

STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS BY LIMPOPO PREMIER, MR SELLO MOLOTO TO THE FOURTH SITTING OF THE THIRD DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURE OF LIMPOPO

15 February 2007

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

The amount of goodwill experienced over the last thirteen years confirms the confidence many South Africans of all races have in the policies and the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC). Perhaps, it was history itself which ordained 95 years ago that, it should be the ANC that must bear the torch of liberating South Africans out of the morass of racial oppression and exploitation. Having spent the past 13 years, engaged in the struggle for bettering the lives of our people, we are never surprised by the level of trust and loyalty many South Africans continue to have towards their ANC led government.

The gains we have attained in the little space of time since 1994 bear testimony to what people can achieve if they are united and focused in pursuit of determining their own destination. Nothing can best capture the depth and extent of this goodwill than the results of the March 2006 local government elections in which, the vast majority of the electorate voted for the ANC, giving it an 84% majority support. What was striking in these elections is that the victory of the ANC represented a 4% improvement compared to the support we received in the previous 2000 local government elections.

Another remarkable milestone is that the province, contrary to national trend, increased its voter turn-out with approximately 3% compared to the previous

2000 local government elections. This massive support and trust on the government and the leadership of the ANC was reinforced in an independent survey by Afro-Barometer in June last year. In this survey, 72% of the respondents interviewed agreed that our provincial government was indeed doing a good job. The results of the same survey also showed a high job approval rating of our municipalities at 62%. This was the highest rating for municipalities in the country and signified increased public confidence in the leadership qualities of our elected local government representatives.

Honourable Speaker

We are not surprised by this public confidence in our policies and leadership as Limpopo's Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS) locates people at the centre of development. It is therefore important that our people continue to take charge and responsibility for their own destiny. All these developments vindicate what we said on the occasion of the adoption of our growth and development strategy in 2004, relating to the life history of Selina Maphorogo, a retired nursing assistant who worked for many years at Elim Hospital in the northern part of our province. A detailed account of her life history and experience on community work is explained in her book titled "***The community is my university: A voice from the grass-roots on rural health and development***".

The book narrates her life-story of rising from humble beginnings as a domestic worker to an internationally-acclaimed community development worker. Her moving narrative on the importance of each one of us contributing to community development even prompted Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, the former Managing Director of the World Bank on Health, Education and Social Protection - to say; "I am proud to have shared the Limpopo province of South Africa as a birth place with Selina Maphorogo".

Mme Maphorogo joined the league of other luminaries in community development from this province who include the likes of Bheka Ntsanwisi, Clara Masinga, Fhatuwani Ramabulana, Ntswaki Qwabe, Lobisa Mamabolo, Elsie Motubatse, Noriah Mabasa and Tendani Senoamadi to mention but a few. It is our firm belief that all of us gathered here share the same sentiment and should consider ourselves lucky to be calling this province our home.

Honourable Speaker

The life story of Manana Selina Maphorogo demonstrates the importance of a community as a university of life. As the leadership of the province we have come to realise the importance of drawing lessons from community experiences through izimbizos and various other community outreach programmes. For the past years that we have had these interactions, we have learned from the people and we continue to appreciate their concerns and aspirations. In this instance,

we have learned that people take a particular stance on issues not because they choose to do so, but because of lack of adequate information and sometimes the distortion of facts which are perpetuated by certain elements who are pursuing particular sectarian agendas.

This is why we believe that it is important for the leadership to have a dynamic contact with the people in order to clarify the position and strategic direction government is taking at any given time. We can confidently say at this juncture that, whilst there may be different and dissenting view points in Moutse, those voices are definitely a tiny minority.

It is in this spirit that we welcome the people of Moutse who are now firmly part of our province. As a sign of goodwill and commitment to nation-building, we are today happy to have in the gallery some representatives of the Moutse community who have come to grace and honour this auspicious occasion. We are pleased that they are ready to join hands with millions of our countrymen and women in making Moutse in particular and our province in general, an oasis of growth and development.

Our knowledge of the area reveals that Moutse has for a long time been one of the highly depressed and poverty stricken part of the country. We are determined to change this anomaly by working hand in hand with the people of Moutse and we can confidently say that they too are equally proud to belong to Limpopo as they demonstrated in our last imbizo held in their area. They know as we all do that South Africa is one country with only administrative boundaries. They now share the same understanding as the ANC-led government that ours is not a federal state but a constitutional democracy which is united in its opposition against hunger, poverty and underdevelopment.

