

State of the Province Address Delivered By the Premier of Limpopo Province Mr Cassel Mathale to the Second Session of the Fourth Democratic Legislature, Lebowakgomo

“Theme: 2011 a year of job creation through meaningful economic transformation and inclusive growth”

18th of February 2011

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

Honourable Speaker

Today, we have assembled on this important occasion of the official opening of the third session the fourth Limpopo Legislature and the presentation of the state of our province.

We are opening this parliament of the people as we observe the 50th anniversary of the conferring of the Nobel Peace Prize Award on Chief Albert John Luthuli, the 8th President General of the African National Congress. Chief Luthuli became the first African to receive the Nobel Peace Prize Award in 1961 for his unparalleled contribution to the struggle for freedom, democracy and equality of the people of South Africa.

The decision to confer such a prestigious award on a leader of a liberation movement gave people more courage to intensify the fight for freedom. President Luthuli never regarded the award as a personal achievement but as a firm recognition of the plight and struggles of the people of South Africa under the oppressive rule of the white minority regime. When addressing the exiled leadership of the African National Congress and the progressive Anti-Apartheid Movement in London, Chief Luthuli said:

“I took the award as an endorsement of our struggle in South Africa and the manner in which we have tried to carry out that struggle under very difficult circumstances in our country, and the award is a great encouragement to all of us, for I must say, I regard the award not just to Albert Luthuli, but to South Africa, particularly to the struggle of the people of South Africa, not only that but to the people of Africa.”

In the very same year of 1961, the struggle for freedom under the leadership of the African National Congress accomplished another groundbreaking achievement when apartheid was declared an international crime by the United Nations Security Council.

Honourable Speaker

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first decision of the UN Security Council that declared apartheid a crime under the law of nations, we should recall the great role that was played by the broader anti-apartheid movement in the struggle for our democracy this including the Pan African Congress, the UDF and other political formations that participated in the struggle. We must never forget that our freedom was won from the epic resistance that was waged from within and outside the borders of our country and the continent.

The African National Congress was formed on the idea of building a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa. The ANC has always been encouraged and motivated by this idea throughout the struggle for freedom. Since its formation in 1912, the African National Congress constantly advocated an inclusive South Africa, where all people enjoy freedom, democracy and the respect for human rights.

Chief Luthuli, in his autobiography, *Let My People Go*, observed without any hesitation that:

"There will be enormous, peaceful change in South Africa before the end of this century. People of all races will eventually live together in harmony because no one, white, black or brown, wants to destroy this beautiful land of ours....It is my firm belief that it is the duty of all right-thinking people, black and white, who have the true interest of our country at heart, to strive for this without flinching."

Honourable Speaker

Next year the oldest liberation movement in Africa, the ruling African National Congress of Chief Luthuli, Sefako Makgatho, ZR Mahabane, Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Nelson Mandela, mama Charlotte Maxeke, Sisi Joyce Mashamba, Mama Lydia Ngwenya, Rashaka Ratshitanga, Bra Ike Maphoto, Pharephare Mothupi, Lawrence Phokanoka, Peter Mokaba, France Mohlala, "Sparks" Ramagoma, and many others, will be celebrating 100 years of its formation and it is proper to invite people from all walks of life and across all political formations to join the historic centenary celebrations, for the African National Congress was formed by the people and for the liberation of the people.

We should also take this moment to acknowledge the participation by the official opposition party and other opposition parties in the legislature and for making our democracy vibrant.

Honourable Speaker

The formal process of preparing for the 2011 Local Government Elections has commenced with voter registration under the management and guidance of the Independent Electoral Commission which, on every occasion, has proved to be an independent institution competent to deliver free, fair and credible elections. As government we will offer all the support required to enable the IEC to assemble elections that will reflect the will and the aspirations of the people.

It is incumbent upon all political formations, civil society movements, and traditional leaders to encourage and mobilise people to register in order to participate in the forthcoming municipal elections. The right to vote, or to be voted for, is a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution. Therefore, we are making a humble plea to all employers to afford their respective employees the opportunity to participate in the elections and, most significantly, be allowed to vote for any candidate or organisation of their own choice.

We would like to seize this opportunity and request all people of Limpopo, in particular churches, to pray for free and fair elections which are not marked by instances of violence and intimidation. All political organisations and individual candidates should be free to campaign anywhere in the province without any form of intimidation.

We should always bear in mind that the freeness and fairness of an election process does not only occur during the casting of votes or during the counting of ballot papers, but it also occurs during the campaigning period. So, it is pivotal that all political formations and interested individual candidates must be afforded the same space to canvass in an atmosphere that is balanced and level.

All political formations and individuals must be tolerant of each other during this important period in our political calendar. Since the birth of our democracy we have demonstrated an immense capacity to accept the outcomes of the elections and these forthcoming elections cannot be an exception in this regard.

