



OPENING ^{OF THE} EASTERN CAPE

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE ADDRESS

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Eastern Cape Office of the Premier
Premier Lubabalo Oscar Mabuyane



Eastern Cape Provincial Government



Eastern Cape Provincial Government



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**BUILDING THE EASTERN CAPE
WE WANT**







Opening of the Seventh Legislature by Eastern Cape Premier Hon. Lubabalo Oscar Mabuyane at the Provincial Legislature on 1 August 2024.

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker

Acting Judge President of the Eastern Cape High Court and
Members of the Judiciary

Members of the Executive Council

Deputy Speaker and Members of the Provincial Legislature

National Government Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Our Former Premiers

Kings and Queens

Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps

Leaders of Provincial Houses and Local Houses of Traditional and
Khoisan Leadership

Mayors of our Municipalities and Leadership of SALGA

Leaders of Political Parties, Religious Leaders, Business Leaders,
Leaders of Civil Society and Labour

Director General, Heads of Departments, and other Government
Officials

Esteemed Guests

Abantu base Eastern Cape bonke

Molweni ephondweni.

Somlomo, sidibana apha eNtabankulu ekuqaleni kwenyanga yeThupha, inyanga yamanina. Lena yinyanga esikhumbula ngayo imigushuzo eyenziwa ngamanina eli lizwe ngo 1956, eyabangela angcangcazele urhulumente wobandlululo. Imbali yomzabalazo wenkululenko ayiphelelanga ingenayo indima eyadlalwa ngamanina aseMzantsi Afrika. Malibongwee!!!

Women played a defining role in dismantling the apartheid regime and continue to play leading roles in building the democratic South Africa we live in today. A classic example of what I am talking about is the daughter of the Eastern Cape, Justice Mandisa Maya from Tsolo. She has been appointed by President Cyril Ramaphosa as the first-ever female Chief Justice of South Africa. History has been made, **Eastern Cape's time to thrive is now.**

This is a milestone we must be proud of as the people of the Eastern Cape. It serves as an inspiration for young women and girls that your circumstances and background do not limit or define what you can achieve in life.

Masiwaxhase amanina mihla yonke afezikise iminqweno yawo ebomini. Kanjalo, silwe nokuhlukunyezwa kwawo kumakhaya wethu, ekuhlaleni nase misebenzini.

While we commemorate Women's Month, let us remember the families that were affected by recent floods that claimed 10 lives, particularly in Kariega and Buffalo City Metro. We are now at the stage of planning to rebuild infrastructure so that things can return to normal in the affected areas. We are also strengthening our disaster response planning in both provincial and local government, giving greater attention to sustainable development and environmental protection to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Honourable Members, as we open this Seventh Legislature, we also remember the people of the Eastern Cape who departed in the recent past. People such as Mr Lungelo Dwaba, Mr Gideon Vakala, Mr Mxolisi Koyo, Ms Kayise Tom, Mr Litho Suka, Mr Khumshile Manditha as well as other citizens of our province, who left us at a time when we need people of their calibre the most. May their souls continue to rest in peace.

Honourable Speaker, three months ago the people of the Eastern Cape participated in the seventh general election to decide the future of our province. **Siza kulala siguqile eburhulumenteni, sisebenze ngokuzinikela ukuze siphumeze iminqweno yabantu beli phondo.**

I invite all the political parties represented in this Legislature to work together with us to serve the people of the Eastern Cape better during this term. Equally, we are making a commitment to work with all the Ministers in the Government of National Unity (GNU), to expedite development in the Eastern Cape for the benefit of our people.

Acknowledging the Gains of the 6th Provincial Administration

Five years ago, we invited the people of the Eastern Cape on a necessary and ambitious journey to build the Eastern Cape we want. We were inspired to pursue this journey by the son of the Eastern Cape, Tata Nelson Mandela who once said: **“There is no passion to be found playing small - in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living”.**

Translating Tata Madiba’s words into action, we said the Eastern Cape we want would be characterised by an economy that creates jobs, infrastructure development, and an improvement in the quality of life for our people.

In the past five years, our strides in infrastructure development, investment attraction, service delivery, and governance have yielded considerable impacts for our province.

A few years ago, Sipethu Hospital here in Ntabankulu, was in a dilapidated state. This government rebuilt it into a state-of-the-art facility that is providing close to 100,000 people access to quality healthcare services.

Out of the 100 new schools we built in the past five years, 20 schools are here in Alfred Nzo District. They accommodate more than 8300 learners in classrooms that have modern-day amenities such as computer rooms, science centres, libraries, and safe ablution facilities.

As I am standing here, I again remember the profound words of President Nelson Mandela when he said, **“A winner is a dreamer who never gives up”**.

Ngubani owayesazi ukuba eLambasi Village eLusikisiki kungakhiwa iMsikaba Bridge ekumgagatho wehlabathi? Ngubani owayesazi ukuba eJama Village eMbizana kungakhiwa iMtentu Bridge ekwindawo yesithathu ngobude eMzantsi Africa?

Kamnandi niyazazi ezi zinto ndizibalayo, zenzeka phambi kwamehlo wenu.

All these progressive developments teach us to believe in the dream of building the Eastern Cape we want. Brick by brick we are building a modern Eastern Cape Province. As we march forward in another five years of leading government, we declare under the sunny skies of Pondoland that the **Journey of Building the Eastern Cape we want is gaining momentum.**

We once again invite the people of our province, and all stakeholders to continue working together with us to build the Eastern Cape of our dreams. Towards the end of last year, we convened a Provincial Development Convention to build trust, accountability, and collaboration among stakeholders. The objective was to develop a shared vision around the implementation of the Provincial Development Plan.

Here is what I expect from our stakeholders in the next five years. I expect the business community to partner with us to create jobs, develop local industries, and contribute to community development. I expect traditional leaders, civil society, and labour organisations, to play crucial roles in fostering social cohesion and advocating for the rights and welfare of our communities. I expect the citizens of the Eastern Cape, particularly young people, to embrace the opportunities that are presented to them because the work we are doing is meant to free them from poverty, unemployment and inequality.

