terms of programmes and responsibility. Our province was given a rare opportunity to host the historic 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference of the ANC. We were presented yet with another opportunity to be the focus of the world even more than what would be happening in the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Limpopo and Polokwane in particular, will remain in the minds and lips of not only South Africans, but also the international community. We believe that we will continue to occupy this space of being the point of reference for the next 15 to 20 years. Given our abundance of natural resources,

scenic beauty, cultural diversity, kindness and humility of our people, we can safely conclude that all the people who descended on our shores are bound to come back either for business or leisure.

On behalf of the people of Limpopo, I would like to take this opportunity to humbly and sincerely thank the leadership of the ANC for having made such a bold decision to provide us with such a life time opportunity of hosting the 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference. This is so, if you consider that the next opportunity of hosting may present itself after the next 45 years, if the rotation system is kept.

Honourable Speaker

In our first State of the Province Address in 2004, we outlined the mandate for the term of office of this government as the building of a people's contract to fight poverty and create work. In responding to the said mandate, we undertook a process to formulate a battle plan. This all inclusive and elaborate process of consultations through summits, culminated in the adoption of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS). We can confidently state that at this point we have succeeded in developing a common vision, common purpose and common understanding on how the development of our province can be taken forward.

Honourable Speaker

We went further to set up targets which are meant to measure our performance in terms of these strategic objectives. We are pleased to report that on the social front most of our targets have been met and in some instances exceeded. We also note that despite the fact that our social security interventions such as social grants, free primary health care services, no fee schools, free basic water, free basic electricity, free RDP houses and various other government subsidies are not integrated, the impact is already felt. In this regard the relevance of the call by the President for the creation of a **war room** against poverty cannot be overemphasised.

The impact we have referred to, has been confirmed by both the results of the Community Survey conducted by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) and even by our outreach programmes and *izimbizo* at a practical level. In these *izimbizo*, the bulk of questions which people raise, are no longer dominated by questions relating to social services such as social grants, IDs and education. The trend which we are observing is that more and more, our people raise concerns and questions in relation to the economic cluster, and thus confirming the recent results of Statistics South Africa's Community Survey, that we are still faced with a challenge of addressing the scourge of unemployment.

**Mining: The wealth belongs to all who share it!**

Honourable Speaker

The Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS) as a way of responding to the need to grow the economy, has identified seven industrial clusters value chains. These include the logistics hub, Platinum Group Metals, Petro-chemicals, red and white meat production, horticulture, tourism and forestry. Our last year State of the Province of Address dwelled much on the contribution and expansion of mines which have been going on in the province. Even this year, there are many mining operations, which are continuing with their expansions and many more which have recently got their mining rights licenses. Therefore, our assertion that, we are the future mining hub of the country cannot be disputed. We should therefore continue with our elaborate plan, the one unveiled in this House on how we can increase the labour absorption capacity of the mining industry through proper exploitation of the whole value chain, starting from research and exploration up to beneficiation as explained in the Mining Charter.

Like we said last year in the State of the Province Address, we should boldly confront the issue of how we are going to ensure that our communities benefit from these mining operations. The Mining Charter is very clear in terms of what needs to be done, in the equity stakes including the social and labour plans. In this regard we appeal to the mining houses not to take our communities for granted. They too have got all the rights to benefit from the developments which are happening in their surroundings. We firmly believe in our brand positioning statement that *“development is about people”*. We further like to borrow the slogan of the Disabled People of South Africa

(DPSA) in communicating, rightfully so, the message of the people of the province in this regard, when they say *“nothing about us without us”*.

We have just developed a working relationship with the Department of Minerals and Energy and we are agreed that there will no longer be any mining development without sufficient community involvement. We are also presented with an opportunity because the majority of the mining houses in the province are going to apply for conversions of their mining rights. There is general consensus in government that these conversions must not be approved without adequate community involvement. Our experience in dealing with this conflict between communities and mining houses, is that our communities are easily manipulated and divided in the process of negotiating better deals which would be more beneficial to our communities. These tensions and divisions are brought about by third parties whose interest normally does not correspond with the interest of communities, our observation is that government is normally not taken on board in the initial stages of these negotiations and we are normally called upon when these conflicts have reached alarming proportions. We will appeal to communities to be united as they face these challenges because unity is the only guarantee for them to get a better deal.

Honourable Speaker

Last year, we spoke about the planned construction of the R80 billion Medupi Power Station in Lephalale. The construction of this power station offers an enormous hope to millions of South Africans who obviously look at this power station as bringing salvation to the energy emergency facing the country. The construction work of the power station has begun in earnest. These developments in Lephalale had a pull effect on what has always been referred to as the Waterberg flagship project. There are many other new initiatives, which are still in the offing related to the mega project. If all of them are to succeed, they would definitely change the face of the Waterberg region and the province as a whole.