Honourable Speaker

Over the past seventeen years of our democracy, we have registered a remarkable progress in building a strong and healthy relationship between local government institutions and traditional leaders. We have increased the participation of traditional leaders in various policy making sessions in the province, and we will continue to interact more closely as we forge ahead in improving the living conditions of our people.

As the African National Congress led government we value the fundamental role which is played by traditional leaders in strengthening our democracy and we will continue to offer support to collective and individual traditional leaders in enabling them to realize the expectations of their respective communities.

We also appreciate the role being played by traditional leaders in enhancing the health profile of our communities through traditional medicine.

Honourable Speaker

The countdown to the third national population census under the new democratic order has begun and, today, we have 233 days to the commencement of the counting of people who live in South Africa. Census 2011, which is scheduled to take place during the month of October, will aid in revealing the real picture about who we are as a people and, most importantly, enable proper planning going forward.

The population census is undertaken periodically not only for statistical information but, most significantly, also

to assist in planning, decision-making, policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation of the work we are doing in constantly improving the living conditions of our people.

The census process will enable us to understand and know how many people live in Limpopo. The gender disparities and age structure of the population are part of the centre pillars in the course of planning and, therefore, positive cooperation with this process will lead us to our expected destination. Every person must be counted regardless of age, nationality or status in the province.

Honourable Speaker

In the past year, we have dedicated a reasonable amount of focus and energy to the process of capacitating and strengthening municipalities to be real institutions of service delivery that meet the expectations of our people. At this point in time, every municipality has a clear Turn-Around Strategy which unambiguously articulates the mandate and the programme of action of the municipality as guided by its respective needs and circumstances.

We will continue with the work of building a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient local government system that is self sustainable and able to make a significant contribution to the course of ameliorating the living conditions of our people. We are making great progress in ensuring that municipalities are equipped with qualified, competent and dedicated personnel at the technical and strategic level of the administration.

We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of employing people based on reasons other than qualification, competence and passion to build an administration that complies with all legal regulations whilst making a significant change to and in the lives of the masses of our people. It is important to emphasize that we are not going to compromise in this regard.

Honourable Speaker

Although we might not have increased the number of clean audit reports in municipalities, we are encouraged by the improvements made in our reports, and this serves as a motivation in our quest to meet the objectives of our 2014 Clean Audit Campaign. We would like to congratulate eight of our municipalities and eight of our departments for obtaining clean audit reports during the 2009/10 financial year. We would also like to send a special message of congratulations to the Legislature for also receiving a clean audit. This puts the Legislature in a strong position to lead from the front. We have an obligation to build an administrative system that is accountable and effective in offering and delivering services to our people.

Honourable Speaker

Pursuant to the Medium Term Strategic Framework objective of making available affordable houses to our people and building integrated sustainable human settlements, we have completed the first phase of Community Residence Units which clearly articulates our message of improving the quality of household lives.

Our plan is not only to take services to the people, but it is also to bring people closer to services. We are on the right path of building affordable houses for our people at places next to services, including in areas where, under normal circumstances, it would have been difficult for them to reside.

We are actualizing our resolve of enabling our people, especially the previously marginalized, to reside at any place of their choice in the province, in particular next to places of their employment. The construction of decent and affordable houses for our people who do not qualify for RDP houses or bank loans will enable them to have access to houses and also spend less than eight percent of their monthly income on daily transport to reach their respective work places. Gone are the days when the majority of our people were confined to townships and villages far away from their places of employment without any other option.

We have already completed and handed-over ten thousand two hundred and thirty-five houses to beneficiaries in the 2010/11 financial year. It is worth noting that, two years in succession, we have been able to exceed the projected target and it did not come as a surprise when we received additional funding of more than one hundred and thirty-one million Rand from the national government to fast track the delivery of houses in recognition of our achievement. This achievement is not only momentous but, most significantly, historic for it has never happened before in the history of the government housing delivery value chain across the country.

Together, with other members of the private sector, we have introduced the **My RDP My Pride** Campaign as part of encouraging RDP houses beneficiaries to value their houses and keep them clean and well maintained. We are the first and the only province to introduce such a campaign and it is yielding positive outcomes.

It is cardinal to mention that the department that is responsible for these great achievements is led by young people who are members of the African National Congress Youth League. Cde Soviet Lekganyane is an immediate former member of the ANC Youth League Provincial Executive Committee and Cde Clifford Motsepe is a current member of the ANC Youth League National Executive Committee.

This is a solid point of reference that young people have the capacity to deliver if given an opportunity and space to lead. It is for this reason that we are encouraging young people out there who are given opportunities

to perform, to show that young people are capable and can make great change in society.

We would like to express our sincere message of gratitude to MEC Lekganyane, HoD Motsepe, senior management and all members of the staff for accomplishing these great achievements for the sole benefit of our people. We are also congratulating the department for winning the 2010 Premier's Service Excellence award for being the best performing department!

