



PREMIER REFILWE MTSHWENI - TSIPANE

STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS

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MPUMALANGA LEGISLATURE
CHAMBER

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**STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF MPUMALANGA
PROVINCE ON 25 FEB. 2020.**

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Legislature;
Honourable Chief Whip of the Majority Party;
Ministers and Deputy Ministers present;
Members of the National Assembly present;
Members of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature;
Colleagues in the Mpumalanga Executive Council;
Executive Mayors and Councillors present;
Provincial Chairperson of SALGA;
Provincial Judge President Justice Francis Legodi and all esteemed members of the
judiciary;
Provincial Commissioner, General Zuma;
The Consular attaché of the Republic of Mozambique;
Excellencies Representatives of the Republic of Cuba;
Excellencies Representatives of the Russian Federation;
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
His Majesty Ingwenyama Makhosonke II;
His Majesty Ingwenyama Mabhokho III;
Chairperson of the National House of Traditional Leaders, Ikosi SE Mahlangu;
President of CONTRALESA, Kgoshi Mokoena;
Chairperson of the Mpumalanga Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, Inkosi
uNgomane;
Acting Director-General Mr Kebone Masange and all Provincial Heads of Mpumalanga
Provincial Government, Chairpersons and CEO of Parastatals and other Chapter 9
Institutions;
The Acting Chairperson of the Public Service Commission in Mpumalanga;
The Leadership of the African National Congress, represented by Acting Chairperson Cde
Mandla Ndlovu;
Veterans of our struggle for freedom;
Distinguished guests; Ladies and Gentlemen;
Good Morning;

The Context

1. It is not only a privilege but also a great honour to stand before this august house addressing you, the people of this beautiful province, The Province of the rising sun.
2. We are gathered here today during the month when the whole country is celebrating 30 years since the founding father of our nation the icon and the first President of a democratic South Africa uTata Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela was released from prison.
3. His first steps as a free man marked the beginning of the end of white minority rule in this country and ushered in a new dawn that culminated with the first democratic elections based on the universal suffrage of one man one vote, regardless of race, gender or creed. Whilst a lot has been achieved since the 1994 democratic dispensation, a lot more remains to be done.
4. As a rainbow nation, if we stand together united behind a vision that was created by uTata Madiba, a vision of a free, non-racist, non-sexist and democratic South Africa, we can overcome all our challenges which include widespread poverty and corruption, chronic unemployment and obscene levels of inequality.
5. We must continue to work tirelessly to build an economy that is inclusive, where no citizen of this province goes to bed on an empty stomach.
6. It is against this background that I stand before you today not as a prophet or the proverbial wise woman from the east where the sun rises but as your humble servant.
7. A servant whose passion and commitment is informed by nothing else but the innate desire to diligently serve the people of Mpumalanga Province with honour, humility, dignity, integrity and dedication.

8. I have always been driven and motivated by the sense of wanting to serve our people in whatever capacity my organization the African National Congress has deployed me to serve.
9. I will continue to do so as long as this glorious movement of our forefathers and foremothers ***boNtate Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, oMama Winnie Madikizela Mandela, Albertina Sisulu, Lillian Ngoyi, and Helen Josephs*** deploys me.
10. As we usher in the new decade we must take stock of our achievements and shortcomings, learn from those shortcomings and consolidate our gains as we set our eyes firmly on the developmental goals that we endeavour to achieve by the year 2030.
11. We have worked very hard and will continue to work tirelessly towards the attainment of the noble vision of a better life for all. This vision is the hallmark of our struggle for freedom since the formation of the African National Congress in 1912.
12. We will be the first to admit that our political gains are yet to be felt and enjoyed by everyone through inclusive economic growth.
13. Tremendous and undeniable progress has been made during the past 25 years of our democracy, however some of our gains are facing the risk of being reversed by geo political and economic circumstances within and beyond our borders.
14. We have also made some policy choices that may have derailed our progress forcing us to rethink and revisit our strategies. The problems that have beset our national state owned enterprises including but not limited to ESKOM, SAA, TRANSNET, PRASA and others are a serious cause for concern.
15. We are confident that the teams that have been appointed to tackle the challenges faced by our SOEs in particular ESKOM which is the engine of our economic growth will soon find a workable solution.

It Was the Best of Times; and It Was the Worst of Times

16. Madam Speaker, this year under review is captured succinctly in Charles Dicken's seminal book a ***Tale of Two Cities*** in which he wrote and I quote, "***it was the Best of Times, it was the Worst of Times.***"
17. *For our province it was the best of times* because for the first time in our history the matric class of 2019 managed to break through the ceiling of the 80 per cent pass mark making us very proud of our students, teachers and parents.
18. Mpumalanga is one of the top six provinces that have broken this record. We are now aiming higher than 80 per cent for the class of 2020. Credit should go to the Department of Education under the stewardship of MEC Bonakele Majuba and his management team.
19. The much welcomed improvements in our matric performance came as a result of hard work and perseverance by our teachers and officials.
20. Their hard-work was also rewarded during the National Teachers Awards held in Pretoria recently, where Mpumalanga Province walked away with coveted teaching awards in four different categories.
21. Ladies and gentlemen join me in celebrating the outstanding achievements by our own teachers. I will ask them as I read their names to stand up and be recognized by this August House;
 - Ms Louis Fullard from Hoerskool Bergvlam walked away with top position in the category of Excellence in ICT Enhanced Technology;
 - Ms Mercia Mthombeni from Bunny Khosa Secondary School was awarded top notch in the category Excellency in Teaching Natural Sciences;
 - Ms Caroline Engelbrecht walked away with a top position in the category Excellency in Teaching Special Needs;

- Mr Jacobus Johannes Du Plessis van Rensburg was awarded a top position in the category of Life Time Achievement.