Honourable Speaker

These developments in Lephalale come amidst the challenges of continuous power outages facing the country. You may very well know that government has embarked on major infrastructural projects in the last fourteen years. Combined with the massive electrification programme and the new household connections, these have undoubtedly placed enormous strains on Eskom's reserve capacities to meet the energy demands of our nation.

Obviously as a country, we are learning the hard lessons from this experience and hope to come out better and wiser. It is true that our economy will be affected by this, but we are neither naïve nor completely helpless. We are pleased that our national government has moved swiftly to develop a national response plan to the



electricity challenges. We expect every household and business to join government in its efforts to save energy.

Whilst Eskom is building additional power reserves to match the needs of our growing economy, we must continue to conserve electricity to avoid more blackouts from happening. The call to conserve energy is not done for the sake of building Eskom power reserves, but if we internalise, and get used to, these measures being proposed it will also save money for households which can be used for other valuable things. We passionately hope that when this challenge would have passed, South Africa will have become one of the world's leading giants in energy conservation.

Honourable Speaker

Last year when we announced the unbundling of the mining shares owned by the Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LimDev) and the shopping complexes, we underestimated the complexity of the challenge. Due processes had to be embarked upon in order to comply with the provisions of the law, particularly Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). We are satisfied with the progress which has been made thus far in ensuring that this empowerment effort is realised.

### **Agriculture: The land belongs to all who till it!**

Last year we spoke about the challenge of a decline in the agricultural sector which is one of our economic comparative

advantages. We take pride at the fact that our efforts to arrest this decline have begun to bear fruit. This is attributed to the review of the 'willing buyer willing seller policy' which resulted in the acceleration of the land restitution and redistribution processes. Through the support of Extension Officers from the Department of Agriculture, even what we used to refer to as community dead assets like livestock, tribal and trust land which were lying fallow, are beginning to come back into production. We would still appeal to parties involved in matters related to land claims to understand the urgency of resolving this problem in order to, once and for all, settle the uncertainties which have got a bearing on the productivity levels.

It is also worth mentioning that we have developed the Limpopo Agricultural Development Strategy, whose priority lies in the development of Agricultural Hubs – a concept adapted to suit areas with the greatest potential to increase land availability for agricultural production whilst enhancing the broader economy of such areas. Two of the five hubs identified are Nandoni in the Vhembe District and Nebo Plateau in the Sekhukhune District. There have been several consultations with Territorial Councils, Ward Councilors, traditional leaders and communities to make land available for agricultural development in these areas. Over 6000 hectares of land has to date been made available for development in both Nandoni and Nebo plateau areas. About 11 irrigation schemes including land owned by traditional leaders will form part of the hub development.

Honourable Speaker

As we have committed ourselves last year, we have been able to formally launch the Agribusiness Academy at Tompi Seleka and Madzivhandila in collaboration with the Flemish government. As we have said then, this academy will mentor and train small scale farmers including providing refresher courses for Extension Officers. The Agribusiness Academy is also supporting an Agri-tourism initiative at Ha-Makuya in the Vhembe District in partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand.

The revitalisation of the Tshivhase Tea Estate in the Vhembe District has reached a stage where rural people of Limpopo can proudly produce their own tea. The factory in the estate is in operation and loose tea leaves are in the market again.

In order to enhance the capacity of the sector to generate growth and create jobs, we are now placing more emphasis on market access in order to empower farmers to derive value out of their products.

Honourable Speaker

It is common knowledge that Limpopo is a relatively dry and water scarce province. It is against this background that government has invested more resources in the development of water infrastructure. Progress in this regard has by far surpassed our expectations. The Nandoni Dam in Vhembe District was completed in 2006. The water purification plant is expected to be finished by the end of the first

quarter of the next financial year. Feasibilities for the construction of the Nwamitwa Dam in Mopani are complete and we expect work to begin in due course. As already mentioned, the construction of the De Hoop Dam is proceeding well.

We have mitigated the threat of water availability in the province by investing resources in the harvesting of water into dams. One major challenge we still face is with regard to the silting of these dams. We need to find resources to minimise this problem from continuing and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) must play an important role in this regard.

### **Tourism: The preferred destination of choice!**

We have been observing a year on year increase on the total share of tourists visiting our province. Last year, Limpopo Province recorded 22.5% growth rate in the number of visits to the province (i.e from 3.1 to 4 million trips).