Honourable Speaker

We are confident that more than fifteen thousand houses will be completed and delivered at the end of this financial year. Once more, we have demonstrated our capability to plan, build and provide houses to relevant beneficiaries on time and at the place of their choice.

As Limpopo we should derive pride and confidence from our achievements as we march forward in pursuit of our obligation to provide more shelter to our people.

Honourable Speaker

During our last State of the Province Address we made a pledge to the people of Limpopo that contractors who delivered poor services will be blacklisted and forbidden from doing business with all government institutions. Last year we cancelled the contracts of those contractors who delivered shoddy and poor service. This year we have moved a step further to blacklist more than 40 contractors on the national and provincial central databases, which means the affected contractors cannot do business with any structure of government in the country.

We will continue with blacklisting others and also begin the process of claiming our money back. We cannot afford to unduly enrich poor performers at the expense of our people. The termination and blacklisting of non-performing contractors serves as another testimony of our commitment to the cause, and determination of doing things differently and better. In the same voice we appreciate and commend the good work which is done by service providers who go an extra mile in assisting government to realize its objectives. We also want to take this opportunity to also thank those who build houses and donate to the needy when we ask them to do so.

Honourable Speaker

In the same energy we are fighting people who are rendering poor services to government we will fight corruption tirelessly regardless of who is engineering it. Two months back acting together with the civil society, the private sector and the unions we launched the Anti-Corruption Forum to advance the offensive against corruption to another level.

We are urging all members of the society to be agents in this cause of uprooting corruption and fraud related practices. In launching this offensive against corruption, we must steer away from the tendency of spreading unfounded and derogatory allegations against people without any base. We are urging our people to report any form of corruption to the law enforcement agencies and the Anti-Corruption Forum.

Honourable Speaker

The provision of water, sanitation and electricity cannot be deferred. During the current financial year, we have managed to provide water and electricity to more than one million people. And more than seven hundred thousand households received sanitation facilities. It is important to indicate that we will never rest until every household has water, sanitation and electricity.

We have already started with the laying of pipes from the Nandoni Dam in Thohoyandou to Nsami Dam in Giyani. The completion of this project will bring the much needed relieve to the Giyani area that has been adversely affected by drought.

We will provide an additional thirty-six thousand households with water in the next financial year. Furthermore, we will increase the number of people with access to sanitation to more than eight hundred thousand and also ensure that an additional one hundred thousand people have access to electricity in the financial year 2011/12.

Honourable Speaker

The mineral wealth of our province has located Limpopo in a firm position to commence massive infrastructure development. The Lephalale Integration Scoping report has been completed and it will serve as a blue print to guide development in Lephalale. We are at work preparing the ground for the massive development of Lephalale into a major city by the year 2030. Lephalale will be the first city in the country to be built by a democratic government for the benefit of our people. This will be a measured milestone in reversing the tragic apartheid spatial planning which rendered our industries uncompetitive.

Another scoping process will be sanctioned for Burgersfort and Musina respectively, as part of the plan to develop our high economic growth points into fully integrated urban places.

The commitment to reconfigure our provincial agencies under LEDET is still on track and the formation of an interim board is imminent in the next three months. Progress has been made in identifying specific models that will be customized to the Limpopo employment, economic, growth, targeted trade and investment potential.

Honourable Speaker

Education remains the only immediately available tool that must be employed to break the cycle of poverty amongst our people. Education is a strategic pillar to commence the protracted voyage of spectacularly uplifting the living conditions of the poor and the historically marginalized communities.

We have invested a reasonable amount of energy and time in improving the education of our people. We are furthering our resolve of closing the gap between rural and urban schools which continues to be reflected each year in the matric results.

It is worthwhile celebrating the achievements made in improving our matric results from 48% to 57% pass rate, notwithstanding the public servants' strike and the time lost owing to the historic 2010 FIFA World Cup. Although we did not reach the 60% target, we would like to congratulate the Class of 2010 for the hard work invested in their school work and also those teachers who assisted in this regard. We should use this achievement as a foundation to build further improvements. As such, it would not be far-fetched to say we expect nothing less than 70 % pass rate from the class of 2011! We congratulate team education for the job well done keep it up Kgobetse.

We must use education to rectify some of the imbalances of the past by providing rural and township learners with education that will make them employable upon completion of their respective studies. The content of our education must integrate with the New Growth Path as initiated by government.

The programme of equipping school management teams and School Governing Bodies' to manage and govern schools is paying dividends in inculcating the culture of learning and teaching.

We are still continuing with our plan to build state of the art schools that are equipped with modern equipment, and that includes science and computer laboratories. We have completed seven state-of-the-art schools in this financial year which are already occupied, fourteen are under construction and a further four have been completed and are ready for occupation.

The investment in infrastructure development at rural and township schools must be complemented by the teachers' commitment to intensive teaching work. We should appreciate the fact that hard work and extraordinary commitment to teaching are the only available answers to the disappointing performance of the rural and some of the township schools. We are continuing with our focused programme of providing water, electricity and sanitation to schools as part of our school infrastructure development strategy.