Honourable Speaker

Following the interactions we had with Moutse people, work is proceeding to address some of the identified challenges. Key among them is the issue of water, electricity and roads. We have drawn enormous lessons from the Moutse experience and believe that it should be a source of hope and inspiration for other parts of our country where boundary disputes may still be a challenge such as in Khutsong in the North-West and Matatiele in the Eastern Cape.

Honourable Speaker

We begin the year 2007 with a renewed sense of enthusiasm and commitment to the goals we have set for ourselves in the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS). Last year we announced that cluster managers would be appointed to monitor and assist in the implementation of each cluster value chain on a constant basis. We are now pleased to report that the PGDS Project Management Unit has now been firmly put in place in line with this objective.

There are already certain quick wins which the unit has succeeded in unlocking giving us confidence that the work of our cluster value chain would be enhanced.

There is every reason to be confident and positive, considering the fact that the province's share in South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is growing rapidly, owing to a sustained economic growth rate over the last decade. As some of you will know, between 1996 and 2005, Limpopo recorded an average real annual economic growth rate of 4.0% which is above the country's average rate during the period under review. The latest statistics indicate that Limpopo is now the fifth largest contributor to South Africa's growth rate at 6.7%, despite the fact that we are experiencing a decline in the agricultural sector.

There are many hypotheses to the decline in the agricultural sector. The common complain is the complex issue of land claims which all of us acknowledge it is a challenge. Others will blame public sector investment which is seen as insufficient largely because of the deterioration of extension services which are not doing enough to support both subsistence and emerging farmers. There is an argument to the effect that what is normally referred to as dead assets i.e large tracks of trust land and livestock, are not being utilised optimally and efficiently for commercial purposes. The conversion of arable agricultural land into private game farms is also blamed as another factor which is diminishing the capacity of agriculture. A holistic solution must be sought to confront the challenges in the sector otherwise we run the risk of losing it as one of the key drivers of our economic growth.

Honourable Speaker

Our province is regarded as one of the provinces which are doing well in terms of race relations, more especially in the agricultural sector. The recently realised report of the Human Sciences Research Council's *South African Social Attitudes Survey* confirms what we already know. In this report, Limpopo is considered third in line from a low base of the provinces which have managed to improve their race relations trend. The work we have been doing with white formations, particularly Afrikaner organisations including, Agri-Limpopo, the Council of NG Kerk ministers, Afrikanerbond, Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU) and Trade Union-Solidarity (TUS) is beginning to yield positive results. Despite all these achievements, we know that there continues to be horrible isolated incidences such as the one where a boy was shot by a farmer for being allegedly mistaken for a rabid dog in Thabazimbi and the one where a man was shot after being allegedly mistaken for a baboon in Musina.

All of us have got a responsibility to condemn in the strongest terms this type of criminality. To this effect, we would like to reiterate what we said before that white communities must be the ones to make the loudest noise when the victim is black, and accordingly black people should do the same when the victim is white. This would obviously serve to discourage the racist perpetrators who might

be thinking that they are advancing a white course by killing black people, and the opposite will be true for black people.

Honourable Speaker

The issue of land claims is still with us and the complexities of the issues are hard to contemplate. Every party to the dispute would have to appreciate these complexities. Last year in the State of the Province Address we raised a concern about the pace of the restitution process in relation to these claims. In response to this challenge, the National Land Summit was convened and very important decisions were taken. Amongst these was the devolution of the powers of the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs to the Regional Land Claims Commissioners. Since this resolution was taken, we have seen the pace picking up. The speedy resolution of Levubu and Makgobaskloof land claims can be partly attributed to this intervention.

However, we have seen new challenges which have emerged following the successful restitution of land. The general trend is that the productivity of the restituted land goes down. We also note with concern the fact that vast tracks of land are lying fallow because of infighting and petty squabbles within the beneficiary communities. We must therefore caution that the whole concept of land restitution will not yield desired outcomes if the beneficiaries do not understand that they equally have a responsibility to ensure that the productivity of these farms is maintained. The need to develop a mechanism where, as this process unfolds, adequate skills are transferred to beneficiary communities becomes imperative. In this regard, we welcome the initiative which our Department of Agriculture is planning in partnership with the Finnish government to ensure that the issue of skills transfer is attended to through the introduction of an agribusiness academy at former agricultural colleges of Tompi Seleka in Sekhukhune and Madzivhandila in Vhembe. The envisaged academy will mentor and train subsistence and emerging farmers including providing refresher courses for extension officers. The aim is to ensure that we do more than just redistributing land to people who may not have the necessary skills and passion for farming.