In return, you can expect a government that **works better for and with you**. You can expect a government that **delivers impactful services** and that is **highly visible in our communities**. Lastly, you can expect a government that has **discipline in getting things done**. I have directed MECs and senior government officials to spend most of their time in our communities resolving the challenges of our people. **Nam ubuqu ndiza kubaphakathi kwabantu.**

For us to succeed in the next five years, I want us to emulate the social life of collaborative animals, particularly honeybees. These insects live in a hive of about 50,000 bees, with each member of the hive playing a specific role for the better good of the entire colony. **Asinokogqithwa ziinyosi ngentsebenziswano bantu bakuthi.**

New Mandate

Somlomo, mandingene ngoku kumcimbi oshushu onxanelwe ngabantu base Eastern Cape, wokuba silisa njani phambili eli phondo leengqwele.

During the recent election campaign, we interacted with many people in different communities of our province. They said they want this province to have jobs, development, improved basic services and an end to crime. We have heard the people of our province. **Sizokuqinisekisa ukuba injongo zabantu beli phondo ziyafezekiseka.**

Our grand plan for accelerated Growth and Development of the Eastern Cape in the next five years remains the Provincial Development Plan, otherwise known as Vision 2030. However, today we are tabling six priorities aligned with the Medium-Term Development Plan that represent focus areas for the seventh administration.

Putting the people of the Eastern Cape to work

Our top priority is putting the people of the Eastern Cape to work. If someone were to ask me: Premier what keeps you awake at night? My answer would be unemployment. This is the number one enemy of the people of the Eastern Cape.

Yiyo loo nto sizama ukukhulisa uqoqosho lwephondo ukuze ludale amathuba emisebenzi. Okwangoku uqoqosho lwephondo lusenkene-nkene, kodwa ziza kujika izinto.

Our economy has been hugely affected by COVID-19, current geopolitical dynamics, and load-shedding. We continue to see disrupted demand and supply, leading to negative growth in construction, manufacturing and mining.

In response, we went into a full-blown campaign of investment mobilization which attracted **R200 billion** worth of investments into the Eastern Cape economy. We are implementing these investments across the province, and they are creating jobs. I was at the East London IDZ recently to launch the construction phase for two investors in the energy sector creating over 1000 jobs.

Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises are also our partners for job creation. We continue to affirm SMMEs in the Eastern Cape to create jobs, by providing financial support and aggressively using the procurement muscle of the government. Agricultural commodities such as grain, vegetables, dairy products, citrus, meat, and meat products will be procured extensively from Eastern Cape-based farmers through off-take agreements. Strides to realise this transformative policy directive are underway.

SMMEs owned by people with disabilities have unique challenges that require special attention for us to achieve an inclusive economy. We are establishing an Eastern Cape Disability Fund to support SMMEs owned by people with disabilities.

Somlomo, imbi kakhulu lento yokubona iimoto zikarhulumente ezimoshakeleyo zingalungiswa ixesha elide. Ndithetha ngee-ambulance, nezinye iimoto.

We will now use the maintenance of the government fleet to affirm SMMEs in the auto sector aftermarket to create jobs and to improve the turnaround times of fixing government vehicles.

We have already started to embark on an intensive programme to capacitate SMMEs with the right working tools, equipment, diagnostics tools, panel beating skills, and compliance with health and safety interventions.

In an era where the Eastern Cape is a major construction site, we continue to prioritize Eastern Cape-based SMMEs for construction work because they create jobs for local people.

We have observed with concern what is happening in the retail space within the township and rural economies. We are developing a township and rural economic strategy that will help us address challenges in that space and empower local entrepreneurs. We continue to implement the small-town revitalisation programme as a means to attract investors to create jobs in our townships and rural communities.

Kulo nyaka siphuma kuwo besifake imali eyi R245 million sincipisa ooMasipala baphucule iiDolophu ezincinci. Siyasebenza e-Chintsa, Ngqamakhwe, Mqanduli, Dutywa, Jourbetina, Ngcobo nase Komani. Apha eNtabankulu silungisa iizitrato sinika le Dolophu inkangeleko entle. Ngenxa yaloo nto, abatyalali mali bakha iivenkile, abantu balapha bayaphangela.

The challenge of unemployment requires us to also create jobs through labour-intensive programmes. Our people will gain meaningful jobs and skills through repurposed public employment programmes such as EPWP, the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative, and the Labour Activation Programme. **Sizakuzilungisa ezinkqubo zinike abantu imisebenzi engcono, zitsale nabantu abatsha.**

The services sector has potential for growth in our province because we have the ICT infrastructure and skilled youth for it. I was in Gqeberha in March to open a call centre that created 500 jobs for young people. We are engaging the private sector to establish more call centres in our province to create jobs for the youth.

Building our industries for an inclusive economy

Honourable Members, our second priority is building industries for an inclusive economy. Our vision is one where economic development is not just a privilege for a few, but a right for all, particularly for women, youth, and people with disabilities.

To achieve this vision, we are pursuing five growth frontiers that are critical for economic growth and job creation which are manufacturing, agriculture, ocean economy, tourism, and digital economy.

To realize and sustain these growth frontiers, we are forming strategic and intentional partnerships with other provinces because we are part of one South Africa. I will be meeting with the Premiers of the Northern Cape, Western Cape, Gauteng, and KwaZulu Natal to collaborate on agriculture, ocean economy, renewable energy, tourism and other economic enablers.

Let me now deal with what our people can expect on these growth frontiers. Our manufacturing sector is anchored by the **Automotive Sector**. All of us are aware of the unfortunate plans by Mercedes Benz to scale down operations. This has a ripple effect on component suppliers in our province. Our approach henceforth is to rescue, rebuild, and grow the resilience of the automotive sector.