As part of our commercialisation programme which we have announced since 2005, we have seen the consolidation of many of our game parks with the nearby game reserves. The dropping of fences between state-owned nature reserves and private game farms is opening up a new chapter in public private partnerships within the conservation field. A collaborative agreement has been signed with Legend Lodges on government-owned Doorndraai and Entabeni Private Game Reserve. This will see Doorndraai increasing from the

current size of 7 000 ha to be part of the 22 000 ha conservancy, and will see joint investments in excess of R4 billion in the next five years.

Equally, the 9 300ha Nwanedi nature reserve would increase to 25 000ha after merging with Kuduland Safaris and Tshipise Honnet Reserve managed by Forever Resorts. We have also signed a collaborative agreement with Eiland Spa in respect of the state-owned Hans Merensky nature reserve, to create an Eco-cultural destination in Mopani.

It is important to mention that in our effort to boost the rural economy and empower local communities, the co-management agreements have been signed with communities owning nature reserves. These agreements are the first of their kind in the country and would translate to the injection of R3.5 billion investment into these parks. Tourism investment is well placed to make a huge impact in the lives of rural communities as almost all game and nature reserves are situated in deep rural areas.

We have successfully managed to defend our market share in the international arrivals by maintaining our presence in the market and by designing new tourism products. So far we have developed through partnership with Open Africa and the European Union three new routes, namely Seraki, 'Land of Legends' and 'Bush to Beach'. The recent opening of the 'Bush to Beach' route which links Limpopo through the Gariyondo border post to Mozambique has opened up opportunities for 4x4 packages. The Limpopo Tourism and Parks

(LTP) should develop a stronger marketing drive to popularise these routes for domestic and international travellers.

All other tourism initiatives like agro-tourism and health tourism are still being marketed and pursued across the country and the world.

Honourable Speaker

### **Logistics Hub: The heartland of southern Africa!**

The PGDS identifies Capricorn District and Polokwane Local Municipality in particular, as our provincial logistical hub. The envisaged anchor projects constituting this hub include the upgrading of the Polokwane International Airport, the building of the International Convention Centre, the Fresh Produce Market and the construction of Peter Mokaba stadium. The commercialisation of the Great North Transport (GNT) was also identified as one of our flagship projects.

Honourable Speaker

As we are all aware, the construction of Peter Mokaba stadium is proceeding well and it will be finished on schedule for the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

On the other hand, the development and upgrading of Polokwane International Airport is beginning to take shape with the construction

of the terminal nearing completion. The board is still pursuing various endeavours and partnerships to ensure that our objective of developing it into a regional commercial and cargo hub is realised. The private sector is beginning to show keen interest in this initiative. In this respect, we have enlisted the technical expertise and assistance of the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA) to assist us in realizing this objective.

Honourable Speaker

With regard to the unbundling of the Great North Transport (GNT), the national Department of Transport has developed a new public transport strategy influenced by the demands of 2010 FIFA World Cup preparations. The new strategy propagates an Integrated Rapid Public Transport Network. This aims to integrate all modes of transport including taxis, rail and non-motorised transport. Inevitably, we have also had to review our envisaged unbundling of the GNT in order to conform with the provisions of the new national strategy.

Honourable Speaker

The International Convention Centre (ICC) remains one of the flagship projects of our government. In partnership with Polokwane municipality, the provincial government has made significant progress towards the realisation of this objective. Part of the reasons why we could not proceed as we envisaged with the construction of the ICC was the rapid increase in the cost of building materials and the

upsurge in demand for the construction of 2010 FIFA World Cup stadiums and related bulk infrastructure. Influenced by all these factors, the cost far exceeded our budget for the project.

It is worth noting that the concept itself has generated interest in the private sector, something that was not envisaged when the idea was initially mooted out. At the moment negotiations and discussions are continuing with the private sector and the appropriate model for the implementation of the project is being explored. Many proposals and innovation on how the project can be profitable are being put on the table. The outstanding challenge is around matters of ownership and management.

Honourable Speaker

In the same vein, our experience of the challenges referred to in the construction of the ICC also bears reference to the establishment of the Fresh Produce Market. In the meantime, the Department of Agriculture is continuing with the establishment of Pack Houses in districts and there is a strong collaboration with the private sector to ensure that the idea comes to fruition. A pilot project of a cold storage was started in Seshego industrial area and it is envisaged that once the challenges relating to land availability are resolved, the project will then migrate to Polokwane.



The line function departments will provide further details regarding all of these flagship projects when they present their budget speeches to this august House.