Honourable Speaker

Last year in the State of the Province Address we talked about the need to expand the labour absorption capacity and the contribution of the mining sector into our economy. We are pleased to note that many of the operating mines in the province have already started with their expansions programme. The majority of the mines have made major capital investments which would lead to improved economic growth and development of the province. These include Venetia Diamond Mine in Musina, Potgietersrus Platinum Mine (PPL) in Mokopane, Forskor Phosphate Mine in Phalaborwa and Grootgeluk Coal Mine in Lephalale. Venetia Mine has already initiated plans to expand its operations to the value of

approximately R1billion. On the other hand, Potgietersrus Platinum Mine (PPL) is investing R4.2 billion towards its mining expansions while Forskor is investing R600 million.

The much talked about Waterberg flagship project has now come to fruition. Eskom is investing R26 billion for the construction of the world's biggest dry-cooled Matimba power station at Lephalale. This power station will go a long way in addressing the growing electricity needs of both the province and the country. It is envisaged that approximately 9000 jobs will be created during the construction phase of this project. In addition, Exxaro Grootgeluk Coal Mine has committed itself to expanding its production capacity to meet the resource needs of Matimba 2. This will require an investment of over R7 billion into the Lephalale plant. SASOL is also proceeding with its investigation of the liquefaction of these coal resources in the Lephalale area.

Honourable Speaker

In our recent engagement with the mining groups a few weeks ago, we were all convinced about the need to upgrade infrastructure and logistics in order to accommodate these expansions. Both the mining sector and the provincial government are agreed about the need to put up plants in Limpopo for the purpose of warehousing of equipments and supplies which are needed for their day to day activities. It is envisaged that even light engineering work and the routine maintenance of machinery could be done in the province. Already there are suppliers like JCB Engineering which are looking at the possibilities of setting up a plant in Mokopane before the end of this year. We expect their presence to boost our drive for skills development and transfer, particularly for the benefit of young people who are the future of our country.

More and more mining houses operating in the province are already seeing the need for cooperation and collaboration in order to maximize the possibilities of cost reduction and development. Of course we have made the point to them that, in their investment plans the focus should not only be in the local market but should look at the markets beyond the province's borders particularly in the neighbouring states. There are a lot of mineral deposits in those countries. This cooperation would obviously involve joint operations on smelting and refining of their products within the province.

The provincial government is aware of common conflicts which always occur between the mines and their surrounding communities. In the recent past we have seen communities up in arms against some mining houses in Tubatse area and in Mogalakwena. The concerns communities are raising range from lack of meaningful partnerships, inadequate corporate social investment, insufficient compensation over land and failure to engage local labour. We therefore implore on the affected parties to resolve their conflicts amicably in order to build long lasting relationships that are mutually beneficial to all parties.

Honourable Speaker

Limpopo is fast becoming a place where you can revive your soul and rekindle your energies. A stay in Limpopo is more than just accommodation - it is about reviving the human spirit and asserting a sense of self being. Our province has become a perfect place where one can relax in a tranquil setting while also being able to interact with mother-nature at her best.

Our capital Polokwane is not only attractive as an emerging hub for conference and business tourism, but was recently voted by the internationally renowned Men's Health magazine as the "Healthiest place to live in for males". This is largely because of its natural surroundings which offer the international traveler tranquility and peace of mind. There are natural hot springs around the province with several full health spas in abundance. However, our tourism operators seem not to be tapping enough on this potential, hence a need for the Limpopo Tourism and Parks Board to maximize the development of emerging health tourism potential for the benefit of both the domestic and the international markets.

Last year in the State of the Province Address we spoke at length about the tourism potential of the province considering its natural scenic beauty and heritage. There is a new concept in tourism called agri-tourism. The Western Cape province has always been adequately exploiting its potential around agri-tourism. Every one of us is familiar with the famous Western Cape wine and garden routes.

Limpopo offers the same potential quality of agri-tourism products which can be exploited for the benefit of the local tourism market. It is not enough that while we are the largest producers of various crops in the agricultural market, this capacity is not exploited as a resource for agri-tourism. Possibility for such a potential is abound in the province, through the linking of various agricultural products to tourism icons and hospitality industries within these areas. For instance, the Modimolle grape festival or (*Druiwefees*) has been celebrated over many years every January. In this festival, the majority of the current and former residents of Modimolle gather to enjoy the table grapes which are grown in the area. The reason for the celebration of this grape festival in Modimolle is derived from the fact that their grapes are said to be the first in the season in the whole country and more tasty than those grown throughout the country. This is what makes them to be unique. Above all, they are the first fresh grape export from South Africa to hit the international market. If this tradition was to be linked to other important tourist icons in the area such as Nylsvlei and Rust de Winter, to develop the route modeled on the wine route in the Western Cape, it is for certain that, tourism would be boosted and the sector will become more productive than it is now. The other festivals which can be exploited in the same way are the

(*Sonskynfees*) or sunshine festival in Bela-Bela and the spring and beer festivals in Haenertsberg.