I urge the people of the Eastern Cape not to despair. Three months ago, I was in Kariëga to welcome an investment of **R4 billion** by VW Africa Group to prepare their factory for the manufacturing of a new model in our province. We have a confirmed investment worth **R3 billion** by Stellantis, to manufacture cars in our province which will create jobs for our people. **Ayizukuphela le minyaka mihlanu singafumananga abanye abatyalali mali abenza iimoto. Siyabakhangela ngoku ndithethayo.**

The challenging times in the automotive sector require us to make decisive interventions to stimulate demand for our locally produced vehicles. We will procure the government fleet from OEMs based in the Eastern Cape and South Africa, to protect the jobs of our people.

As the world transitions to the production of electric vehicles, our agency, AIDC-EC has installed and commissioned Electric Vehicle charging stations, in Libode and East London, with more to be installed in other locations before the end of March next year.

The second growth frontier is **Agriculture**. Let me inform this house that the national government has approved the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP) to ignite economic growth, inclusivity, and employment in the agricultural sector. Our approach in the Eastern Cape is premised on district agriculture value chain development to ensure that black farmers are not confined to subsistence or primary producer level, but rather drive the development of food products for domestic and international markets.

Zonke izithili zeli phondo zidlala indima enkulu kuphuhliso lwezolimo, ingakumbi kwimveliso efana nombona, inyama, uboya, intlanzi, iziqhamo, ubisi, imifuno, kunye nentsangu.

In partnership with Development Finance Institutions and the private sector, we are upscaling programmes in all these district value chain corridors to revolutionise agriculture in the Eastern Cape.

For instance, we are enhancing our export market capabilities by upscaling existing infrastructure such as abattoirs, feedlots, and grain storage facilities. Nyandeni Municipality is already building an Animal Feed Processing Plant that will improve the quality of livestock and enable the creation of 2000 jobs by local farmers in OR Tambo District.

I must hasten to say that our provincial irrigation schemes such as **Qamata, Ncorha, Bilatye, Zanyokhwe, Tyhefu, Kieskamma, Bengu, Shiloh and Lambasi** are not working optimally because of community conflicts, ageing infrastructure and lack of investment. We have started with the rehabilitation of the bulk components of the irrigation schemes with an investment of **R375 million** from the Department of Water and Sanitation. **Le minyaka mihlanu iza kuphela zisebenza zonke ezi irrigation schemes zidale amathuba emisebenzi ezilalini, ziphelise nendlala.**

Our province has been free of Foot and Mouth Disease since the last outbreak in the country in 2019. However, in April this year, we had our first case of Foot and Mouth Disease. Unfortunately, the outbreak led to the suspension of live animal and milk exports costing farmers millions of rands. We vaccinated 80,000 cows in 109 farms with 27 farms returning positive results. We are making biosecurity a priority, by strengthening our disease control measures in Kouga and Koukamma to contain the spread of the disease.

Honourable Members, I cannot overemphasize the need to use available land at our disposal effectively to scale up agricultural production. We are consolidating all the necessary support to ensure that the 100 farms that we acquired through the Pro-Active Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) are commercialised through the aggregation of suitable commodities including grain, beef, wool, and vegetables.

As I have mentioned before and further validated by the Census of 2022, the Eastern Cape is the province with the highest proportion of livestock in South Africa. The quality of our animals and animal products depends on the health of our livestock. That is why we are working hard to establish a Vet School at the University of Fort Hare during this term. The University has already established a Research Chair in Dairy Science and Technology demonstrating its commitment to research, development, and innovation.

Honourable Speaker, people thought I was losing my mind in 2019 when I said the Eastern Cape was going to venture into the **cannabis and hemp sector**.

The good news is that in April we announced an investor in Gqeberha that is going to produce medicinal products from hemp and cannabis. The investor already has three distinct off-take agreements with the USA, Canada, and Germany for medicinal products. Through its out-grower program, the investor will contract the medicinal hemp flower to hundreds of hemp cultivation permit

holders in the Eastern Cape. The targeted hectares to be cultivated in the next five years is 10,000, with the potential to create 20,000 jobs at the primary production level. It is these kinds of developments that make us say the **Eastern Cape's time to thrive is now.**

We aim to unlock more jobs in the hemp and cannabis sector through value chains in economic sectors such as automotive, construction, clothing & textiles, and food & beverages. We are skilling local farmers in hemp and cannabis production in our province. We are establishing a new campus of Ingwe TVET College in Ntabankulu that will focus on agriculture including cannabis production and processing, meat production, abattoir and dairy. Phase 1 of this project to the value of **R94 million** has already commenced.

Honourable Members, Forestry is another potential growth sector for our province that could create jobs for our people. We are working with the national government to develop 100,000 hectares of land to ensure the beneficiation of raw timber within the province to create jobs and uplift our communities. The Forestry industry is on board and has pledged to invest in the establishment of plantations in areas such as Amathole, Alfred Nzo and OR Tambo District Municipalities.

The third growth frontier in which the people of the Eastern Cape will see a lot of activities is the **Ocean Economy.** The Eastern Cape moved ahead and developed a provincial master plan for the ocean economy sector.

We have a strategy in place and a bid book with tangible projects with the potential to create massive jobs for our people in areas of aquaculture, fisheries, oil and gas industry, to mention a few. We are augmenting our provincial capacity to drive the implementation of the ocean economy master plan to grow this important sector.

Success in the subsectors of the ocean economy such as bunkering services requires a review of some customs and tax regulations. We are engaging with SARS and the National Treasury to address the regulatory and policy impediments to the attraction of investments into the maritime sector in our province.

The fourth growth frontier we will invest heavily in is the **Tourism Sector**. In 2023, we recorded 318,000 international trips to our province with a contribution of **R4.7 billion** to our economy. In the same period, 6.9 million domestic trips were undertaken to our province, 1 million more than in 2022, contributing **R6.5 billion** to our provincial economy. We are going to vastly improve this revenue generation by addressing binding constraints such as flight offerings and infrastructure.

For instance, we are developing an Eastern Cape Airlift Strategy to ensure all our airports enable the smooth movement of people and goods in and out of our province. We are building roads to make it easy for tourists to access our province. As part of building the N2 Wild Coast Highway, we are going to invest **R460 million** to upgrade the road from Mthontsasa to Mkhambathi Nature Reserve.