Honourable Speaker

Guided by the words of wisdom and counsel from one philosopher, who in his conviction of expanding the horizon of knowledge from the inspirational biblical verse in the Book of Ecclesiastes 9:11 said: *“race is not for the swift, nor battle for the strong”, but for those who have hope, courage and determination*

Since the advent of our democracy, driven by this hope, courage and determination, we are slowly about gradually breaking the cycle of poverty and underdevelopment.

It is worth noting that we are continuing to experience sustained economic growth and development in our province. Statistics South Africa's figures show that our economy grew from 4.1% in 2005 to 4.6% in 2006. We have been experiencing an average economic growth of 4.2% in the last four years.

Equally, from the same source, statistics show that we are also beginning to observe a gradual decline in unemployment rate in the province. The unemployment rate got reduced from 35.6% in March 2006 to 32.4% in March 2007.

In our endeavour to remove all the bottlenecks and impediments to the realisation of the effective implementation of the PGDS, the provincial government established a Project Management Unit (PMU). This unit's principal responsibility was to identify all the bottlenecks and how they should be overcome. The brief also included developing bankable implementation plans for us to continue with the realisation of all these important objectives of the PGDS. That job has been done and we are now ready to proceed with implementation. We would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the unit for a job well done!

**Institutional capacity: Building a sensitive and responsive public service!**

Honourable Speaker

In pursuit of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, the past four years of our current term saw us hard at work building the capacity of the provincial government. Our main focus was on streamlining systems on internal audit, contract management, risk and integrity management, human resources management, supply chain management, records management and more importantly financial management capacity. Despite the challenges which are still remaining, we can confidently assert that there are signs of remarkable improvement. This improvement came as a result of the collective effort of all the important stakeholders including the committees of this august House. Our provincial government can take

pride in the fact that the work of this honourable House and its committees is made easier because our planning processes and programmes are gradually maturing. The robustness adopted by the committees of this House over accountability and oversight role stems from the fact that our systems are generally improving and easy to follow.

In this regard, we would like to thank committees of this Legislature for the job well done.

Honourable Speaker

As part of this improvement which we have referred to above, the provincial government discovered that we have been running an overdraft, which accumulated over the past eight years from 1999. This overdraft came as a result of accumulated over expenditures from various departments. In response to this challenge, the provincial government decided to adopt austerity measures which were aimed at increasing savings in order to close up the overdraft. These austerity measures included cutting on expenditure on those items which don't have a serious bearing on service delivery such as gala dinners, workshops, end-of-year parties, and so on and so forth. We are confident that by the end of this financial year we would have done away with the overdraft and our books will be clean.

As alluded to earlier on, the internal audit measures have been put in place and are bearing fruits. This is demonstrated by the Auditor

General's audit report for 2006/2007 financial year. In this year, none of the provincial government departments have received either a disclaimer or an adverse audit opinion. Even the number of matters of emphasis has reduced drastically. This represents a marked improvement in the management of public finances by government departments and institutions. Despite these improvements, all our departments have received qualified audit opinion. This is primarily as a result of elevated audit standards. In the 2006/2007 financial years all spheres of government were not audited on assets and it was only introduced in the previous financial year.

Honourable Speaker

In an effort to conform to new audit standards and improve our asset management systems, we have embarked on a multi-pronged strategy to address these deficiencies. This would include the development of a common valuation catalogue to ensure uniformity across all departments.

In our previous State of the Province Address, we expressed our concern about the tendency to employ people who are not suitably qualified in our provincial departments and municipalities. It is against this background that we have developed a comprehensive Provincial Human Resource Management Policy to guide departments in appropriately recruiting and selecting suitably qualified people. The strategy also ensures that in-service training, and related capacity

building programmes, becomes the centrepiece of maintaining our institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

The other deficiency which we have been experiencing is with regard to our performance management system. We have not as yet perfected the system to hold our administration accountable, particularly the Senior Management Service (SMS). This area of work still requires close scrutiny and attention.

### **Fraud and Corruption: Building a clean and transparent administration!**

Honourable Speaker

Obviously, fighting fraud and corruption is critical in the interest of building a clean and transparent administration. We are on record condemning any form of impropriety in our administration and we will continue to spare no effort or energy in an endeavour to rid our administration of this malady. It is within this context that we have subjected about 1 999 government employees earning salaries above the housing subsidy threshold to the Special Investigative Unit (SIU). Harsh disciplinary measures are also meted against public servants who continue to draw social security grants. Once again we call on our people to cooperate with government in ensuring that the war against fraud and corruption is taken to greater heights.