22. Ladies and gentlemen let us put our hands together in congratulating these four exceptional educators whose contribution to learning and teaching surpasses even our own expectations.
23. To appreciate their selfless contribution to our nation building, the Province will donate R10 000 to each of them as a token of appreciation. Let's give them a big round of applause once more.
24. In pursuit of our developmental path, we have continued to prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable amongst us.
25. We have made tremendous progress in the provision of the social protection net for the most vulnerable groups in our society.
26. We have built learning institutions and continued to provide free quality education for all;
27. We will continue to build libraries that become the fountain of knowledge and wisdom;
28. We continue to construct roads and bridges that connect communities and serve as economic arteries;
29. We continue to build clinics and hospitals that support life and bring hope to the hopeless;
30. We continue to construct early childhood learning centres that are a foundation for a good quality education;

31. We continue to build houses and integrated human settlements, and by so doing restore the dignity of our people by ensuring that they possess title deeds.
32. Madam Speaker, ***It was the worst of times*** as we continued to grapple with the scourge of Gender Based Violence. Gender Based Violence is a scourge that is destroying our moral fibre as a nation. It is also a scourge that robs our nation of a prosperous future.
33. We fully support President Ramaphosa's call made during the State of the Nation Address for the promulgation of the Domestic Violence Amendment Act that will better protect victims and survivors of gender based violence.
34. We call upon the people of Mpumalanga to name and shame convicted perpetrators of gender based violence. There must be no safe haven for perpetrators of all forms of gender based violence in our communities.

Our Commitments

35. Last year, Madam Speaker, we committed ourselves towards establishing a capable, ethical and developmental State.
36. In that regard, we decided to undertake a skills audit in both the Municipalities and Provincial Government. This is in our effort to professionalise these spheres of government.
37. We are still committed to ensuring that public servants are capacitated to carry out their tasks so as to enable us to give effect to the constitutional mandate.
38. Madam Speaker, we committed ourselves to developmental imperatives that drive innovation and the digital revolution, increase levels of investment in the economy,

accelerate the provision of infrastructure to support the economy and create the much needed jobs.

39. Such imperatives should also transform and diversify all sectors of our economy, consolidate support for small businesses and cooperatives, as well as grow the township and village economy.
40. It should also translate into improved basic services, better education, make our people live healthier and longer lives, provide shelter over their heads, provide social security and promote social cohesion.
41. Our **social wage** has played a significant role in our efforts to reduce poverty and inequality.
42. Madam Speaker, the proverbial elephant in the room is the unacceptably high levels of unemployment and in particular youth unemployment.
43. Mpumalanga's unemployment rate was the third highest amongst the 9 provinces at the end of Quarter 4 of 2019 at 33,6%.
44. We are committed to exploring new ways to stimulate our economy and create work opportunities.
45. As we do this, it is important to also take cognisance of the fact that we anticipate more job losses in the mining sector, which is one of the biggest contributors to the Provincial economy. These job losses will be attributable to mines reaching the end of their operational lifespan.
46. In order to mitigate the socio-economic consequences of the closure of mines, the Provincial Government, in collaboration with the Department of Mineral

Resources, and through the Premier's Mining Forum will actively engage mining houses to ensure that they comply with the legislated requirement to establish a rehabilitation fund for the restoration of operational land upon the ceasing of mining operations.

47. This will enable us to repurpose the use of land from mining to agriculture and by so doing create employment opportunities for our people. This will also end the rapid deterioration of former mining towns across the Province.
48. Furthermore, the Provincial Government has taken a firm decision to embark on the following short term interventions to stimulate economic participation and ultimately create jobs;
49. MRTT in partnership with the private sector will increase the number of youth who are put on short term skills development courses like plumbing, painting, electrical, bricklaying, plastering, hospitality and others initially targeting those who may have left school between grades 8 and 12.
50. These young people will be deployed to hospitals, clinics, schools and all government buildings to do maintenance and all necessary repairs. We are targeting at least 50 000 young people to be skilled by government and the private sector during the next three years.
51. Our strategic partners in the private sector have indicated that they will up-skill young people on areas which are related to their operations. We will elaborate further on this, later.
52. Madam Speaker, at the advent of this Administration, we indicated that a Youth Development Fund shall be established.

53. To this effect, R10 million had been set aside during the 2019/2020 budget adjustment.
54. A further R40 million will be apportioned in the 2020/2021 Financial Year in continuation of this initiative.