That road will lead to the development of more tourism-related infrastructure investments such as the **R300 million** 5-star Boutique Hotel at Mkhambathi Nature Reserve that will be opened next month. That hotel has created 100 permanent jobs for local people.

Ndiyafuna ukubulela amaMpondo ngentsebenziswano kuphuhliso. Xeshikweni kukhangelwa umhlaba wokubuyekeza lona uthathwe ngu N2 Highway, amaMpondo avuma nomhlaba ophaya ku 15 000 hectares ukuba mawube phantsi kolondolozo lwendalo. Esi senzo sibonisa phandle ukuba abantu base Eastern Cape, bebambisene norhulumente bayakwazi ukukhusela indalo, nophuhliso luqhubeleke ngexesha elinye.

Tourism enthusiasts should be on the lookout for two exciting developments in our tourism offerings which are the !Gariep Dam initiative in collaboration with Northern Cape and Free State; as well as Cruise Tourism with coastal provinces. As a linkage to tourism, we are also focusing sharply on Cultural Heritage, Creative Industries and Sports Tourism to create jobs. Sport is one of the biggest draw cards for tourists. Our Municipalities must maintain sports infrastructure to give our province a better chance of hosting major sporting events.

Honourable Speaker, the fifth frontier we are pursuing is the **Digital Economy**. Already 1200 schools are connected to broadband and benefit immensely from it. Furthermore, we will continue to work with the National Department of Communication and Digital Technologies to roll out internet connectivity. In the next five years, we are taking things a step further by exploring ways of connecting our province to the 2Africa Undersea cable that is laid under the ocean on our coastline.

The benefits of connecting to the 2Africa Undersea cable will be high-speed internet connectivity with affordable access for communities and businesses. We are developing a Digital Economy Strategy that will also identify key projects to grow the ICT sector. The construction of the data centre in the EL IDZ has been completed and is ready to host investors in the ICT sector to create jobs in our province.

Honourable Speaker, our provincial economy is not at the level of **industrialisation** that we want. The 100 enterprises in the East London IDZ and Coega have made a significant impact on the provincial GDP and its export basket. We will utilise these SEZs to stimulate further economic growth and job creation in our province in key sectors such as ICT, Renewable Energy, General Manufacturing, and agro-processing.

While we continue to lay the bulk infrastructure at the site of the Wild Coast SEZ, we are mobilising resources to build top structures for the full development of the Wild Coast SEZ. This initiative is interlinked with the Eastern Seaboard Development whose anchor projects include the N2 Wild Coast Highway, Mzimvubu Dam, Port St Johns Harbour development and Renewable Energy initiatives. These projects will be fully realised to transform the economic landscape of the eastern side of our province. **Ayiyonto eza kwenzeka kudala lena ndiyithethayo kuba sesiqhuba.**

We are committing to manufacture goods locally. To achieve this, we are activating the full potential of all industrial parks such as Dimbaza, Fort Jackson, Vulindlela and Butterworth. We have about 2200 people currently employed in our industrial parks. This number will double because we are fixing infrastructure and mobilising investors to locate in our industrial parks. As I am speaking with you, six companies are in the process of signing lease agreements to locate in Dimbaza. Five more investors are negotiating with us to locate in the Butterworth Industrial Park. **Imisebenzi iyeza, niza kuthi benditshilo.**

Honourable Speaker, for us to grow the Eastern Cape economy to create jobs, we are scaling up the development of **enabling infrastructure** in all the districts of our province. This enhances the competitiveness of our province to attract investors.

Bantu base Eastern Cape, sityhile kwelinye iphepha ekwakheni iindlela zeli phondo. Senza into engazange yabonwa yobuxhaka-xhaka beendlela, ezinye zikhwele phezu kwezinye. Baza kulahleka abantu abagqibela kudala ukuza ephondweni.

In Alfred Nzo and OR Tambo Districts alone, we are implementing projects worth **R22 billion** which include the two mega bridges of Mtentu and Msikaba as well as seven road packages.

Sakha iindlela zetar ezilalini thina, into engazanga yenziwa ngoorhulumente bangaphambili. Apha ndithetha ngendlela esuka eNdwalane eya eNtafufu, indlela esuka eNtafufu eya eBambisana, indlela esuka eMbambisana eya eLingeni, indlela esuka eLingeni eya eMsikaba, indlela esuka eMsikaba eya eMtentu, indlela esuka eMtentu eya eKhulumbe kwakunye nendlela esuka eKulumbe eya eMtamvuna. Yilento sithi ngu N2 Wild Coast Highway ke leyo eyenza ibemfutshane indlela esuka eMonti eya KwaZulu Natal.

Kwalapha e Alfred Nzo senza indlela esuka eMatatiele eya eCedarville nge R1.2 billion, nendlela esuka eMount Frere eya eNgcweleni River nge R1.2 billion.

We are also building road networks in other parts of the province connecting our people to socio-economic centres and enabling the smooth movement of goods. In Buffalo City Metro we are building roads worth **R2.3 billion** which include the completed construction of the Belstone-Briedbach Interchange.

In Amathole District we are building roads worth **R4.3 billion** which include the Ndabakazi interchange. In Sarah Bartman District we are building roads worth **R2.3 billion** which include phase 1 and phase 2 of Kirkwood to Addo Road. In Chris Hani District we are building roads worth **R2.7 billion** which include the Black Kei River to Komani Road.

In Joe Gqabi District we are building roads worth **R2.7 billion** which include the R56 to Nqanqarhu Road. Last but not least, in Nelson Mandela Metro we are building roads worth **R1.4 billion** which include the R335 Motherwell to Addo Phase 1 Road. Eastern Cape is a construction site, no one can dispute that fact.

More than 6000 people are currently employed in road construction projects underway in our province, putting food on the table for their families. More than 700 SMMEs are benefiting from contract packages ensuring their financial sustainability and growth.