Honourable Speaker

## **HRD and Skills Development: Opening the doors of life-long learning!**

Like we have always said, the non-availability of competent skills and human capital poses a much bigger threat to the successful implementation of the PGDS. However, we take great pride in knowing that many of our departments are making huge investment in the area of human capital development in the province.

The annual expenditure of provincial departments in human resource development has been on the increase in the last four years. Last year alone, the provincial departments have spent about R85 million in bursary awards only. No less than 2 000 young people in various institutions of learning have benefited from these bursaries.

On the other hand, the contribution of the private sector stands at R6.4 million in 2007. Although we appreciate this intervention by the private sector, we believe that this amount is too little to make the necessary dent on the socio-economic and skills challenges which we are still experiencing.

Honourable Speaker

Last year we announced the imminent establishment of the mining academy in Sekhukhune district. The construction has started in Twickenham mine, and the first intake of trainees will be done towards the end of the year.

Honourable Speaker

Our efforts to bridge the digital divide as outlined in the PGDS are being realised. As part of the drive to establish an information society in the province, government has undertaken a massive project to install the infrastructure for wireless broadband technology so that residents can gain access to internet throughout the province. This project which is expected to be completed by March 2010, involves connecting about 6 000 sites around the province including 4 400 schools and a number of clinics and hospitals situated in some of the more remote areas.

The ICT Hub concept has been expanded and subsequently renamed "Limpopo Living Lab" to better illustrate the inclusion of not only government but also academia, private sector and the civil society. The core of the Limpopo Living Lab is already up and running in Polokwane. On the other hand, the Mogalakwena i-Community project is being rolled out as part of the "Limpopo Living Lab" initiative.

In a partnership with the Information Systems, Electronics and Telecommunications Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority (ISETT-SETA), 50 young people from rural areas of Waterberg District are undergoing a twelve-month long ICT training at NQF Levels 3 and 4. This initiative has been replicated to Vhembe,

Mopani and Greater Sekhukhune Districts with a total intake of 90 young people.

We are very pleased to learn that Satyam Computer Services of India has again taken a second batch of 29 young people for twelve-month training in world class software engineering techniques and methodologies. This batch of youth was among a group of 90 young people recruited across the country as part of the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) programme.

Our Further Education and Training (FET) system has begun to make the necessary impact in the development and provision of requisite skills. We have enrolled 3 431 students on the new FET National Certificate Vocational (NCV). However, we believe that, in order for FET colleges to become effective, they must obviously forge closer ties with industry. There are lessons to be drawn from the example set by the Lephalale FET College, whose students benefit directly from doing practical training with mines in the Lephalale area.

Honourable Speaker

Our National Youth Service (NYS) programme targeted 2 000 young volunteers. We have learned that the Limpopo Youth Commission in partnership with government departments has succeeded in reaching this target. These young volunteers are involved in the following projects such as the Tzaneen housing construction, maintenance and plumbing through EPWP; SAPS reservists programme; warehousing of books in the Department of Education; and the Presidential e-



literacy programme. This programme has, and continues, to add value to our cause of ensuring that young people seize opportunities of freedom and democracy, and above all, make meaningful contribution to the development of society.

### **Improving the quality of life of our people**

Honourable Speaker

As we move towards the end of the third term of the democratic government, we have no doubt that we have made a difference in the lives of our people. The majority of our people, most of whom are found in the vast farm lands of Limpopo and far flung villages have got access to basic services such as primary health care, education, water, electricity and roof over their heads. We have asserted in them a sense of self being and they can proudly identify with freedom and democracy.

Honourable Speaker

Our health care system is maturing. As we move towards meeting our policy objective of universal access to Primary Health Care (PHC), we are proud to announce that we have significantly surpassed the target set in the PGDS with regard to the provision of 24 hour services provided in our Primary Health Care (PHC) and the clinic building programme. We are proud to have established the first Renal

Dialysis Unit in the province which is also the first Renal Dialysis PPP model in the country.

However, we fully acknowledge that our health system is still afflicted by challenges relating to the quality of care provided. On the other hand, we still have to improve on our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) response time from the current 25 to 20 minutes in urban areas and from 45 to 40 minutes in rural areas.

Honourable Speaker

We continue to implement the Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Care, Treatment and Management Programme. Our Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) sites have increased from 37 last year (36 hospitals and 1 clinic) to 47 this year. We still appeal to our people to practice safe sex by adhering to our central message of abstinence, faithfulness to one partner and condom use. Remember, your sexual health is your responsibility.