The province is known for being the biggest producer of other products such as mango, marula, avocados and tomatoes in which the same principle can apply. For instance, the large tracts of ZZ2 tomato grown farms in Mopani District also offer a huge potential for agri-tourism development. The same can also be said about avocados in Levubu. We therefore implore on the economic cluster to take keen interest in this form of tourism and work out a comprehensive strategy through which it can fully be exploited.

Honourable Speaker

It is worth noting that Limpopo and KZN were the only provinces in the country which received more visitors from foreign countries in 2005, with at least 1.3% added growth compared to other local destinations. This has prompted the Limpopo Parks and Tourism Board to initiate the translation of our niche brochures into Dutch, German, Mandarin and local indigenous languages so as to attract a diverse range of visitors. We are also pleased that during this financial year, our provincial tourism agency would be expanding its tourism information offices to Gauteng and the Western Cape to draw a bigger market share of domestic visitors and travelers.

The other development of note in sports tourism is the building of an 18 hole golf estate in the Waterberg region which will form part of Entabeni game reserve. This development will also integrate the government owned Doorndraai nature reserve in order to maximize its tourism potential. It is said that this would be a golf course of its own kind in the whole world, and is envisaged to be opened next year.

Honourable Speaker

Two years back, we convened the sectoral summits whose resolutions guided us in pursuing the economic growth and development of the province. Our mid-term review has however noted the need for us to reconvene these sectoral summits during the course of this year. This will provide us with yet another opportunity and platform to evaluate and assess the progress we have made since 2004. Once more we call on all the stakeholders to join us in this evaluation and assessment in order to attain the intended objectives.

Honourable Speaker

The commercialisation of our state-owned game parks has been moving very slowly. The slow pace is mainly attributed to unresolved land claims and the need to get the necessary buy-in from surrounding communities. However, we still maintain that this process proceeds because it is the only vehicle at our disposal to ensure that the historically disadvantaged individuals are brought into

mainstream tourism as shareholders and owners. At this stage we believe we have gone a long way in removing all the obstacles which are stifling the process and we are confident that there will be a significant movement forward.

Honourable Speaker

During the state of the province address last year, we undertook to proceed with the commercialisation of Great North Transport as envisaged. The implementation process has proven to be difficult and complex than anticipated because of the number of stakeholders we were required to deal with. As things stand now, the consultation process and all other obstacles have been dealt with and we are now in a position to complete this process before the end of this year.

Honourable Speaker

The 2010 count down has already begun for the staging of the world most prestigious and spectacular event in the game of football. We are happy that both the City of Polokwane together with the Local Organising Committee (LOC), have committed themselves to commence with construction work during this first quarter of the season for the new 45 thousand seater Peter Mokaba sports complex. This facility would remain beneficial and an asset of the province even beyond 2010.

Like we said last year in the State of the Province Address, the need for the development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) cannot be overemphasized if we are to remain competitive within the context of skills and knowledge based economy. As honourable members would know, Mogalakwena I-Community project has been identified as the province's ICT hub. The students who have been trained in this centre are well equipped to develop new IT models and applications as well as programming and even repairs of computers. Most of our government computers are now being referred to this centre for repairs.

We have just finished the project plan for the roll out of the I-Community project to other districts throughout the province. By the beginning of the next financial year, we will start with the roll-out to Sekhukhune district and the rest of other districts shall follow as and when we build more capacity.

With your indulgence, let us also hasten to mention that we have been sending learners to India, Andhra Pradesh province, to get international exposure for the development of this hub. More importantly, we have entered into partnership with the India based Satyam Computers in order to get our learners trained in ICT. The process is underway to establish as many partnerships as possible in order to ensure that the learners would have the opportunity to get as much exposure as possible.

Honourable Speaker

Last year in our State of the Province Address, we undertook to initiate the process of redefining and refocusing parastatals to equal the task at hand. Work has been done in this regard, and we are now at a point where a viable option has been agreed upon and has to be implemented. This option entails the amalgamation of Limdev, Trade and Investment Limpopo (TIL) and LIBSA in order to reinforce their productive capacity and contribution to the provincial economic development.