The good news I am bringing the people of our province today is that we are not yet done building roads. In the next five years, we are going to build, strengthen and improve the Eastern Cape Road network with an investment of **R50 billion** by SANRAL. We will again prioritize roads that lead to healthcare facilities, towns, tourism sites, and farms. Indeed, the **Journey of Building the Eastern Cape we want is gaining momentum.**

Sizakugqiba ukuzakha engaphelanga lonyaka zolishumi elinesithoba iibhulorho esizakha kwilali zeli phondo, phantsi kwenkqubo ye Welisizwe. Sithetha nje iNtlanga ne Sunrise ezise Port St Johns zigqityiwe. I-Dambeni Bridge kwa ward 8, i-Mfundisweni Bridge kwa ward 19 apha eNtabankulu zizakugqitywa xa kuphela le nyanga yeThupha. Ezinye ezizakugqitywa kwamsinya ziquka iNtsitsinyane apha eNtabankulu, iWelakabini eMzimvubu, neCwaka eWinnie Madikizela Municipality. Ezi bhulorho zizakwenza kubelula ukuwela imilambo kubantu basezilalini.

Kumcimbi webhulorho yaseDikidikini, iinjinelizethu zifumanise ukuba le ibhulorho ifuna ubuxhaka-xhaka obungaphezulu kobu beWelisizwe. Kungoko ke sixoza mphini wumbi.

Currently, the municipality has set aside some funds for this bridge, and we also received a commitment for funding from the DBSA. **Lo gama silinde ulwakhiwo lwebhulorho, ndicele isikhephe kwiSouth African Navy ukuze abantu bawele ngaso okwangoku sisacwangcisa ulwakhiwo lwebhulorho. Siza kufika kungekudala.**

We acknowledge the concerns that have been raised by the people of the province about the state of our rural roads. **limoto zabantu, ooTishala, amaNesi, abaqhubi beeTaxi nabeeAmbulance kunye noosomashishini ziyaphela ziindlela zasezilalini.** We are collaborating with municipalities to build and strengthen in-house road maintenance capacity to regularly maintain our rural roads.

Another matter that our people have been raising with us is the poor maintenance of public infrastructure. We are scaling up the use of artisans to maintain public infrastructure and tightening security to protect our schools, health facilities, and other government buildings from vandalism.

Honourable Members, we are heightening building sustainable **Energy Infrastructure** in our province because, without a reliable supply of electricity, there will be no future economic growth in this province. Eskom has done well to keep the lights on for more than 4 months now. We are lobbying Eskom for the development of the Eastern Cape electricity transmission grid. This will unlock 547 megawatts of additional electricity generation projects in our province with an investment value of **R13,7 billion**, and the creation of over 2000 jobs.

Eskom is busy in several areas in our province rolling out projects to strengthen electricity infrastructure. This will enable additional energy access for municipalities and communities in deep rural areas.

There is no doubt that the future of the energy sector is clean energy. We are in the thick of things to become a major player in its development, supply, and distribution. We are embarking on establishing a viable and globally competitive green hydrogen sector.

The reason we are pursuing this sector is that we will generate revenue from exporting green hydrogen and it will make Eastern Cape-based companies globally competitive because international markets want products that will reduce their carbon footprint.

That is why we are active partners in the Three Capes Alliance with the Northern, and Western Cape provinces to establish an integrated regional Green Hydrogen sector. We are unrelenting in bringing to a logical conclusion the establishment of the manganese export terminal, the LNG import terminal and the establishment of a nuclear power station. We have an undertaking that Transnet is in the final stages of ensuring that the **R19.2 billion** Ngqura Manganese Export Terminal will be built in 2025. All these projects are necessary for energy security for households and businesses in the Eastern Cape.

We are engaging the National Government, to develop the SouthCor rail corridor between Gqeberha and Gauteng to facilitate the movement of goods such as cars and manganese for the export market. This is a **R8.4 billion** capital investment that has the potential to generate 9500 indirect jobs and 2500 direct jobs for the people of the Eastern Cape. **Iza kwenzeka le project nokuba kumnyama entla. Eastern Cape's time to thrive is now.**

The development of **Water Infrastructure** is important for households and industries in our province. The construction of the Ntabelanga Dam is underway with advance works and the construction of access roads. The project will create over 6000

full-time equivalent jobs each year during construction. **Okubaluleke nangakumbi lakugqitywa eli Dama kuzakuxhamla abantu belali zalapha, ezase OR Tambo nezaseJoe Gqabi. Siza kusebenza noMphathiswa wezaManzi uMama uPemmy Majodina siyokuyibeka emgceni le project ngo 2029.**

The people of the Eastern Cape must also look forward to the implementation of major water infrastructure projects on Zalu Dam in Lusikisiki, Coerney Dam in Nelson Mandela Metro, Foxwood Dam in Amathole, and Raising of Gcuwa Weir. These projects are in the planning stages and are worth **R5.4 billion** to ensure water security and supply for our communities.

Working with our municipalities, we are empowering communities by accelerating water reticulation.

Senza umsebenzi wokuba amanzi aphume ezimpompeni kwilali zeli phondo. To achieve this, we are implementing 16 regional bulk infrastructure projects in all our districts. **Umzekelo, apha e-Alfred Nzo senza i-Greater Mbizana Bulk Water Scheme Phase 2, ezakunika abantu abangaphezulu kwe 200 000 amanzi.**

In addition, we have 14 other bulk water supply and sanitation projects that are in the planning stages. These include amongst others, Ntabankulu Dam, Zachtevlei Dam (Joe Gqabi), Sundwana Dam (Amathole), Caca Dam (Chris Hani), Coffee Bay Regional Bulk Supply (OR Tambo) and Mayfield Wastewater Treatment Works (Sarah Baartman).

Somlomo, uqoqosho esilwakhayo luza kuxhanyulwa ngabantu abanezakhono. Yiyo loo nto sixhobisa abantu beli phondo, ingakumbi ulutsha ngezakhono bazokwazi ukuqesheka, nokuziphangelela.