Honourable Speaker

In line with the new policy directive, the education of our children should no longer be a departmental issue, but an issue which occupies the attention and energy of everyone in the community.

Studies have shown that Early Childhood Development (ECD) is critical in the development of humanity. In this regard we have taken a decision to give ECD a priority attention not only as an Expanded

Public Works Programme (EPWP) but also to be dealt with as business unusual.

Honourable Speaker

We are noting with appreciation the improved performance of our matriculants from 55% pass rate in 2006 to 58% in 2007. We offer our congratulations to the class of 2007 for their hard work and dedication given the challenges under which they had to learn. We also acknowledge the continued support from the parents, educators and officials.

Despite our huge backlogs in infrastructure and human resources, our province continues to perform well in Mathematics and Physical Science. In 2006 we got 31% pass in Mathematics higher grade, which has now increased to 49%. In physical science we moved from 23% to 52%.

Honorable Speaker

Our government remains committed to the opening of the doors of learning for all. Since the adoption of the “no fee school policy”, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of learners benefiting from these schools. The number of these schools has since increased from 2 557 in 2007 to 2 832 this year.

As we join the nationally driven Mass Literacy Campaign (*Kha ri Gude-Let us learn*), we will also increase the number of ABET

centres by 40 and implement an ABET learnership for 800 learners. Our target is to have 582 ABET centres in the province in order to meet the PGDS target of reducing illiteracy from 25% to 10% by 2014.

Honourable Speaker

In order to improve learning and teaching in our schools, we have prioritised the building of 204 classrooms in 89 schools, and 88 administration blocks in 88 schools. In addition to these, we have committed ourselves to build 3 model schools for rural areas and 3 others for hotspot urban areas. As a temporary measure, we will continue to provide mobile classrooms for schools which are overcrowded.

### **Basic services: Building a better life all!**

Honourable Speaker

The Community Survey by Stats-SA recorded in February 2007 draws a picture of remarkable improvement in the quality of life of the people of Limpopo. The survey shows that over the period of five years, the province made significant progress in arresting the cycle of underdevelopment in the social sector. When it comes to human dwellings and habitation for instance, the survey finds that formal dwellings increased from 72.5% in 2001 to 83.2% in 2007. Informal dwellings on the other hand have decreased from 7.1% in 2001 to

5.6%, while traditional dwellings decreased from 20.2% in 2001 to 9% in 2007. The percentage of households using electricity for lighting increased from 62.9% in 2001 to 81% in 2007 (it was 38.7% in 1996). On the other hand, the percentage of households who have access to piped water increased from 78.1% in 2001 to 83.6% in 2007. This is the kind of progress we need in order to move closer to meeting the targets we have set for ourselves in line with the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

Honourable Speaker

The Provincial Growth and Development Strategy enjoins us to reduce congested accommodation and also to eradicate informal settlements. The development of an Integrated and Sustainable Human Settlements is a critical element in our fight against poverty and in improving the quality of life of our people. On the other hand we are also challenged with the question of housing affordability for the so-called "gap market", i.e. teachers, nurses, police etc. Some of them are steeped in debts thereby reducing their eligibility to housing loans. It is, therefore, not surprising that some of them resort to illegal means of acquiring RDP houses.

**Local governance: A centre of gravity in terms of service delivery!**

Honourable Speaker

During the previous year we spoke a lot about proper planning in our municipalities. In the last two financial years, we even created a fund which was meant to assist municipalities with forward planning in order for them to access Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). We did so because we realised that the rapid developments which are going on in our towns and villages are far outpacing the existing bulk services. These will include sewerage plants, solid disposal sites and proper upgrading and maintenance of municipal roads. If all these bulk infrastructural projects are not attended to quickly, we are inevitably bound to be faced with the same challenges of power outages experienced by Eskom. In our view we do not think that these challenges should be left to municipalities alone. They require an integrated approach which requires all spheres of government.

### **Public service transformation and special programmes**

Honourable Speaker

The efforts to bring government services closer to the people are being realised. The Community Development Worker's (CDW) are currently involved in a project of compiling Ward Information Database for household profiles. The household profiles will assist government in making specific and direct interventions to households, which are particularly affected by poverty or lack of basic amenities. We regard this initiative as a building block of the war room against poverty which the president referred to in his State of the Nation Address. We call upon all our people and community-based

organisations including Ward Councillors and Ward committees to collaborate in addressing these identified challenges in the affected households.

Honourable

In the past four years we have exceeded the employment target with regard to women and people with disability. Our administration boasts 50% female HoDs. With regard to the employment of people with disability, we stand at 1.5% and we are working hard to ensure that we reach 2% target as per NEDLAC resolution. We also call on the private sector to emulate this good example by giving priority to the vulnerable sectors of our society.