As part of the restructuring process of our parastatals, government is also going to be looking at the asset base of Limdev, for the purposes of unbundling and bringing of BEE companies on board. At the moment, Limdev, owns shares in mining, in retail business and various other properties which we believe is not a government competence to be involved in. Limdev's role should in this regard be that of facilitating participation of BEE's. So far progress has been made in the unbundling of ASA metals and 30% shares in this Mine is now ready to be taken over by BEE companies. We are looking forward to the process being completed by the end of this year.

The other area where studies are being made for the possibility of bringing BEE's on board, is in relation to properties and shares of Limdev in Mokopane mall, Thohoyandou, Giyani, Lulekani and Nkowankowa shopping complexes. We hope and trust that this process will be speeded up in order to ensure that our people can have a stake in this industry. All designated groups including women, youth, and people with disability must be given priority.

Honourable Speaker

Our medium term review identified weaknesses in planning and capacity to spend. This has led to delays in the implementation of many important infrastructural flagship projects identified in our PGDS. Amongst these projects are the International Convention Centre (ICC), Peter Mokaba Sports Complex, and the development of the Airport. The Executive Council has since made a decision that the Office of the Premier should henceforth take a lead in the implementation of these projects if the contribution of our envisaged logistic cluster is to be realised. Both the planning unit and the project management unit in the Office of the Premier will be seized with the responsibility of the realization and the accelerated implementation of these flagship projects.

Last year we spoke at length about the need for early detection of weaknesses and risks in the public service. The measures we have put in place have not yielded the desirable outcomes as the phenomenon of high staff turn- over and skills shortage is still with us. We believe that we should explore, as an alternative, the possibility of co-sourcing the internal auditing responsibilities. We are opting for this route because all of the risks which this government is experiencing stem from the fact that we do not have the capacity for early detection and therefore we will be proactive in responding to these risks. If this unit is well capacitated, then the threat of fraud, corruption and all forms of

impropriety will all be dealt with promptly. This measure would entail the private sector assisting government in the management of risks and related weaknesses.

We believe this intervention will serve two purposes. Firstly, it will contribute in the improvement of institutional effectiveness and efficiency; and secondly it will help to impart skills and capacity to our internal audit unit as the unit is largely staffed by those on internship and learnership programmes. It is our belief that if these officers on internship and learnerships are well capacitated, this capacity will spread across all government departments and even our municipalities.

Despite these measures we are taking to improve our institutional capacity and effectiveness, we still remain firm on our stance against fraud, corruption or any form of impropriety. Appropriate internal measures are being pursued to deal with issues relating to the International Transport Convention (ITC) and Mapungubwe Arts festival. Any action which borders on criminality has been referred to the relevant law enforcement agency for further investigation and action.

Honourable Speaker

Building on the initiative of Project Consolidate, twelve (12) development facilitators have been dispatched by the Department of Local Government and Housing to municipalities to assist in the building of institutional capacity, particularly in the area of engineering, finance and town planning. Since the 2006 March elections, there is also an ongoing training programme to equip both municipal Councilors and managers with the necessary skills that will enable them to discharge their responsibilities. However, the skills which still remain a challenge to attract in the province include technical, planning, legal and financial management. There is a growing concern that both the provincial government and our municipalities continue to opt for the appointment of less qualified officers, even when people with appropriate skills are available. In our view this is not only a curse to the overwhelming mandate and confidence our people have placed on us, but an act of arrogance which history will not spare any of us who is perpetuating this anomaly.

Honourable Speaker

We have seen a significant increase in women representation at senior management level in the public service. We moved from 32.2% in 2006 to 37% this year, which is a marked increase of 5%. It is also worth noting that 50% of our departments are led by women as HoD's. This has made Limpopo the province with the highest number of women senior managers in our country's public service. The representation of people with disabilities at senior management level has also improved and has now reached the required target of 2%. It is our belief that the private sector will take cue from the achievement which the provincial government has made particularly in gender representation.

In line with our commitment to build a compassionate government service to the people of our province, we are happy to report that service delivery improvement plans are being implemented in all departments. Some departments have established centres of excellence and customer satisfaction surveys are being conducted regularly to ensure that service delivery is geared towards implementing the Batho Pele principles.

Honourable Speaker

Over the years, in our EXCO outreach programmes, there has always been an outcry about the delays in the processing of applications for social security grants. Our recent experience is that those complains have been dramatically reduced; and in fact one can consider those problems history. What is remaining is the integration of all government social intervention measures, like credible allocation of RDP houses and indigent provision of basic services from municipalities such as water, electricity and sanitation.