Working with our SETAs and national government departments we are rolling out a skills revolution in the Eastern Cape. Over 20 000 young people will be empowered with skills of the future in ICT, agriculture and engineering in the next five years. For instance, this month, working with our private partner we are launching the Integrated Sustainable Food Security Intervention and Development Programme, targeting 2050 learners drawn from all our districts and metros. The learners will be skilled in crop production and high-value vegetables, as well as applied entrepreneurship and business skills to enable commercialisation. Most of our young people will be trained in trade skills such as electricians, plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers, painters, welders, fitters, and turners. Our objective is to ensure that jobs in all these fields benefit the young people of the Eastern Cape first.

The youth of our province is entrepreneurial. We are scaling up business development support to young entrepreneurs. In June, we awarded funding to 75 youth-owned businesses from the Isiqalo Youth Fund.

USomikazi Zulu wase MaXesibeni, uAphumelele Ndukwana waseMbizana, kwakunye no-Siyabonga Mqina wakwaBhaca, ngabanye babantu abatsha abaxhaswe yinkqubo iSiqalo Youth Fund ukuze bakhulise amashishini abo. More Youth-owned businesses will benefit in the next five years.

We are using our relations with countries that are strong in technical skills like Germany, China, and Japan, to deploy our young people to acquire the latest technical capabilities abroad. As I am speaking to you, there are 25 students and a Lecturer from Ingwe TVET College who are on an educational trip to China to learn about renewable energy, intelligent manufacturing, e-commerce, and entrepreneurship. We are going to identify the best-performing learners from our high schools and channel them to fields of study sponsored by countries that have bilateral relations with South Africa.

Tackling High Cost of Living

Our third priority is tackling the high cost of living because we were a caring government in 1994 and we remain a caring government in 2024. Many people in our province are struggling to make ends meet. We are continuing with the implementation of economic and social support measures to protect households from the impact of increasing living expenses. These measures include ensuring that all vulnerable people such as the elderly, children, and people with disabilities who qualify to receive social grants are assisted to receive their grants.

Thina bantu bakhule phantsi korhulumente wobandlululo siyayazi ukuba oomakhulu bethu babeyifumana kanye i-grant ngekota. However, this caring government invests **R2.9 billion** every month paying social grants to 2.9 million beneficiaries in the Eastern Cape, as a means to protect our people against poverty. That is **R34.8 billion** per year. By building industries in our province, we want to produce food and clothes in the Eastern Cape to keep this **R34.8 billion** circulating inside our province to grow our economy and create jobs for our people.

Sifuna wonke umntu ekufanele afumane isibonelele se-grant asifumane. We are ensuring that people have the proper documents that are required to apply for social grants. Four months ago, we received 16 new Mobile Home Affairs Trucks from former Home Affairs Minister, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi. **Anizukukhwela niye eDolophini xa nifuna uHome Affairs, ezi nkonzo ziza kunizela ezilalini bantu bakuthi.**

Honourable Members, as we all know, since the era of apartheid we have been a labour-sending province. As a result, many people from this province spent many years working in the mines and did not access social wage benefits. Our programme to unlock unclaimed and unpaid social protection benefits due to ex-mine workers, their widows and surviving beneficiaries has been successful in the past five years and will continue in this term.

The Occupation Diseases Compensation Benefit paid **R366 million** to 11 649 beneficiaries between 2019 and 2024. Tshiamiso Trust paid **R423 million** to 4476 beneficiaries between 2021 and 2024. Mine Workers Provident Fund paid **R13.8 million** to 186 beneficiaries, whilst the UIF paid another **R13.8 million** to 4664 beneficiaries. **Eli phulo yimiphumela yentsebenziswano phakathi kukarhulumente nabantu kusionjululwa iingxaki zabo.**

Our state of readiness for the implementation of the NHI has gathered momentum. When fully implemented, the NHI will ensure affordable access to healthcare services for our people. Access to houses has improved over the years. For instance, in the past five years, we built 32 854 houses in the province. Of that number, 3993 houses were built for the people of Alfred Nzo. People living in villages such as Lubala, Silindini, Bomvini and Sidakeni benefited.

However, the demand for houses continues to rise in our province because many people cannot afford to build or buy homes. We are continuing to build subsidised houses and assisting low-income families to purchase homes. **Abantu abanezindlu zodaka ezidilikayo, nabantu abaphila nenkubazeko bazakuxhamla, sikhusele isidima sabo.** I call on Mayors of Municipalities to deal decisively with people who illegally occupy RDP houses in the Eastern Cape and allocate those RDP houses to the rightful beneficiaries.

This government widened access to basic and higher education in South Africa. That is why matric results improved, reaching 81.4% for the first time since 1994 and the number of graduates increasing every year. In 2024 alone, the NSFAS has paid **R2.9 billion** benefiting 54 000 university students in the Eastern Cape. In the same period, NSFAS has also paid **R506 million** benefiting 24 000 TVET College students in our province. We are continuing to provide free and subsidized education to reduce the financial burden of education on families. Programmes such as scholar transport and school nutrition are being improved to shield families from high food and transport costs.

No one should go to bed hungry in our province because we have arable land and the largest population of livestock in South Africa. We are ramping up the implementation of food security programmes to protect families against poverty and ensure every household maintains a decent standard of living.

Investing in our people

Honourable Members, our fourth priority is investing in our people. **Siqwalasela ngakumbi umcimbi wezemfundo kuba sisiseko sokunika ulutsha ubomi obungcono.** Our liberation struggle hero, Tata Oliver Tambo once said: **“Education is not a privilege, it is the birthright of every individual.”**

The implementation of the revised Eastern Cape Education Transformation Plan is continuing uninterrupted. We are investing in school infrastructure, competent school leadership, improved teacher quality, and provision of learning materials in disadvantaged areas. In the past five years, several schools had to be closed due to the migration of learners to other high-performing schools and urban centres. We are focusing on building viable schools, including boarding schools, equipping them with effective leadership and adequate resources to give our children quality education.