Improving the quality of teaching and learning remains our priority. We are registering remarkable achievements through the enhancement of educators' subject content and methodology of teaching. We have introduced the new concept of merging schools in order to improve learning and teaching.

These new learning centres, some of which are located in rural areas, will be able to retain and attract the best educators in Mathematics, Science and Technology. Mathematics and Science teachers from schools that obtained a zero pass rate or underperformed in the past matric examination results will receive special training on subject content.

All districts have been provided with mobile laboratories to support practical work in schools which are located in remote areas. In order to capacitate the schools to respond positively to the demands of the economy, we are providing schools with computer laboratory equipment; and teachers are receiving training on Computer-Aided Drawing, which is aimed at enhancing their skills in teaching engineering graphics and design in line with the current trends. We will continue with the search for, and recruitment of teachers with scarce qualifications in subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Science, Agricultural Science, Accounting, Business Studies and Economics.

School Management Teams from the very same schools that underperformed will continue to receive training on their roles and responsibilities including on subject combinations. This will enable the learners to choose correct subject combinations that would make them qualify for a career path that is demanded by our growth path.

We must be able to shape the future of our children from an early stage. The best method to manage the early childhood development is, amongst others, through the provision of quality education to all children. We are pleased to indicate that we have surpassed the goals set by the UN's Millennium Development Goals on the improvement of universal access to education for children. In addition, we have increased the number of schools offering grade R as part of broadening access to education.

We have introduced various successful programmes in the form of our no-fee school policy, scholar transport and National School Nutrition Programme in order to widen access to education to all people regardless of their

financial background.

The introduction and increase in the number of Adult Basic Education and Training centres continues to give people of older generations access to education as part of the strategy to reduce illiteracy levels. New ABET centres will be opened and adult learners will also be exposed to skills programmes in the form of learnerships. We will be commencing the process of including deaf learners in ABET and to increase opportunities for them to access further learning.

We are improving the subject content of our Further Education and Training institutions as part of creating vibrant opportunities for learners and also discovering a clear alternative to higher education.

The introduction of new mechanisms to fund students at the Higher Education Institutions and Further Education and Training centres is a significant achievement in our course towards opening the doors of learning.

Honourable Speaker

The establishment of the National Youth Development Agency in the province could not have come at the right time than when young people are eager to demonstrate their capacity to perform. The NYDA will lobby, advocate, and coordinate programmes aimed at enhancing youth development in the Province. We are appealing to all stakeholders, including the private sector, to make meaningful contribution to the development of young people in the Province. Our government will continue to assist and work with the NYDA to meet the expectations of young people in our Province. The NYDA will work in conjunction with the Youth Development Unit in the Office of the Premier to achieve this objective. The youth must be given opportunities in our infrastructural expansion programmes. They must be able to participate in the construction of schools, roads and housing projects that aimed at creating opportunities for our people. We must understand that young people are not only job seekers but creators of opportunities.

Honourable Speaker

We have a moral obligation to create a conducive environment for learning and teaching not only in the school yards, but also in the surrounding areas. The construction of beer halls or shebeens next to school buildings and community libraries must come to an end. The construction of beer halls or shebeens next to church buildings must also come to an end.

The process of reviewing the liquor license legislation has ensued and as soon as it is possible we will be approaching this important House for a review of the legislation. Our view is that the new legislation will mean that people will have to re apply for their liquor licenses with simple regulations which will make it easy for law enforcement agencies to do their jobs. We must control how alcohol is sold in our communities.

Honourable Speaker

The establishment of the National Youth Development Agency in the province could not have come at the right time than when young people are eager to demonstrate their capacity to perform. The NYDA will lobby, advocate, and coordinate programmes aimed at enhancing youth development in the Province. We are appealing to all stakeholders, including the private sector, to make meaningful contribution to the development of young people in the Province. Our government will continue to assist and work with the NYDA to meet the expectations of young people in the Province. The youth must be given opportunities in our infrastructural expansion programmes. They must be able to participate in the construction of schools, roads and houses projects that aimed at creating opportunities for our people. We must invest in the youth to secure a better future for our country.

Honourable Speaker

Notwithstanding other challenges, we are content to note that our health system is showing firm signs of improvement. As part of realising our promise to expand the capacity of our health care infrastructure, the upgrading and building of 12 new clinics is underway and they will be completed and handed over before April. We have increased our 24-hour service clinics to 345 throughout the province. We have also completed two malaria camps which will put us in a strong position in the battle against the spread of malaria in the province.

Our government has taken note of the deteriorating state of some of our hospitals and we are engaged in a process of revitalising these hospitals. We are currently refurbishing the Letaba, Maphutha Malatji, Thaba Mmopo, Jane Furse, Nkensani and Thabazimbi Hospitals.