Honourable Speaker

Last year we committed ourselves to the passing of both the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders Act and Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act. As part and parcel of the implementation of the Acts, both the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders have now become full time office bearers in the Office of the Premier. The aim is to assist the Office in the process of establishing the Local Houses of Traditional leaders and Traditional Councils. Our target is to ensure that Local Houses should have been established by the beginning of April this year. The other area of focus which we have to complete during the next financial year is the establishment of administrative systems and the building of capacity in all our Traditional authority offices.

We have also noted that, the Nhlapo Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims committed itself to report about the first phase of its work before the end of the first quarter of 2007. This is the phase which will determine the existence of any kingship and paramount-ship in the country. We hope and trust that the second phase which looks at the claims and disputes will be concluded as speedily as possible in order to bring finality and stability in this matter.

Honourable Speaker

Our "Arrive Alive" campaign has begun to make a dent on the challenges of road safety, particularly during the festive season. We observed a significant drop in fatalities over the last festive season despite an increase in the number of cars and drivers on our roads. Statistics show that we experienced a drop of 24% compared to the same period in 2005. Despite this drop in the number of

fatalities on our roads the numbers are still so high that there cannot be any reason for celebration. We have learned that most of these accidents happen at night. This is the time when many illegal things including un-roadworthy vehicles, un-licensed drivers and overloading occurs. Many motorists take advantage of the absence of traffic officers on the road during this period because their work hasn't as yet been declared an essential service. We therefore implore on the responsible bargaining chamber to consider the possibility of declaring traffic management an essential service so that we secure a 24 hour presence of traffic officers in all our public roads. The Department of Roads and Transport should work on the improvement of testing and licensing systems so as to ensure that all drivers are well trained and fit to be on the road.

Honourable Speaker

It has always been noted that the bulk of the accidents happen due to human error. There is a need for a year round campaign which should involve all the stakeholders. The Arrive Alive campaign should not be confined to the peak periods of the festive season. Government should therefore lead a multi-stakeholder campaign that runs throughout the year to educate both the motorists and pedestrians about the importance of road safety. This campaign should also be taken up in our schools where learners are taught road safety issues as part of their life orientation programme.

Honourable Speaker

We draw comfort and satisfaction from the peace and stability that has prevailed over many years in our taxi industry. There has been no serious violence and conflicts in the taxi industry in the past few years in our province. This stability bodes well for the safety of commuters and the industry as a whole. We are encouraged that the national taxi recapitalisation programme is proceeding well in our province, largely due to the cooperation we have with the industry. It is our wish to see this atmosphere of peace prevailing in the interest of both commuters and other motorists.

Honourable Speaker

We are pleased to note that our health system is doing well in many areas. About 80% of our Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities are offering 24 hour services. Last year we had twenty four (24) Emergency Medical Service (EMS) stations and the number has since increased to forty two (42). While we have improved the response time from one hour to forty seven minutes in rural areas, however the challenge remains the improvement of access roads which both the Department of Roads and Transport and our municipalities must attend to, because these ambulances spend most of their time in garages than providing services.

Honourable Speaker

HIV and AIDS continue to be a great cause for concern to our government. While our province has the lower prevalence rates compared to the rest of the country, we are however worried about the infection rate which is always on the increase. This is obviously a worrying phenomenon given the level of awareness which is out there in the community. Government has done all what is required to be done in relation to the fight against HIV/AIDS. We have even increased the treatment sites from 20 to 35 this year. We believe that government has taken every step necessary in the fight against the disease, but ultimately the responsibility rests with the individual to save his or her life. If our ABC message of Abstinence, being faithful or condom usage, does not sink within the national psyche of our people, government's efforts will definitely come to naught.

Honourable Speaker

The province is also doing its best to control the outbreak of malaria. In the spirit of regional integration we have been in continued cooperation with both governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe to share strategies and resources in the fight against this preventable disease. We have assisted Zimbabwe in particular with (*Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane*) DDT pesticides to help control the spread of malaria.

Honourable Speaker

Last year in the State of the Province Address we committed ourselves to absorb temporary educators into permanent positions. We are happy to report that we have absorbed all 8651 temporary educators into permanent posts. On the other hand, a lot continues to be done in terms of classroom provisioning in order to alleviate the challenge of pupils learning under trees. So far, 90% of work has already been completed in the rebuilding of 237 dilapidated or storm damaged schools.

However, we have noted that poor management and supervisory capacity continue to be a challenge in the Department of Education, particularly at district, circuit and school levels. The downward spiral in matric results over the last two years can be attributed to these deficiencies. Last year we were particularly hardest hit as we found ourselves at the bottom of the ladder with only 55.7% pass rate. On the flip side of it, the province has performed well in qualitative terms as we have got the highest number of matriculants who wrote in higher grade. We have also produced the third highest number of university endorsements in the country. This is in terms of both quality and access to institutions of higher learning. This has happened as a result of our deliberate policy of encouraging our learners to register in higher grade as opposed to standard grade.