We are creating universal access to early childhood development through the implementation of the Thrive by Five Index. By this we mean, our children must be healthy, their growth must not be stunted, their IQ should be ready to acquire knowledge and they should be grounded in their mother tongue language. This approach will help us to prevent dropouts from primary to high school. We are paying special attention to support learners with disabilities. **Nabo ngabethu asibashiya ngasemva.**

In the foundational classes, we are promoting a diversified curriculum with solid foundations in STEMA, ensuring that our children can learn, read, write and count with comprehension. The people of the Eastern Cape should look forward to improved education outcomes in the next five years as we build on the current record of 81.4% grade 12 pass rate.

Somlomo, i-Alfred Nzo isoloko ithe gqolo ukuphumelela emagqabini kwiziphumo zebanga leshumi, iminyaka ilandelelana. Loo nto siyazingca kakhulu ngayo siliphondo.

Siyayiphucula imeko yokufunda kwabantwana bethu sisebenzisa ubuxhaka-xhaka bonxibelelwano bale mihla. Towards the end of this month, we will launch a state-of-the-art broadcasting facility at the Mandla Makhuphula Education Institute. This studio will enable us to reach all learners of this province with lessons such as maths, science, technology and other critical subjects. We will augment our capacity on digital platforms by revamping the existing studio at Cofimvaba Science Centre.

In this term, we are also expanding the virtual reality labs to other technical high schools to afford learners realistic simulations for their lessons. **Umzekelo, le nto ndiyithethayo iyenzeka e-Richard Vara Technical High School eDimbaza, apho abafundi bekwazi ukucakaca i-engine yemoto baphinde bayidibanise besebenzisa i-computer.** This is what we mean when we say **Eastern Cape's time to thrive is now.**

The stability of the education sector is pivotal to maintaining and sustaining the standard we have set in the past five years. We are continuing the same ethos of collaboration between government, labour and other education stakeholders in the next five years. I urge parents to continue playing an active role in the education of our children. **Ndiyayazi zinzima ii-homework zabantwana bethu kodwa masibancedise.**

Honourable Speaker, our **Health Plan** is premised on the noble cause of improving the health and well-being of our people. Five years ago, the average life expectancy for men in our province was 59 years, but now it is 65 years. For women, it was 67 years, but now it is 71 years.

Le nto ibonakalisa mhlophe ukuba siyaziphucula iinkonzo zempilo kweli phondo, nangona zikhona iingxaki. Ezempilo zifuna sisebenzisane olu hlobo senza ngalo kwezemfundo.

We want to have healthy communities, families, and individuals in the Eastern Cape. To achieve this, we are addressing the burden of disease in our communities with a particular focus on maternal and child health, tuberculosis (TB), HIV and AIDS, non-communicable diseases, trauma and violence.

We are also implementing strategic reforms across our healthcare system. These include implementing the National Health Insurance (NHI). We have 230 NHI health facilities in the Eastern Cape fully accredited by the Office of Health Standards Compliance and 9 facilities are here in Alfred Nzo. We have seen some exceptional levels of services in these health facilities. For instance, Gengqe Clinic in Mqanduli operates on a paperless system. Flagstaff Community Health Centre has 3 full-time doctors attending to patients daily.

Bantu bakuthi ii-Community Health Centres mazingajongelwa phantsi, zenza umsebenzi wezempilo nazo, kwaye zinikezela ngeenkondo iiyure ezingamashumi amabini anesine (24 hours).

We are enhancing our electronic health records and data management systems to prevent incidents that lead to medico-legal claims. We are investing in the leadership of our healthcare facilities so they can manage efficiently and effectively. In the past five years, we completed major health infrastructure projects in our province making them ideal for the provision of quality healthcare services to our people. **Nantsi i-Sipethu niyayibona igqityiwe, iMeje Community Health Centre e-Mbongweni Village nayo igqityiwe.**

Ngoku sakha phakathi ezilalini izibhedlele ezithathu, i-Bambisana e-Lusikisiki nge-R616 million, i-Zithulele eMqanduli nge-R1 billion, kwakunye neMadwaleni eXhora nge-R560 million. Ezi zibhedlele ziza kusinika iibhedi ezingamakhulu amahlanu (500 beds). lindlela eziya kula maziko empilo ziyalungiswa.

Equally, we are also revamping infrastructure in other healthcare facilities across the Eastern Cape, such as Matubeni Clinic, SS Gida Hospital, Taylor Bequest Hospital, Nessie Knight Hospital and All Saints Hospital.

We continue to capacitate our health facilities with personnel and EMS vehicles to deliver better services. In the past 4 months, we delivered over 100 Emergency Vehicles and Mobile Clinics to our healthcare facilities to ensure timely medical intervention to save the lives of our people.

Defending democracy and advancing freedom

Honourable Speaker, our fifth priority is defending democracy and advancing freedom. As our democratic government turns 30 years old, one of the areas we will improve is service delivery. We should not have things like potholes on our roads. Refuse should be collected regularly. The billing systems should be credible. Bylaws should be adhered to by all. We are prioritising investments in social infrastructure such as roads, electricity, clean water, and sanitation to improve the quality of life in our communities. We are supporting municipalities to improve financial management capabilities and to properly implement infrastructure projects.

The infrastructure in a number of our municipalities is under pressure because of the rural-urban migration of our people. In partnership with the municipalities, we are rehabilitating and upgrading municipal infrastructure to meet the high demand for services and ensure resilience to climate change.

Somlomo, sisebenzisene kakuhle kakhulu neeKumkani zephondo lethu kwakunye neNdlu yeeNkosi yePhondo kuleminyaka mihlanu idlulileyo. Sizakuqinisa intsebenziswano neeNkumkani kunye neeNkosi ukuze kubelula ukuphuhlisa iilali zethu.

Umcimbi womhlaba masiwuphatheni ngononophelo bantwana begazi ukuze abatyali mali babenomdla wokuza kweli phondo lethu. Masisebenzisane nabazali kumcimbi wolwaluko bayaphela abantwana bethu. Siphulukene nabakhwetha abalishumi elinesine apha kuJune. Ayinje into xa izakulunga. Ukusuka ngoku ukuya ku November, siza kuzijula inyama nofele ukulungiselela ulwaluko ukuze sinqande ukubhubha kwabakhwetha.