We are registering significant strides in increasing the number of facilities that are providing comprehensive HIV/AIDS treatment in the province. We increased the number of centres offering ARV services from 80 in 2009/10 to 257 by the end of December 2010. This is an enormous achievement in the history of our battle against the virus since we started rolling out the antiretrovirals.

We are confident that all other health care facilities will be upgraded to offer HIV treatment as part of creating new frontiers in our offensive against the virus. We have succeeded in capacitating all our health care facilities

that render antenatal care to provide the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission service.

Honourable Speaker

We are making a humble plea to our people to continue testing and also influence others to test for HIV and TB as a routine way of ensuring that new infections are reduced. We must intensify the HIV Counseling and Testing Campaign to reach many people as we expand the Anti-Retroviral Campaign programme.

As President Jacob Zuma has stated in his State of the Nation Address, plans are underway to establish the medical faculty at the Limpopo Academic Hospital to train more doctors. This will go a long way to address the shortage of medical practitioners in our health care facilities, particularly in the rural areas.

Honourable Speaker

We have divided the Department of Health and Social Development into two departments but under one political executive authority in an effort to improve and accelerate service delivery. Presently, the Department of Health is focusing on its core mandate of managing health care programmes in the province whilst the Department of Social Development is focusing on improving the social welfare of our people in particular assisting in the fight against poverty and hunger amongst the less fortunate.

Honourable Speaker

Agriculture represents one of the strongest pillars responsible for propelling our economic growth forward. Formal farming activity is on a gradual decline owing to the competition from international markets, farms subsidies in other countries, the lack of interest in the younger generations, the turning of crop farms into the game farms and other reasons. Alternative income generating opportunities are being explored as agriculture is diverse with a potential to provide new opportunities in the province through its multiple effects on the economy. We have to find new ways of beneficiating our agricultural produce as a way of also creating jobs for our people.

We are employing the services of the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme and Revitalization of Smallholder Irrigation Schemes to fund twelve irrigation projects in order to develop irrigation land for food production and economic growth. This project forms part of our long term Infrastructure Plan whose objective is to grow the agricultural economy in the coming five years.

The 10 Multiyear Landcare projects implemented in all the districts are enabling communities to locally mitigate the effects of climate change, curb land degradation, and contribute to both food production and food security. We have completed the process of agro-ecological zoning as part of identifying prime but scarce agricultural land. This will enable us to reserve prime agricultural land for food production during spatial planning for development especially in the municipalities.

We will continue to support initiatives to bring rural development in the remote areas of the province. The Muyexe project remains our priority in rural development and as we are working on this project we are further developing the rural strategy to better improve on the lives of our people in these areas.

The African National Congress-led government remains committed to supporting farmers for improved performance which seeks to accelerate food production and ensuring food security. During the 2010/11 financial year, we have spent twenty million Rand to support 459 farmers across the province on production inputs that included seed, fertilizer, poultry production stock and feed. In the next financial year forty million Rand has been budgeted for and more than 600 farmers will be supported.

More than forty million Rand has been invested to re-capitalize our integrated meat production which will benefit the provincial economy, many farmers and, most significantly, give us leverage to create more job opportunities for our people.

Honourable Speaker

Most of our agricultural land has been negatively affected by floods and we have reserved an amount of twenty-seven million Rand for immediate flood relief in the farming sector throughout the Province.

Honourable Speaker

The struggle to liberate South Africa and Limpopo, in particular economically, will be no less bitter than the struggle we fought to liberate our country for democracy. We can never claim to have freed and liberated our people as long as the majority of the people are still not yet liberated economically. The struggle to liberate our people economically is not easy but we are sure that victory is certain.

This government, in a new wave of social compact and partnerships with all active stakeholders, will do everything in its power to move from a highly skewed pattern of economic growth and development characterized by less emphasis on sustainable job creation to a well balanced and inclusive economy.

It is now embedded in our consciousness that the old ways of doing things as government, or as the private sector, will not get us onto a new growth path.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of the House, Comrades

We must decisively address the reality that most of the unemployed are black and African in particular, many of whom are women, many are young, and many are in the rural areas and have a very low skills base.

Following the successful EXCO Lekgotla on the 1st and 2nd of February 2011, the combined job creation target by the sector departments amounts to more than one hundred and sixty thousand, of which 40% of these jobs will be earmarked for the youth.

We cannot claim to be winning the battle against unemployment when the majority of young people are not members of the labour force of the province. It will be a myth to assume that we are making progress in redressing the imbalances of the past when many women are without employment.

Honourable Speaker

The global economic storm has subsided, and the South African economy is on the path to recovery. The 2010 fourth quarter labour force survey released by Statistics South Africa last week indicates that, as a province, we are on the right course to reducing the level of unemployment.

According to Stats SA, there has been a steady increase in the number of jobs in the Limpopo economy, rising from nine-hundred and five thousand jobs in the 3rd quarter of 2010, to nine-hundred and sixty-two-thousand jobs in December 2010. This represents an increase of 57 000 jobs in the last quarter of the year.