The Land Question

55. Madam Speaker, the land question, which is the most polarising issue in this country, is receiving adequate attention.
56. Parliament is processing the amendment of section 25 of the Constitution that deals with the matter of land expropriation without compensation. Public hearings are ongoing and we will soon take it through the necessary legislative requirements.
57. Since 1994, we have made modest but very significant progress on land reforms through our land restitution and land redistribution programmes.
58. Hundreds of thousands of hectares have been distributed to the rightful owners using these two instruments.
59. Working together with Amakhosi, Government shall continue in ensuring that communities in the rural areas also enjoy the privileges promised in the Constitution.
60. We will continue to review and improve the working conditions of our traditional leaders, improve working relations and to share in their indigenous wisdom in crafting and passing laws that protect and advance the good course in our society.

Priorities for 2020/21

Transforming the Economy to serve the People

61. Madam Speaker, we are on a mission to industrialize our Province. This will be done by implementing the **Mpumalanga Industrial Development Plan**, which is aimed at promoting the development and establishment of Industrial Technology Parks for the prioritized areas, with a primary focus on;
- Agriculture and Forestry;
 - Mining and Metals; and
 - Petro-chemicals.
62. Linked to this, is the commitment to supporting **Township and Rural economies**, as well as small businesses. In this regard, our priority projects remain the **Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market** and its associated Agri-Hubs, as well as the **Nkomazi SEZ** (Special Economic Zone).
63. It is imperative, *now more than ever*, for us to ensure that our catalytic projects such as the Nkomazi SEZ and the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market are strategically positioned, not only to stimulate economic activity but also to create sustainable work opportunities for our people.
64. We will further tap into the **Green Economy**, which will bring a myriad of new opportunities, where waste streams are turned into input stream for a new economic intervention, leading ultimately to a zero waste industrial ecosystem.

Tourism

65. Madam Speaker, in an effort to address the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, we are in the process of optimizing the holistic value proposition of the tourism industry in the Province.
66. We are blessed with a Province that is home to a unique blend of cultural and historical heritage. Indeed, the Province of the rising sun is home to a melting pot of culture, arts, historic, and geological treasures.
67. The importance of tourism is evidenced by its significant contribution to the Provincial GDP. Tourism contributed approximately **7% to the GDP** of the Province.
68. Our marketing efforts have resulted in the Province receiving an increased number of international arrivals. The total number of international tourists who visited Mpumalanga, increased from **1, 5 million in 2017** to **1.6 million in 2018**. Most of our visitors came from Mozambique, the Kingdom of eSwatini, the USA, Germany and the United Kingdom.
69. Mpumalanga recorded an increased number of domestic tourism trips at 2.9 million in 2018, when compared to 2.2 million in 2017. Our **key source provinces were Gauteng, followed by Limpopo** and then our own people in the Province.
70. Our Province is now recorded as the second fastest growing at 64,1%, and it should be stressed that more domestic trips actually originated from this Province.
71. The second quarter of 2019 (from April to June) has also shown a positive growth in the number of international tourist arrivals to our Province, when compared to the same period in 2018.

72. In moving with the times and diversifying our tourism offerings, we will start the process of ensuring that our tourism attractions are broadened to attract the cosmopolitan and upwardly mobile tourist who seeks a holistic tourism experience.
73. In order for this strategy to succeed, we will be paying heightened attention to the safety of tourists and infrastructural development in our Province.
74. The **safety of tourists in the Province remains one of our biggest challenges**, and requires urgent attention by all relevant stakeholders. Since June 2019 to date, a total of 49 crimes against tourists were reported in the Province.
75. This means that we must devote resources to tackle acts of criminality, and counter the perception that Mpumalanga is an unsafe tourist destination. In this regard, a focused collaboration with the South African Police Service and private sector need to be re-enforced.
76. To tackle this problem head-on, we have constituted the **Tourism Safety Forum** that looks at the Safety of tourists in the Province. As the Provincial Government, we pledge our support to all efforts aimed at eradicating the criminal elements that threaten one of our most important economic drivers in the Province.
77. Another area of concern, is the **poor maintenance and upgrading of the tourism infrastructure**, particularly, the roads in our tourism routes. This is another contributing factor that has the potential to affect tourist arrivals in the Province.

Infrastructural Development

78. Madam Speaker, there can be no sustainable economic growth without a concomitant investment in our infrastructure.
79. In the past Financial Year, we have invested over 4 billion Rand in improving our economic and social infrastructure.

80. In the next financial year, we shall invest over 5 billion Rand to infrastructural projects that will aid our efforts to ensure that we create a conducive environment for socio-economic development and inclusive growth.
81. Furthermore, we have noted with grave concern the dilapidation of some of our infrastructure. To this effect, all Departments will ring-fence 2% of their capital budgets and apportion it to maintenance of infrastructure.

Expanding Agricultural Infrastructure and Increasing Production

82. Madam Speaker, The notion that agricultural development is an integral component and catalyst of broader economic and infrastructural transformation is now widely accepted and supported by evidence observed by the World Bank in other areas like Asia and South America.
83. The global demand for our agricultural products is consistently increasing. We therefore need to increase our production in order to grow our net export market share.
84. There must be a strong and strategic collaboration between us as policy makers, farmers of all sizes and shape and civil society organizations to collectively create sustainable solutions for this critical sector.
85. We have successfully negotiated with the Sultanate of Oman to purchase our agricultural produce. During our recent visit to that Gulf State we took along a number of emerging and commercial farmers who are now in the process of signing off-take agreements with the distributors and wholesalers in Oman.
86. We will continue to reconfigure and restructure our support for emerging farmers in order to ensure that they are flexible enough to meet the constantly evolving needs of the international fresh produce market.