Honourable Speaker

The setbacks we have suffered should serve as an indictment on the part of all of us to start taking keen interest in matters of education. In the coming months, we will be convening district-wide forums to look deeper into this challenge so that we do not leave it only to the Department of Education and school governing bodies (SGB's). The department has also committed itself to strengthening the supervisory and management capacity at all levels, particularly at circuit offices and schools. By the end of March this year, we would have appointed about four hundred (400) subject advisors who will be providing hands on support to our educators.

Honourable Speaker

In our round table engagement with the private sector representatives of mining, tourism and agriculture, the issue of skills was rated as top priority for the realisation of the PGDS objective. We were also informed about the initiative by the mining industry to put up an underground mining academy in Sekhukhune to deal with this challenge. Even our government has identified this challenge as an impediment to our economic growth and development. The Department of Labour has already committed R95 million for skills development. We believe that this will reinforce some of the initiatives the private sector has already commenced with like the partnership around the issue of the agribusiness-academy with the Finnish government and the underground mining academy. It is time that the notion of looking down upon FET colleges as a dumping ground for the less privileged or less gifted; and looking at university education as the most prestigious training for the few must come to an end. Given the growing global challenge of skills and knowledge based economic development, the time has now come for the bulk of our best brains to be channeled towards technical training. In one of our interactions with the mining input suppliers, one of the participants intimated that there is nothing in any university throughout the world called mining compressor engineer. All of your compressor engineers are trained on the job after they would have gone through basic technical training.

Honourable Speaker

Our work of honouring all warrior kings who fell in the cause of the struggle against colonial dispossession has been completed. We are pleased to note that the National Heritage Resource Authority has finally approved the declaration of four provincial heritage sites in terms of section 27 of the National Heritage Resources Act. These sites will include Tjate in Sekhukhune-land, Dzata in Vhembe, Soutini-Baleni in Mopani and Malebogo-Boer war battlefields in Capricorn. The second chapter we are now opening is that of erecting a Heroes Acre in memory and honour of those who fell in combat. We are aware about the outcry in various communities, particularly by those people who have lost their loved ones and their remains are lying in different parts of the country and some

even in the frontline states. These heroes and heroines of our liberation struggle deserve a proper send-off and we therefore implore on our Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, the Freedom Park Trust and the post Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) unit to find ways of assisting the families concerned. We however maintain that our liberation struggle was a people's war against apartheid colonialism and no amount of compensation can replace the lost lives. We in the ANC believe that the best form of compensation is to ensure that the ideals they lived and died for are realized, i.e. the acceleration of service delivery and achievement a better life for all our people.

Honourable Speaker

The history of this country will never be complete unless all the struggles which have been waged across the country are documented. The bulk of this history has not been documented and remains oral history. It is in this context that in last year's State of the Province Address we entrusted the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture to profile and document resistance struggles such as Fetakgomo, Sebatakomo including the ones waged by the people of Matlala-a-Thaba or (*Ma-congress*) as they were popularly known. The unique feature of the struggle of the people of Matlala-a-Thaba in particular is that their resistance went beyond the banning of the liberation movements in 1960. It was only crushed and defeated around 1980, 20 years after the banning of the liberation movements. There are obviously similar rural struggles which are not documented and spoken about, as if the rural people were spectators in the fight against apartheid colonialism.

Honourable Speaker

The Mapungubwe Arts Festival remains one of the exciting cultural events for the province and the country. While the purpose and objectives of the festival are still relevant and beneficial to the province, we must also accept that, over the years the festival has been marred by poor planning and lack of adequate private sector involvement. The Department of Sport Arts and Culture has committed itself to correct all of the weaknesses identified in order to ensure that this cultural event continues to achieve its intended objectives.

Honourable Speaker

Despite the persistent outcry about crime in the whole country and in our province, the recent statistics of the independent survey conducted by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) confirms Limpopo as the safest province in South Africa. We have witnessed on many occasions swift actions by our police rounding up criminals and effecting arrests, particularly in high profile cases like cash in-transit heists and murders. We are also proud to say that even in cases where the actual crime has been committed outside the province and the criminals involved choose to make our province a hide-out, they are always

rounded up and arrested. In our view, this can only mean that communities and the South African Police Service (SAPS) in the province are doing a sterling job.