Our unemployment rate has also declined from 25% to 16% in 2010. We regard this as a resounding achievement, but the challenge is how to collectively sustain this in order to further lower the levels of unemployment.

Honourable Speaker

While the increase in the number of jobs is not yet enough to provide work for all new entrants, retrenched workers or those who are underemployed, we are reinforcing the implementation of a comprehensive package of economic initiatives with key elements of the Limpopo Employment, Growth and Development Plan (LEGDP) to drive a faster, more inclusive and job creating growth pattern.

As a province, we are expected to create more than four-hundred-thousand job opportunities in the next nine years as part of contributing to the national target of creating 5 million employment opportunities by the year 2020.

Last year, in our State of the Province Address, we announced the launch of the Limpopo Employment Growth and Development Plan whose primary purpose is to aggressively deal with the issue of unemployment in the province and prioritize high impact catalytic initiatives that are employment led.

We are pleased to announce that a well researched implementation map of the LEGDP has been adopted by the Executive Council and all government departments have been charged with a responsibility to collaborate with the private sector, institutions of higher learning and our social partners to ensure that the plan is being implemented with speed and precision.

We are resolute to forge ahead and enter an uncharted territory of development which is people driven and people orientated. We will ensure that government's infrastructure expenditure is refocused to be job creation orientated. Our infrastructure expenditure will, amongst others, support and promote enterprise development especially that of the SMME's. In this regard all major projects must set aside at least 30% of their contract value to support this and other initiatives as we distribute the wealth amongst our people.

We will intensify the support for youth and women-owned small businesses and cooperatives and ensure that the youth will benefit from government contracts, EPWP employment opportunities and internship programmes.

The development of the supplier industry, through government procurement support, is the mechanism through which, as a province, we are laying a solid foundation for industrialization.

We are building a procurement system that has the capacity to make an immense contribution to the economic growth of the province whilst at the same time accelerating service delivery and making sure that more rapid and equitable distribution of opportunities and benefits are promoted and supported.

Honourable Speaker

Cooperatives have the potential to release more people from the traps of poverty into gainful employment and income generating activities. The building of an economy that is largely driven by competitive cooperative

movement is inevitable. We are developing practical initiatives that will enable us to build, support and sustain cooperatives in the province.

Although we are continuing to support cooperative initiatives in construction; professional services; industrial manufacturing; agricultural produce; food services; tourism services, and other such initiatives that have the potential to succeed more still need to be done. We are developing an integrated cooperative plan which will define the manner in which cooperatives must be formed and supported in order to be main participants in the economic direction of the province and the country.

Honourable Speaker

We will continue to promote the development of skills and the entry of young people into employment through our learnership and internship programme. The internship programme must be effective and sustainable and serve as another arm of labour absorption in the province.

Our learnerships and internships programme will focus on critical and scarce skills such as information technology; financial management and auditing; engineering and construction; ICT; nutrition; transport management; and planning and waste management.

Honourable Speaker

The plan to roll out broadband in the province is a commitment we will never renege on. It is with great enthusiasm to report to this house that within this financial year we will be ready to request the industry to respond to our request for proposals. This will go a long way in bringing ICT development and information technology advancement among our learners and the community in general. Broadband is the future of telecommunication and Limpopo must counted among leaders in this field.

Honourable Speaker

We are poised for progress. Two years after the recession we are yet to see economic growth that intensively creates meaningful job opportunities for our people. However, progress cannot be measured by the statistics in the government score card alone, but it can be measured by our ability to ensure that no child goes to bed hungry because the parents are not working.

Although we must never measure progress by this analysis alone, we may also measure progress by the general success of our people, by the jobs they can find and the quality of life those jobs offer. We must measure success by the prospects of a small business owner who dreams of turning a good idea into a thriving enterprise and by the opportunities for a better life that we pass on to our children.

Honourable Speaker

We have embarked on a concentrated process of identifying, verifying, vesting and registering government assets as part of our broader infrastructure development plan. We have committed more than forty-two million Rand on the refurbishment and upgrading of public buildings. We are making a humble plea to all people using public assets, both immovable and movable, to take care of such property and ensure their long utilization.

The African National Congress-led government has introduced the Expanded Public Works Programme as an interim measure to assist in freeing our people from the burden of poverty and other social difficulties which are caused by lack of employment opportunities. Since the inauguration of the EPWP plan of action, we have clearly succeeded in creating new boundaries against poverty and we are registering great strides in exposing and addressing the suffering of many people.

One of the much celebrated achievements of the Expanded Public Works Programme is found in its ability to make a meaningful change also in the rural areas of our country. Through the programme, a substantial number of our people in the rural areas have been afforded various job opportunities and the quality of their lives has greatly improved.

The Expanded Public Works Programme is people formed, people led and attempts to bridge the gap between the haves and the have nots. We are very proud of the gains made thus far in improving the living standard of our people through the programme and remain committed to the course of initiating other viable mechanisms to aggressively push back the frontiers of poverty.