87. We will continue to ensure that our small and emerging farmers are given opportunities to actively participate in the agricultural space.
88. We will provide herds of cattle, goats, pigs and poultry along with critical tools of trade such as tractors and other implements to ensure the success of their farming enterprises.
89. As a condition for our support, emerging farmers will be obligated to complete training programs offered and accredited by Agri-Seta.
90. We will also be expanding the Fortune 40 Youth Incubation programme with the understanding that half of these farms should be self-sufficient and not dependent on government grants in future.
91. Incubation by its definition means at some point those who are receiving support and training should stand on their feet. We simply cannot allow such programmes to become bottomless holes.
92. Fortune 40 programme has a specific focus on developing young entrepreneurs in farming. It has the wide array of agricultural activities that include, farming with various commodities including vegetables, poultry, livestock development and tractor mechanics.
93. This programme has managed to link twelve (12) of these farms to established markets that include retailers like Spar, Shoprite, Boxer, Wholesalers, Agri-Hubs and other markets.
94. The other farms are at different level of development and linked to the local markets like the hawkers and small retailers.

95. All the Fortune 40 farms are continuously provided with extension and advisory services. The youth on these farms are at different levels of training and some are in full management of the farms.
96. In addition, some of the learners have completed their Agri-Seta learnership programmes and graduated last month.
97. The Province has, in the last 10 months, focused on the eleven (11) new farms that the department has identified and are currently at different stages of development.
98. Fortune 40 programmes continue to create much-needed jobs for the youth, it plays a role in the alleviation of poverty and improves food security. Through the Fortune 40 Youth Incubation programme, we must capitalize on innovation and improve the efficiency of agricultural production.
99. Madam Speaker, We promised the people of this beautiful Province that we will build them agri-hubs in all three districts.
100. I am proud to announce that the Mkhuhlu Agri-hub in Bushbuckridge is operational and offers several markets that includes the local supermarkets, retailers and national markets. The Agri-Hub is a key and strategic element of the Provincial Government Nutrition Programme.
101. The Mkhondo Agri-Hub in Gert Sibande is completed and partially operational. The Agri-Hub will be fully operational in the next financial year.
102. Government is also conducting a feasibility study for the establishment of the Agri-Hub in the Nkomazi Municipality. A **budget of 15 million Rand** for the 1st phase of the Agri-Hub and the conversion of the other to the Pack-house, has been set aside for this purpose.

103. To address the **Food Security** challenges faced by many communities of Mpumalanga, the Province has intensified **Phezukomkhono Mlimi**, a programme that provides mechanization and inputs support to all its farmers and in particular the household, subsistence and emerging famers.

Climate Change

104. Madam Speaker, climate change is striking harder, faster and more aggressively than many of us expected.

105. The last five years were the warmest on record, natural disasters have become more frequent, and last year we witnessed an unprecedented high instances extreme weather throughout the world.

106. In our Province we first experienced a prolonged drought, which resulted in huge losses for our stock and grain farmers destroying the little capital our emerging farmers have.

107. The drought was followed by floods and storms that wreaked havoc in many areas of our Province.

108. According to climate change experts; the failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation implementation strategy has been identified as the number one risk by impact and number two by likelihood over the next 10 years.

109. Mpumalanga economic output is largely attributable to mining, power generation and petro-chemicals production that contribute to more than 85% of SA's carbon emissions in the country, making SA the biggest carbon emitter in the African continent.

110. The Highveld region has a regional fossil fuel dependent economy that is predominantly based on coal where most of the power station are aging and will be decommissioned and phased out.

111. As part of our mitigation and adaptation strategy we have crafted a Green Economy Development Plan focusing on priorities that will unlock the interventions that can be implemented to support the just transition towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy and society.
112. The Just Transition strategy will be more biased towards protecting the most vulnerable members of our societies which include women, children, people with disabilities and the poor.
113. To mitigate against potential food insecurity caused by climate change disasters, the Department of Agriculture, Land Administration and Environmental Affairs working with our private sector partners and donors will soon launch fresh vegetable gardens and fish production facilities known as **aquaponics** in various communities. This project will be driven by youth and women cooperatives in both urban and rural areas.
114. We will also invest in climate change early warning systems which will assist us to reduce the impact of disasters associated with drought, floods and cyclones.
115. We must double our efforts in our mitigation and adaptation strategies more so because Mpumalanga ranks amongst the worst places in the world on air pollution.
116. We need to strike a good balance between the need to create meaningful and quality jobs with the protection of our people against the ravages of environmental degradation.

International Trade and Investment relations.

117. Madam Speaker, Mpumalanga is well positioned to become a gateway to Africa. We have the best road infrastructure leading to our neighbouring countries Mozambique and the Kingdom of eSwatini, a port much closer to us than other ports and a combined market of about 30 million people. We also have easy access to four adjacent provinces.
118. To grow our exports and increase our market share, we have taken an informed decision to market Mpumalanga as a trade and investment destination to a number of overseas countries.
119. As I have indicated, our recent excursion to the Sultanate of Oman resulted in commitments being made to increase our exports of fruits, nuts, vegetables and meat to that State.
120. Madam Speaker, you will recall that in March 2019, I led a delegation to Russia that culminated into the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). As recently as two weeks ago we hosted a delegation from Russia, to firm up the areas of collaboration outlined in the MOU.
121. It was agreed that the areas of collaboration shall be;
- industry and trade,
 - tourism,
 - culture,
 - research and education.