### **Roads and transport: Limpopo in motion!**

Honourable Speaker

In the last State of the Province Address, we raised concerns about lack of visible road patrols during the night and in non-peak periods. It is encouraging to note that traffic officials are beginning to be visible 24 hours and throughout the year. To this end, we have established the N1 Brigade which is now patrolling the N1 road from Bela-Bela to Beit Bridge border gate on a 24 hour basis. We will continue to step up measures for more visible policing and road safety awareness, particularly given the fact that the traffic volume in the province has increased by 20% and this trend is bound to continue.

It is also worth noting that the Mpumalanga province ASGI-SA project of Moloto Rail Corridor development is being expanded to include our province. In terms of the plan, the rail line is envisaged to include areas like Burgersfort in the Sekhukhune district and ultimately joining with Polokwane. We believe that this initiative will finally ease out congestion on our roads and ultimately reducing the number of accidents.

**Safety and Security: There shall be peace, security and comfort!**

Honourable Speaker

As confirmed by yet another survey of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), Limpopo still remains a “Home of Peace.” Notwithstanding this achievement, there are still sporadic incidences of crime taking place in some of our communities.

We were disturbed by an increasing number of missing children in Modimolle. This challenge even prompted us to set up a police investigating task team to establish the causes of this criminality. Several campaigns were also conducted in the area to try and raise awareness with the intention of stemming the tide against this challenge. We are relieved to receive reports that the police have arrested a person suspected to be responsible for the atrocities at Modimolle and we expect justice to take its course. Once again, we



commend the South African Police Service (SAPS) in the province for a job well done.

The summits and the awareness campaigns which were embarked upon are beginning to bear fruit. There is a discernible decline in the reported cases of ritual murders. Our rural safety programme is also beginning to yield positive results as we are beginning to see a decline in reported cases of farm attacks despite the fact that we still find isolated incidences of either a farmer or farmworker attack.

Honourable Speaker

As part of our popular mobilisation and building of people's contract, business is also coming on board in our endeavour to fight crime. Preparations for the launching of a provincial chapter on Business Against Crime (BAC) are at an advanced stage. We cannot overemphasise the point that, for us to finally defeat crime, we will have to work closely with the police in order to isolate criminals. This will require that we play an active role in Community Policing Forums and various other neighbourhood structures aimed at fighting crime.

**Traditional leaders: Custodians of heritage, culture and traditions!**

Honourable Speaker

We have completed the chapter of the payment of the Induna's and we are continuing with our programme of revitalising and refurbishing

traditional council offices. We are also making good progress with regard to the employment of staff in these offices.

Early last year, we had a two day summit with traditional leaders where in-depth discussions took place on many issues relating to the role of traditional leaders in matters of development. This included how traditional leaders participate in our municipalities, reflecting particularly on issues of levies and land use management. A number of decisions were taken on how their collaboration and cooperation with government should be streamlined.

We acknowledge the fact that their responsibilities are increasing and many of them are serving in municipalities as well as in the local and provincial houses of traditional leaders. Over and above that, they are still expected to discharge their responsibilities in their own traditional authorities. All of these reasons demand their increased support in order for them to adequately carry out their tasks. A decision was then taken that we should purchase vehicles for traditional authorities. We have had critics and cynics challenging us on this noble objective of our provincial government and branding it all sorts of names; some calling it a waste of money or even buying of influence. We regard these irresponsible statements and utterances as not only an insult to our traditional leaders but also the people of the province as a whole. Maybe General Bantu Holomisa was right when he asserted that the expenditure we incurred “cannot be equated to the annual budget of the Zulu monarchy”.

Honourable Speaker

As we said last year, the history of this country will never be complete unless all the struggles of our people which have been waged across the country are documented. In this regard, we welcome the initiative by a Limpopo historian, Mr. Champ Sepuru, in conjunction with heritage institutions in the province. We have learned that he is finalising a book on the HISTORY and HERITAGE of the people of Ga Matlala-a-Thaba, with special emphasis of the earliest activities of the ANC “Congress men and women” (MaCongress) from 1919. Sepuru’s work is yet another effort of indigenous historians whose aim is to document HISTORY from an Afrocentric perspective – thereby moving from a tradition in which African stories are told and written from a Eurocentric perspective. This is similarly important given the fact that this will be the year dedicated to the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sekhukhuneland revolt against 'Bantu Authorities', an act of defiance that served as a precursor to similar uprisings among the rural masses against apartheid impositions.