The only area of weakness we need an improvement on is in relation to shortage of personnel and logistics. We hold a view that these issues need to be given the special attention they deserve given the enormous security challenges related to the 2010 FIFA World Cup which will be hosted by our country. The one security area we are not succeeding as a province to put under control is that of alleged ritual killings and witchcraft. In the recent past we have seen the escalation of these heinous acts to uncontrollable proportions. The provincial government had to organise a multi-stakeholder conference in order to coordinate our response to this challenge. The most important resolutions from this conference include the need to establish a police specialised investigating unit focusing on occult-related activities, the review of legislation dealing with this matter and the scaling up of public awareness programmes. We hope and trust that the implementation of the conference resolutions will go a long way in curbing this scourge. We have already discussed the matter of legislative amendment with the Minister of Justice and she promised to deal with the matter.

Honourable Speaker

We all know that at the heart of South Africa's economic and social problems lies a deeper absence of moral values and acceptable norms. We see these in the increased rate of teenage pregnancies in our schools, in the high rate of road carnage caused largely by speed and alcohol consumption, in the increased levels of family murders, domestic violence, abuse of women and children and overall disregard of the rule of law. Quite often we continue to count deaths which are not due to natural causes and this confirms that something is terribly wrong with the moral fibre of our society. As a result of what we see and hear everyday, we are beginning to doubt whether people still cherish the noble values of respect, love, humility and human solidarity, which have always defined our being as Africans.

Delivering the 4th annual Nelson Mandela lecture, President Thabo Mbeki resents the culture of "personal pursuit of material gain, as the beginning and an end of our life purpose". He further attributes "the corrosion of our social and national cohesion" to this pattern of social behavior. We cannot agree more with the President in his assertions and in fact concur with him that conspicuous consumption and the desire for material gains, account largely to the moral decay we see in our society. We agree that every individual has got a role to play in the restoration of community and family values in order to achieve the quest of building a caring society and the spirit of human solidarity.

Honourable Speaker

Last year we witnessed the display of enormous courage and excellence on the

part of many great sons and daughters who owe their origin and allegiance to this province. It is in this spirit that we wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate these formidable sons and daughters of our soil who not only represent the best that our province can offer, but what our country and the continent personify among nations of the world. These include:

- Mbulaheni Mulaudzi who won Gold Medal in 800 metres in Athletic World Championships making him the number one athlete in 800 metres on earth;
- Mr. Calvin Maphophe, the Managing Director of Mambedi Country lodge in Vhembe district who won the National Tourism Entrepreneur of the Year (ETEYA) award for the third time within the six years of the awards;
- Our struggle veteran, comrade Bra Ike Maphoto, who became one of the 2006 recipients of one of our country's highest honours - the National Order of Luthuli;
- Ishmael Legodi who won Silver Medal in the Intellectually Impaired Athletics Championships held in the Netherlands;
- Given Ratsuma who won a Bronze medal in the Intellectually Impaired Athletics Championships held in the Netherlands;
- Jannie van der Westhuysen, a former learner at Louis Trichardt Secondary School who managed to scoop a total of six distinctions and came out as our top 2006 matriculant.
- Livhuwani Martha Mulaudzi the 2006 female farmer of the year, who made us proud as the people of Limpopo by winning the first prizes both at a provincial and national level as the top exporter of tomatoes to a number of markets in the SADC region, and lastly
- Ms Matshidiso Mashishi, who was honoured by the national Minister of Education, Mme Naledi Pandor, for winning the National Teacher Award in the category of lifetime achievement.

The luminaries we mention here today represent not only individual success but a desire and determination on the part of our people to sustain the flames of freedom we fought so hard to achieve.

Honourable Speaker

The ANC will be holding its 52nd national conference in December in our Province. It must be borne in mind that while this would be an ANC event, it has to a large extent already attracted the attention of the international media, large

contingent of the diplomatic corps and huge interest of business community including political parties across the globe. We should therefore bear in mind that all eyes would be on our province as we go about preparing for this major occasion. In this regard, we all have an obligation to make this conference a memorable one that must leave an indelible mark for the province as we build up the momentum for 2010 FIFA World Cup.

As always, we are certain that the people of the province would be in their dignified best, happy and ready to welcome every delegate, and every guest, with open arms. This is a trait which has always made us who we are as the people of Limpopo, and we must commit ourselves to remain true to this tradition.

Honourable Speaker

It is befitting to remind ourselves of the wise words of counsel which we quoted in our first address in this august house from one of the legendary philosophers of our time, born out of this soil, the late comrade Lawrence Phokanoka when he said:

“We should not make a mistake of finding ourselves on the wrong side of history and no earthly force can stop a determined nation to reach its own chosen destiny”.

The people of Limpopo are making history and no one can stop them.

Inkomu!