Local Government and Basic Services

122. Madam Speaker, the most fundamental reason for the existence of any government is to ensure the provision of services to its people.
123. Local government by its nature and character exists to provide quality and reliable services to our people. There has been instances of poor delivery on that commitment.
124. In recognition of our commitment to ensure that Government operates in an integrated and efficient manner, we will continue to exercise oversight over Local Government in line with the provisions of the Constitution.
125. Our priority is in ensuring that the people of Mpumalanga are afforded access to basic services.
126. We are also committed to fighting corruption and maladministration wherever it rears its ugly head. Our communities have raised issues of wrong doing in some of our municipalities.
127. To this effect, we have instituted investigations in terms of section 106 of the Municipal Systems Act in Dr JS Moroka, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme and Govan Mbeki Local municipalities.
128. Once these investigations have been completed and submitted to the Executive Council for consideration, we will make sure that the recommendations are fully implemented.
129. We have also invoked section 139 (1)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa at Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality during the month of January in order to arrest a rapidly deteriorating situation whilst ensuring that our people continue to have access to basic services.

130. We want to appeal to our communities and all strategic stakeholders in Dr JS Moroka to cooperate with the work of the Administrator and give him undivided support.
131. Madam Speaker, in line with our responsibility to dismantle the legacies of the past, we have taken a decision in line with the NDP that any new development should be planned and designed in such a way that it breaks the legacy of Apartheid spatial development patterns.
132. As part of our efforts towards integrated development, we have finalised the compilation of the Provincial Spatial Development Framework (PSDF) to facilitate spatial integration.
133. Through the PSDF proposals, the province will, in the 2020/21 financial year, embark on a process to develop the ***“Nkomazi Regional Spatial Development Framework”*** which will be implemented through the **Project Management Unit to be located within COGTA.**
134. Some of the major challenges that hamper development in the province include continued urban sprawl, caused by rapid urbanization in the province’s fastest growing towns like eMalahleni, Steve Tshwete, Govan Mbeki, City of Mbombela, Nkomazi, Bushbuckridge, Thaba Chweu and Victor Khanye local municipalities.
135. In response to urban sprawl, we will introduce processes that make it mandatory for departmental plans at all spheres of government to align all proposed sector programmes to the relevant Municipal Spatial Development Frameworks (MSDF) and the Provincial Spatial Development Framework (PSDF).
136. This is in accordance with the District based delivery model we are embracing in order to move us away from a fragmented approach of service delivery, eliminate bottlenecks and expedite the delivery of services.

137. Subscribing to the District Delivery Model will enable all tiers of government to operate in an integrated manner. Through this model, implementation shall be tracked more closely. We will be able to timeously intervene in order to improve the efficiency of local government.
138. Once implemented, this model will result in government being able to holistically address the challenges associated with rapid urbanisation in our cities, it will stimulate local economic drivers and allow government to plan efficiently when investing in infrastructure for integrated human settlements.
139. Furthermore, we will avail the necessary resources for the identification of land parcels for servicing to facilitate future sustainable development in the province's fastest growing towns.

Human Settlements

140. Madam Speaker, our ageing sewer infrastructure remains our biggest challenge. As we think that we are succeeding in resolving sewer spillages in some areas, new challenges emerge in other areas.
141. Working with our partners like Sasol in Govan Mbeki Local Municipality, we are confident that we will finally succeed in resolving these challenges wherever they are.
142. Madam Speaker, we have taken a decision to focus our resources on servicing more sites and allowing our people who can afford to build themselves houses, to do so.
143. Going forward into the future we will reduce the number of top structures, cater mostly for the child headed homes, the elderly, the disabled and the most vulnerable for top structures.

144. A total of 5226 sites including those ring-fenced for informal settlements will be completed during the 2020/21 financial year whilst 4481 top structures will be completed.

145. We are mandated to establish Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements across the province which are located in areas within close proximity to work opportunities and transport services. The following projects are prioritised for the current financial year;

- ***Nkosi City Project*** that is situated in the City of Mbombela Municipality. The project will comprise 1747 Fully Subsidized Dwelling Houses, Social Housing with an estimation of 166 Dwelling Units. Finance Linked Individual Subsidies Programme which is planned to deliver 558 dwelling bonded houses, 9 Preschools, 3 Primary Schools, 2 Secondary Schools, TVET College, Training Centres and a Provincial Hospital.
- ***Smart City*** is planned to be in the Nkomazi Municipality and will include; an Integrated Human Settlement, Housing Opportunities, ICT Infrastructure, Bulk Municipal Engineering Infrastructure, Commercial Uses, Retail Uses, Industrial Uses, Logistics related Uses and Agri-Processing Uses.
- ***Dingwell Integrated Human Settlement*** will be situated in the City of Mbombela Municipality and will yield approximately 13 000 housing opportunities.
- ***Matsafeni Precinct Integrated Human Settlement*** is planned for the City of Mbombela Municipality, it is anticipated that the project will yield approximately 15 000 housing opportunities.
- ***Retiefville Integrated Human Settlement*** is planned for the Mkhondo Local Municipality and will yield approximately 620 housing opportunities.
- ***Secunda West Integrated Human Settlement*** in Govan Mbeki Municipality will yield approximately 9 000 housing opportunities.
- ***Rondebosch Integrated Human Settlement*** in Steve Tshwete Municipality will yield approximately 6 595 housing opportunities.