Honourable Speaker, good governance remains our focus area in the next five years because it is the foundation of building a capable developmental state. We are continuing to capacitate the state with qualified and talented personnel to improve the performance of the government. In addition, we will continue to work with our universities and other knowledge institutions to enhance knowledge-based planning, evidence-based decision making and execution.

We are building on the successes of the previous administration on good governance by carrying forward the achievement of clean audits by 8 departments, 7 public entities and 4 Municipalities. This builds public confidence and trust in government.

I urge the Members of this Legislature to be firm on their oversight responsibilities so that clean governance becomes a norm in the Eastern Cape.

In the past five years, we managed to reduce incidents of corruption. Through our control measures, we significantly reduced the number of government officials doing business with the state. We are continuing to clean our public administration of the cancer of corruption that is eating the soul of our society.

Crime in urban areas, townships and rural communities is a challenge we will resolve by working with our people. First of all, we must understand that criminals have no respect for the rights of other people and the Rule of law. Therefore, we must stop treating criminals like innocent people. We are capacitating community police forums and strengthening crime intelligence capabilities to combat crime.

We have observed with concern a surge in organised crime in our province such as cash-in-transit heists. The police are making inroads in the cash-in-transit robberies, by making arrests, confiscating firearms and explosives from suspects. Just on Monday this week, police took down five cash-in-transit robbers and arrested others after a robbery on the N6 in Macleantown.

Bazokuyazi ukuba i-Eastern Cape ayondawo yokwenza imikhuba yokuphaka inkunzi iimoto zemali. Siyawabulela amaPolisa ngaloo msebenzi.

Going forward, we are going to focus on stabilising the top 30 high-crime police stations in the province, through the deployment of specialised units in the form of a Tactical Response Team, National Intervention Unit and Public Order Policing. We will also strengthen crime prevention initiatives through intelligence-driven operations.

Gender-based violence continues to affect the women of our province. We are working with Civil Society Organizations, Traditional Leaders, Religious leaders, Business sector, including the Higher Education Sector to enhance the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.

As citizens of the Eastern Cape, we must all agree that somehow as a society we have lost our way. Social ills, the erosion of the moral fabric of society and mistrust between social partners are a matter of national concern. In our Development Convention last year, we committed ourselves to work towards addressing these challenges. We will now convene a Provincial Dialogue of all stakeholders in the Eastern Cape to discuss these socio-economic challenges and to prepare ourselves for the National Dialogue which has been called by President Cyril Ramaphosa during the Official Opening of the National Parliament.

One of the ways to fix the moral fibre of our society is through sport to promote social cohesion. **Siliphondo leEastern Cape simelwe kwimidlalo ye Olympics eqhubayo eFrance ngabadlali abaquka uNdyabo Lamani, uJaco Smit, uAndrew Birkett kwakunye noJamie Riddle. Sibanqwenelela impumelelo kula midlalo.**

Having said that, we are proposing three actions we must collectively undertake in the next five years to fix our moral psyche. The first one is **Values Reorientation** to build a sense of responsibility and moral courage. **Izinto zokuvala iindlela ngemililo masiziyekeni, zisibuyisela emva. Kukho abagumba iindlela bebeka ubomi babaqhubi engozini. Hayini bantu bakuthi nqandanani.**

The second one is the **Promotion and Respect for the Rule of Law** to protect human dignity and human life. The third one is making the Eastern Cape the **Cleanest Province** in South Africa.

Building a better Africa and the world

Honourable Members, the last and the sixth priority for this term is building a better Africa and the world. We live in a highly polarised world which affects people-to-people relations and trade with other nations of the world. As the people of the Eastern Cape, we must continue to be unifiers of the people of South Africa, Africa, and the World. Let us remember the words of Pixley ka Isaka Seme when he called for the unity of all Africans. **UmXhosa, umZulu, umSuthu, umPedi, umVenda, umTsonga, njalo-njalo sonke masimanyane ukwakha isizwe.**

Honourable Members, part of growing the Eastern Cape economy to create jobs requires us to form formidable relations with other countries so that we can export and trade goods in international markets.

We are maintaining our existing export market by strengthening economic diplomacy. In the first quarter of 2024, Eastern Cape exports improved, registering **R10.6 billion** with Europe, **R2.6 billion** with Asia and **R246 million** with Oceania.

We are expanding our export trajectory by venturing aggressively into the African Continent because it offers low barriers to entry, it is a free custom tariff zone, and it's easily accessible through our ports and air transport. We are continuing to use our relations with the African Continental Free Trade Area and BRICS countries more effectively to grow trade with Africa and the world.

Conclusion

Somlomo, lona ngumbono esizakusa ngawo eli phondo phambili. We are committed to achieving an impact that would improve the living conditions of our people with this vision.

The journey of building the Eastern Cape we want needs all of us to work together with zeal and determination. **Siza kubila sisoma, sisebenza ngokuzimisela ukuze sibeke iphondo lethu kumhlaba obanzi wophuhliso.**

I would like to remind all of us, who are serving in government and this Seventh Eastern Cape Legislature of the profound words of Mama Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke when she said **this work is not for ourselves, we must kill the spirit of self. Ngokwenene asenzeli thina, senzela abantwana bethu nezizukulwana zethu.**

Our success in the next five years will depend on our ability to collaborate, innovate, and face challenges together. **Ndiyaphinda, masifaneni nebubu leenyosi, kuba kulo inyosi nganye inomsebenzi ekufuneka iwenze, oligalelo kwimpumelelo yebubu leenyosi lonke.**

We have the vision, the plans, and the commitment to build the Eastern Cape we want. Let us take bold and decisive action to turn this vision into reality. **Eastern Cape's time to thrive is now.**

With God and our ancestors on our side, we shall not fail.

Maz' enethole.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. At the very bottom, there is a solid light blue horizontal band, likely representing a margin or binding area. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.



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