We have also made remarkable steps in providing the unemployed people with work experience and training opportunities through the EPWP. We have in place a provincial five-year business plan, which is being implemented across government structures and municipalities.

We have created no less than forty-nine-thousand job opportunities through the EPWP programme in the previous year. The second phase of the Expanded Public Works Programme is structured in a manner that will make a significant contribution by halving unemployment by 2014. More than fifty-nine-thousand job opportunities will be created in the next financial year.

We have launched our Greening Initiative Campaign under the Greening Limpopo Programme, which is another contributor to the green economy. Through this initiative, our province will be able to preserve the environment whilst at the same time creating job opportunities for our people with an estimated seven thousand job opportunities expected to be created. As a province, the country, and the international community at large, we are on the verge of causing irreparable damage to the environment if we do not adopt new measures in the interest of the environment and, concomitantly, the future generation.

We are duty bound to promote any intervention that seeks to preserve or rehabilitate the environment. We are using the planting of trees as one of the major exercises to create job opportunities for our people. We are constantly at work creating new frontiers in the battle against poverty and the suffering of our people.

We are appealing to the people of Limpopo to join hands with government in making our province green whilst at the same time fighting and eliminating hunger. We have an obligation to employ new methods to address land degradation, deforestation and also reduce the province's carbon footprint.

Honourable Speaker

In 2004, on this very same platform, during the occasion of the opening of the second democratically elected parliament, Comrade Ngoako Ramathodi delivered the State of the Province under the resounding theme **"From segwaigwai to modern bridge."** This morning, we are still standing at this very same podium, addressing the fourth democratically elected parliament to further the same message of "From segwaigwai to modern bridge." In one of our Public Participation Programmes we listened to the people of Mankele when they made a clarion call to our government to build them a bridge over the Oliphants River.

The construction of the road and the bridge over the Olifants River is underway with an investment amount of more than forty-six million Rand. In April, the people of Mankele will say it at full volume of their voices that indeed gone are the days of segwaigwai. This infrastructure development opens a new chapter in the lives of the affected community and will enable community growth and, most importantly, create economic opportunities for the people.

We have also completed the construction of Lutanandwa Bridge which connects Makhado and Thohoyandou at an amount of more than twenty-eight million Rand. The completion of the bridge will assist in accelerating the economic activities and narrowing the distance between the two areas.

It is important to mention that the recent floods have damaged many of our roads and bridges, especially in the area of Vhembe. We have dedicated a reasonable amount of resources and energy to confront the devastation caused by floods and some of the areas have been declared disaster areas, which requires and qualifies them for a special attention.

The upgrading and development of infrastructure remain critical interventions required to facilitate our economic growth. In order to enjoy massive economic growth that responds to the needs of the people we must invest in the road infrastructure development in the province. We are continuing in designing our road infrastructural expansion in a manner that increases the economic activities between our emerging towns.

The construction of R33 road from Marble Hall to Modimolle to Mabatlane Vaalwater further to Lephalale is the model of infrastructural expansion that will add in propelling our growth forward and, most significantly, creating many sustainable job opportunities. This road infrastructure is more than 200 kilometers and it is the main corridor in the Waterberg District with an enormous potential to aid in stimulating the economy of the district, in particular, and the province, in general.

We regard the upgrading of the R33 road as a strategic intervention necessary to facilitate economic growth in the area including accommodating the anticipated increase in the number of tourists visiting the province.

We have committed a total amount of two hundred million Rand for the full roll out of the community based maintenance initiatives which are estimated to create 15 000 job opportunities across all our municipalities. The proper maintenance of our roads will assist in reducing the accidents on the roads which continue to claim the lives of many people. As part of keeping our roads safe and making them more user friendly, we have introduced new advanced devices which are assisting in capturing traffic offenders and we have also increased the visibility of law enforcement officers on the roads.

As the African National Congress-led government we will be constructing intermodal public transport facilities in Thohoyandou, Burgersfort and Giyani at an amount of one-hundred and eighty million Rand.

We will be spending fifty-three million Rand on the development of the Polokwane International Airport and we have also set aside five million Rand for the establishment of freight logistics hubs in Polokwane and Musina. We will be commencing the implementation of Integrated Public Transport networks in Sekhukhune District, including the implementation of the Limpopo Freight Rail Initiative.

It is important to report that our infrastructure expansion and improvement programme is led and driven by local labour force, composed of young people and women with a clear aim of transferring skills.

Honourable Speaker

We are faced with the challenge of the deteriorating usage of our indigenous languages. We should build more momentum in the campaign to instruct schools to prioritize the usage of indigenous languages. Language is an important tool in the realization of our resolve to promote and preserve the heritage and customs we have inherited from our forefathers.

The process of developing the Limpopo Language Policy is at a promising level and the policy will ensure that government components establish language units which will, amongst others, ensure that citizens are serviced in the language of their choice.