The NDP, Regional Development Model, CRDP and a Capable Developmental State

146. Madam Speaker, the National Development Plan (NDP) and the New Regional Development Model fits comfortably well within the ambit of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP).
147. All these programmes envisage an integrated rural development enriched by the inclusion of local aspirations and knowledge, and accelerated by improved coordination among government agencies and civil society.
148. After careful consideration of the positive impact the CRDP had on our rural communities during the era of its implementation, we have decided to re-introduce the programme and align it with the District Development Model.
149. These programmes also subscribe to the need for a capable and developmental state, which actively intervenes to bring benefits that accrue across society and builds consensus among the various layers of society around long-term national objectives.
150. They recognise that a capable and developmental state will need to improve its performance and increase public confidence through its policies, leadership, resources, institutions, policy adherence and accountability.
151. The National Development Plan, targets economic transformation with the ultimate intention to transform the social and human development conditions of the vast majority of the people.
152. The ultimate objective is to bring fundamental change in the structure, systems, institutions and patterns of ownership, management and control of the economy.

Innovation for better Education Outcomes & Early Childhood Education

153. Madam Speaker, education lays a strong foundation for the development of all our talents and capabilities and advances the democratic transformation of society. In order for this to come to fruition the education outcomes must continue to improve and respond to the needs of the economy and society at large.
154. There is an improvement in the provision of access to Grade R, as 2019 statistics indicate that 93.8% of children aged 5 to 6 years received formal Grade R. There is still a backlog in terms of access for the 0-4 cohort, which stands at 43%.
155. The Province was able to provide 9 schools with 36 specialized Gr. R classrooms in the 2019/20 Financial Year.
156. A total of 35 ECD specialized classrooms in 10 schools are to be provided during the 2020/21 financial year.
157. The Province will continue to improve ECD delivery through quality of teaching, practitioner qualifications, material development and resourcing.
158. We call upon the private sector to join hands with Government in the provision of state of the art ECD centres across the Province.

Learner Performance

159. Our investment in education has begun to show results, as statistics indicate that there is now gender parity in schools. Enrolment, retention and through-put ratios have improved substantially up to Grade 9.
160. The introduction of the Second Chance Programme for young people has energised social cohesion programmes.

161. As part of our innovation strategy we have improved on curriculum differentiation for more effective and inclusive education as well as the implementation of the three stream curriculum model.
162. All these measures are geared towards better improvement on curriculum choices, reduce repetition, deepen quality of learning outcomes, reduce drop-out rates and improve the quality of teaching and learning.
163. One of the biggest developmental challenges facing Mpumalanga in particular and South Africa in general is the high number of children who do not learn to read for meaning in the early years of schooling.
164. In an effort to ensure that our 10 year olds read for meaning we will expand the early grade reading intervention strategy to 300 more schools in collaboration with academics at various universities and international donor organisations.
165. Working with our private sector partners we are making concerted efforts to increase skills development and competencies to prepare learners for the fourth industrial revolution.
166. The process of developing a Curriculum to introduce Digital Skills teaching, learning, Coding and Robotics is in its final stages.
167. The coding and robotics curriculum will develop learners' ability to solve problems, think critically, work collaboratively and creatively, function in a digital and information-driven world, apply digital and ICT skills, and transfer these skills to solve everyday problems.
168. The department will be piloting coding and robotics curriculum across 100 schools in the Province in the 2021 academic year.

169. Madam Speaker, as I have indicated earlier on, the province has now joined other provinces that are performing at 80% and above with regards to Grade 12 results.
170. However, there is a concern with the decreased uptake and performance in Maths and Accounting.
171. We will conduct advocacy campaigns in the main targeting primary school learners in order to increase awareness and participation in Maths, Science and Technology subjects at an early age.
172. As part of our efforts to improve the uptake of these subjects, 88 primary and secondary schools were provided with maths laboratories to enhance teaching and learning in this key subjects.
173. We will work hard to sustain and improve on this through a continuous search for excellence in all areas of basic education. The province's **target for the Grade 12 class of 2020 is 83%**.
174. Education infrastructure is a crucial component of learning environments in schools. There is strong evidence that high-quality infrastructure facilitates better instruction, improves student outcomes, and reduces dropout rates, among other benefits.
175. In an effort to inspire confidence and bring the dignity of our learners as promised in our SOPA of July 2019, our boarding school strategy saw the birth of the 6th boarding school in the province which is the Thaba Chweu Boarding School. It opened its doors in January this year. An additional 6 new schools were constructed.
176. The bulk of our education infrastructure budget continued to be biased towards the basic service projects (water, sanitation and electricity). To date 98.5% of our schools meet the minimum norms and standards for infrastructure.