On the other hand, the National Heritage Council [NHC] is currently funding the production of a documentary on THE HISTORY OF THE BAHANANWA OF MALEBOGO, with special emphasis on the 1894 war between the Zuid Afrikaanse Republic (ZAR) Boers of President Paul Kruger and the Bahananwa of Kgoši Ratšhatšha Lebogo.

It is also worth mentioning that our project of honouring all our warrior kings has been concluded. We have erected statues in honour and memory of these leaders of our people.

Honourable Speaker

The rebuilding of the moral fibre of society continues to be one of the challenges we are faced with as South Africans. When we thought that there are signs of improvement in this regard, incidences like the one which involved the killing of four staff members in Seshego hospital last year, the attack on the family of Willem van Schalkwyk in Polokwane, the chaining of people to the storeroom roof by a farmer in Thabazimbi and the shooting of a Councillor in Vhembe District two days ago reminded us of the fact that we still have a long way to go in this regard. It is unquestionable that we live in a troubled society whose only source of redemption lies in the amount of change which people have to undergo in their hearts. In order to build a society which is free from fear, anxiety and distress, we cannot overemphasise the importance of family values in our society. A family is a pillar on which the community stands. Without good moral values in the family, the community will obviously suffer. This is why it is important to nurture the values of human solidarity, compassion and respect in order to realize the objective of building a caring society.

Honourable Speaker

**We cannot agree more with the Ecclesiastes prophecy that “race is not for the swift nor battle for the strong”, but for those who have courage, hope and determination.** Though much still needs to be done, we believe we have covered enough ground in carrying out

the mandate entrusted upon us by the electorate. Chief amongst the notable milestones will include:

1. The popular front which we have galvanised against poverty and underdevelopment;
2. The overwhelming confidence and support we continue to enjoy from our people;
3. Our steady contribution to the national GDP which rose from 6.7% in 2004 to 6.8% in 2006;
4. The sustained economic growth rate which continues to grow on an average of 4.2% over the past five years;
5. An unemployment rate which has been on the decline from 35.4% in March 2006 to 32.4% in March 2007;
6. The increase in the percentage of households with access to piped water from 78.1% in 2001 to 83.6% in 2007;
7. An improvement in the credibility of IDP's and LED's of our Municipalities;
8. Improvement in management systems in Provincial government departments and municipalities;
9. Our Maths and Science performance in matric which is the highest in the country;
10. The South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR) confirming in two consecutive years, that our province remains the most peaceful province in the country;

Honourable Speaker

As it is customary, we cannot end our address without acknowledging the movers and shakers from our province who continue to make our people feel proud of their origins in this part of our land. These include organizations and institutions that have distinguished themselves in the service of humanity and Limpopo citizens in particular. Amongst these we count:

- 9 year old Micaela Van der Merwe from Burgersfort who was crowned Little Miss World for 2007/08;
- Serogole Mokganyetji Glodean from Hoerskool Friekkie Meyer in the Waterberg District for being Limpopo's overall best learner in 2007 matric class;
- Dale Steyn, commonly referred to as the 'Phalaborwa express', a player for the national Protea team and the third best fast bowler in the world;
- Mr Victor Ngobeni, a geography teacher from Rotterdam Secondary School in Mooketsi for being one of the only two winners to be chosen in a National Innovative Teachers competition presented by Microsoft;
- Ms Petra Mphahlele who competed against women from all 9 Provinces and emerged as the 2007 overall winner of the Technology for Women in Business (TWIB) Awards;

- Nedzanani Muvhuso who was recently voted the boxer of the year in Africa 2007 by the World Boxing Federation;
- Baloyi Papish, one of our province athletes who participated in the Boxing Cadet championships in Lesotho and received a gold medal;
- Manganyi Masana, one of our province's athletes who participated in the Zone Six Trial 2007 (boxing) in Botswana and Netherlands and received a silver medal in both instances.
- Mbilwi Secondary School in the Vhembe District for being inscribed in the top 100 elite club of schools with 100% higher grade passes in mathematics and science;
- Lwatshatsimu Land Care project in Vhembe District which was awarded the first runner up at the 2006 International Land Care conference in Australia.
- Tzaneen Municipality which was voted the cleanest town in the annual Cleanest Town Competition in which 16 Municipalities participated.

- Capricorn District Municipality for winning the Provincial Vuna Awards making it the best municipality in the province, and second best in the country.

***Indeed Honourable speaker, we may seem not to be swift enough or even not appearing strong, but our hope, courage and determination will carry us through”***

**Happy Valentine 's Day!**

**Inkomu**