Honourable Speaker

We have ended 2010 on a high note after the successful hosting of the historic first ever FIFA World Cup to be held on the African continent. We have set a new standard in the history of the game by assembling the perfect infrastructure, hospitality services and effective logistical support to the visitors to the disappointment of some who never trusted our capacity to host a major international sporting event. The tournament has left our country and the continent in general, in a stronger and better position than ever before.

Furthermore, our province hosted the Soccer World Cup for intellectually impaired persons. The tournament has exposed our capacity to support and care for those who are living with disabilities. We must build on the successes and experiences obtained from the games by constructing a society that accommodates and advances the interests of people living with disabilities.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people of Limpopo, members of the police service, and public servants, for the good work done during the tournaments. Our special message of appreciation is due to all volunteers who came to the fore to offer their services. Your unparalleled service and patriotism has given us hope and confidence about our future as a province and the nation at large, for we understand that there is nothing as strong in life as the heart of a volunteer.

Honourable Speaker

The continuous usage of our state-of-the-art stadium is paramount not only for revenue collection but also to the course of marketing the province. The vibrant and sustainable use of the Peter Mokaba sports complex is a responsibility of the people of Limpopo. We are making a humble plea to the people of our province to support every initiative which is aimed at keeping the infrastructure alive, by attending in our great numbers, sporting and other events that are organized at the stadium. We wish to thank the Executive Mayor of Polokwane for the initiatives he has taken in this regard.

Polokwane will also be celebrating in two months as we open the much awaited Mall of the North. The mall is expected to make the city vibrant as it further brings a variety for shoppers with more shops being opened. This will also help in circulating revenue in the province and attracting more people into the city as Limpopo claims its space in the retail sector.

Honourable Speaker

For many years our province has been commended for its brave fight against crime. We have long declared that crime does not have space in our province; and in many areas, members of the community have mobilised themselves against criminals and continue to work jointly with the police in reporting and exposing acts of crimes.

We are further urging all communities to be partners in the fight against crime, and all related criminal activities, through amongst others the establishment of Community Safety Forums and Street Committees.

During the last State of the Province we reported to this honourable house that we will be commencing the process of assessments for the possible building of new police stations and satellites in order to deal with the challenge of crime. Today, we are pleased, but yet humbled, to report that the former Masemola Satellite has been developed into a fully functioning police station and we have also opened the Botlokwa Police Station. We are happy to also report that the construction of two satellite police stations in the areas of Driekop and Aganang is almost complete.

We are more than convinced that, with the development of these police stations, the increased police visibility, and the expansion of other policing methods, we will make an immense contribution in the actualization of our resolve to fight crime. We wish to use this occasion to condemn the ritual killings in the Vhembe district and Thulamela in particular which took place in the past weeks. We call upon our police to act decisively against the perpetrators of these backward acts of criminality. Our people must work with the police to defeat these rogue elements.

Honourable Speaker

We would like to send a message of appreciation to the Senior Management in our administration and Public

Servants in general who are responsible for all the achievements registered by government in delivering services to our people. Step by step, inch by inch we will continue to make a remarkable difference in the lives of our people.

We should forever be motivated by the successes we are making and learn from the challenges we are overcoming. We must always consider ourselves fortunate to serve the people of Limpopo.

Honourable Speaker

In the previous year we have seen courageous sons and daughters of our province displaying their enormous talent and dedication which are worthy of acknowledgement and celebration. We wish to seize this opportunity to congratulate Ms Bokang Montjane for being crowned Miss South Africa, Ms Margret Ntuli of the Philadelphia Hospital who won the Merylene Lihana National Award, Mary Mabuza who won the Nadine Gordimer Short Story Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award at the South African Literary Awards and Winnie Mashaba for winning the Best Female Artist at the Crown Gospel Music Festival.

A special message of congratulations also goes to the son of the soil, Dale Steyn popularly known as the "Phalaborwa Express" who has been ranked No.1 on the International Cricket Council Test Bowler Rankings. It is such people who make us proud of being citizens of Limpopo. We are wishing the Proteas well in the ICC Cricket World Cup which has commenced and we know they will bring the trophy home. We are also wishing the Springboks success in the Rugby World Cup as they will be defending their title.

Honourable Speaker

We continue to be indebted to the religious community for the words of counsel and prayers which guide us in delivering on the mandate bestowed upon us. With their prayers we are able to confront every challenge with one objective of emerging victorious, for we know that God is on our side.

Honourable Speaker

There comes a time in our journey of life when we are called upon to actualize our conviction and willingness to deliver on the promise made and to meet the expectations of our people. We must use this moment in our lifetime to make a meaningful and sustainable difference in the lives of the masses of our people. As we depart from this honourable house we will be forging ahead and determined more than ever before to achieve our mission of building a better life for all.

Thank you!

Baie Dankie!

Ndaa!

Inkomu!

Re a leboga!