177. We are working towards completely eradicating all pit latrines in our schools in a few years to come and the eradication of unsafe structures in the following years ahead.
178. The province has prioritised the alleviation of overcrowding in urban areas.
179. We have therefore conducted needs assessment for additional classrooms in fast growing towns and all other urban areas.
180. We will commence with construction of 7 new schools in 5 fast-growing towns. 2 schools in Mbombela, 1 school in Secunda, 1 School in Ermelo, 1 School in Lydenburg and 1 school in eMalahleni.
181. As part of our commitment and in line with the Freedom Charter principles of opening the doors of learning and culture to all by creating equal education opportunities, we have planned to build the school for the Deaf which will be housed within the City of Mbombela Municipality. The project is at the design stage.

Skills Development

182. As part of our drive to address the shortage of rare skills, we have sent 281 learners to study in Russia. MERSETA has also partnered with us and funded 81 new students who are studying overseas.
183. Our bursary scheme has assisted more than 3 334 learners who are studying in various fields like Medicine, Veterinary Science, Information Technology, Aviation, Education (Maths & Science) and Engineering.
184. The artisan development programme in partnership with Hydra Arc was set up to deal and address the issue of artisan development in the province as envisaged by the National Development Plan.

185. This has thus far produced 2 950 artisans ranging from welding and pipe fabricators, boiler making, safety and quality officers. The programme has contributed immensely by changing the lives of young people who would otherwise have faced a very bleak future.
186. MRTT continues to produce quality students especially in the hospitality industry. Samkeliso Mathaba from Kanyamazane started his training as assistant chef with MRTT in 2015 and continued with his studies in Professional Cookery, obtained a diploma in culinary arts and an advanced diploma in culinary arts.
187. Today Samkeliso is doing his internship program in the United States of America, at Colorado Springs at the Broadmoor Hotel, which is one of the biggest hotels in Colorado.
188. Samkeliso is the third MRTT learner leaving to start a career internationally and a fourth one will be leaving for Canada. The entity is indeed changing lives and producing skilled learners who are ready to compete globally.
189. In response to the call made by His Excellency President Ramaphosa, on the need for short term courses, we will, in partnership with our private sector partners, intensify and increase the number of our existing programmes to 25 000 young people trained in various skills during the next financial year.

Skills and Innovation Hub

190. Madam Speaker, our desire and dream to build a skills and innovation hub has finally come true. We have procured a site around eMalahleni and have budgeted R16 million for the initial phase of this project.
191. The Provincial Skills and Innovation Hub will contribute to economic growth in all economic sectors of the province, offering opportunities through skills development, incubation, and innovation and emerging technologies.

Innovation for a better Health System

192. Madam Speaker, most of our health facilities have reached the end of their life span. Few years ago we began investing in the infrastructure and some of those projects are now nearing completion.
193. The new Middleburg district hospital will soon be completed. We are also at an advanced stage with the upgrading of Bethal district hospital and the upgrading of Mmmethake district hospital is continuing in earnest.
194. The construction of Mapulaneng regional hospital and Kanyamazane CHC have already started. We will continue with refurbishment of the Oncology Chemotherapy ward and refurbishment of nursing accommodation at the Rob Ferreira Tertiary hospital. The Department of Health will also complete the construction of Pankop CHC.
195. During construction phase these projects will create more than 500 job opportunities and once these facilities are operational a significant number of permanent professional and support staff jobs will be created.
196. We will also use these projects to place our newly trained young people for work experience and learnerships.

197. Madam Speaker, crime that was perpetrated in our hospitals suggested that criminals were beginning to turn our health facilities into war zones.
198. We had to do something about it before it escalated to even more serious incidents. To this end we are busy with the installation of turnstiles at Witbank, Middleburg and Mapulaneng Hospitals.
199. We are finalising the appointment of service providers for the remaining hospitals and CHCs in the current financial year.
200. We are also in the process to appointing service providers for the digitalisation of security systems such as installation of CCTV cameras and panic buttons in health facilities.
201. To improve patients waiting times in our health facilities, we conducted waiting times surveys and developed quality improvement plans to close identified gaps.
202. We are also purchasing 67 new ambulances to improve turnaround time and equipping all those that were purchased recently with the necessary life-saving equipment.
203. Madam Speaker all these initiatives are meant to respond to the principle of the Freedom Charter which demands that there shall be free medical care and hospitalization shall be provided to all with special care for mothers and children. We are also laying the foundation for the introduction of the National Health Insurance.

Innovation for improved Social Development

204. Madam Speaker, one of the most important objectives of this Administration is the advancement of previously disadvantaged people, especially women and young girls in particular.
205. This Administration will not rest until we ensure that we preserve the dignity of young girls in each corner of this Province.
206. This Administration will ensure that no girl child misses a day of school because of a lack of sanitary towels. This is why the Provincial Government, through the Department of Social Development, will continue with the mass roll out of sanitary towels in every District with a particular focus on rural areas.
207. Madam Speaker, in an effort to empower young people who are not in the formal work space, the Provincial Government is currently rolling out support for 90 Youth Development centres (YDCs) across the Province.
208. These centres deliver services including provision of accredited training of Computer skills, Entrepreneurship Development, Life Skills, Job Preparedness workshops and Career Guidance.
209. These Youth Development Centres will strategically position Mpumalanga Youth to be amongst the first to benefit from the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention programmes as announced by His Excellency, the President of the Republic in his State of the Nation Address 2 weeks ago.

Strategic Private Sector Partnerships

210. Madam Speaker multiple and complex challenges we are navigating through have opened up opportunities for us to partner with the private sector.

211. We are very fortunate to have corporate citizens that have chosen the path of becoming part of the communities where their businesses are located.

212. We call upon all companies that operate from this province to likewise make a meaningful contribution to the well-being of our people. Some of the corporate citizens that are walking the talk and are contributing in a meaningful way include;

213. ***Sasol, Exxaro, South 32, Glencore, Anglo American, Sappi, Mondi, Seriti, Rcl Foods and Mafube Colliery*** who have taken up the responsibility to produce higher standards of living and quality of life for the communities that surround them and still maintain profitability for stakeholders.

214. These companies have succeeded in forging strong bonds between themselves, their employees the communities around them and government at all spheres.

215. For the 2020/2021 financial year, South 32 has committed itself to finish building a R32 million community health centre at Rockdale in Steve Tshwete municipality, to complete an R18 million clinic in Phola in Witbank, to finish the installation of water and sewer to houses in Phola valued at R7 million and to complete other infrastructure projects like the egg producing plant in Rietspruit.

216. Sasol has committed itself to continue supporting municipalities around Gert Sibande district with special focus to Govan Mbeki Municipality.

217. As part of preparing our youth for the fourth Industrial revolution in schools within Mpumalanga, Sasol sponsored teachers to be trained as master teachers for **Robotics and Coding**.
218. Through Sasol Foundation, Sasol created access to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) high quality, low cost, multimedia enriched textbooks for use by learners and teachers.
219. These are available free of charge online. To date, a total of 180 volumes of books have been completed and published online.
220. Glencore, another socially responsible corporate citizen in this province has built schools, community centers, low cost houses roads and supported small businesses across the Province to the tune of 133 million Rand.
221. At Mashinini the company has invested heavily in education, from early child hood centers to youth development centers that focus on arts culture and sports. It also converted an old public works building into a TVET college which opened its doors for the first time last year with 500 students.
222. As part of up-skilling unemployed youth and increase their employability and open up opportunities for them to start their own businesses, Exxaro has invested more than 40 million Rand in skills development of more than 220 young people.
223. These young people are trained over a period of 12 to 18 months on the latest digital technologies that are compatible with the 4th industrial revolution.
224. Exxaro is also providing free WIFI interconnectivity in Siyathuthuka township in Belfast.
225. The company has completed a number of infrastructural projects in various townships in Nkangala and Gert Sibande districts. All these companies are involved in portable skills development which include among others artisanship.

226. Mafube Colliery recently donated a clinic to the value of 16 million Rand in Sikhululiwe Township in Steve Tshwete Municipality.

Innovation that Promotes Social Cohesion and Social Justice

227. Madam Speaker, social cohesion is by and large the glue that keeps us irrespective of colour, race or creed together. Some prefer to look at it as the bond that keeps societies from falling apart.

228. It is therefore important that we invest heavily on positive attitudes and norms that include trust, a sense of belonging to this beautiful province and the willingness to participate and assist where we are able to.

229. For this Province to prosper we need to individually and collectively turn our social capital, our time and efforts into social cohesion which represents the good that we do for the community especially those that are most vulnerable.

230. We will continue to host other signature events whilst promoting the culture of learning and reading by building more libraries for our communities.

Innovation for Safer communities

231. Madam Speaker, personal safety is a human right. It is a necessary condition for human development, improved quality of life and enhanced productivity.

232. When our communities do not feel safe and live in fear, the country's economic development and the people's well-being are affected, hindering their ability to achieve their potential.

233. Whilst we have seen a reduction in some kinds of crime and we welcome that, there has been an increase in others like gender based violence.

234. The safety of communities should therefore be measured by the extent to which the most vulnerable in society, women in particular, feel and are safe from crime and the conditions that breed it.
235. Through effective, coordinated responses of all stakeholders including police, business, community and civil society we will work harder to eradicate all forms of violence particularly that directed against the most vulnerable members of our society.

Conclusion

236. As I conclude Madam Speaker, we have witnessed the loss of integrity in some of the institutions of state, business, political and other organisations. We have learned hard lessons about the vigilance needed to stop lawlessness, greed and selfishness from taking root.
237. My Office in its continued endeavour to **fight corruption** in the public service has established a Vetting Field Unit to aid the huge backlogs faced by the State Security Agency.
238. We are currently considering various options to conduct life style audits in the public service and recruiting more forensic investigators to deal with reported cases of fraud and corruption.
239. In essence, Madam Speaker, we must be the embodiment of the Province we want to create. We must embody the virtues that befit this glorious paradise of the East.
240. It is our responsibility to ensure that we serve as the moral compass that will ignite the flame for the moral regeneration our Province yearns for.
241. In this year of unity, socio economic renewal and nation building, we must be reminded of the ideals of uTata Nelson Mandela, who after 27 years of

imprisonment preached a message of unity in diversity, non-racialism and most importantly, peace.

242. Let everyday of our lives and every decision we make, as servants of the people of Mpumalanga, be informed by the greater responsibility to advance the interests of Mpumalanga and all those who call her home.

243. I thank you.