

SOPA 2025 FRIDAY, 28 FEBRUARY DELIVERED
BY THE PREMIER OF MPUMALANGA
PROVINCE HON. MANDLA PADNEY NDLOVU

Speaker of the Mpumalanga legislature,
Honourable Masina

Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga legislature,
Honourable Masango

Judge President of the High Court of Mpumalanga,
Judge Mphahlele

Esteemed Members of the Judiciary

Hon Members of the National Assembly and
Provincial Legislature

Hon Members of the National Council of Provinces

Your Worships Executive Mayors, Speakers and all
Hon Councillors

Traditional Leaders led by Chairperson of the
Provincial House of Traditional leaders and
Khoisan, and President of CONTRALESA, **Kgoši**
Mokoena

Leadership of various religious formations

Leadership of traditional healers

Chairpersons and board members of our parastatals

Senior government officials from all spheres of government led by the Acting DG **Mr. Nyoni**

Our newly appointed Director General of Mpumalanga Province Ms Maggie Skosana

Acting Provincial Commissioner, Major general Dr Mkhwanazi and all law enforcements agencies present

The Provincial Secretary of the governing party **Cde Muzi Chirwa**

ANC veteran **Ms Norah Fakude**

Leaders of the Alliance partners

Leaders of the opposition parties

Leaders of our social partners, big and small business, the informal sector, and non-governmental-organizations

Esteemed guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Avuxeni, Sanibonani, Dumelang, Lotjhani

1. Honourable Speaker, the country bemoans the departure of life of 14 fallen heroes of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), who were deployed as part of the South African Development Community (SADC) and the United Nation Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC. They were deployed to support and restore peace and security in the Eastern DRC.
2. We are engulfed by a dark cloud, ten (10) people from Mpumalanga lost their lives in a horrific accident in Limpopo. They were gutted beyond recognition. We are still waiting for a forensic DNA analysis. We are ready to give them a decent send off. Behind every dark cloud is an ever shining sun, the storm will pass.
3. Let us all observe a moment of silence in honour and remembrance of our heroes, our soldiers who fought like an eagle that has no fear of

adversity, and our ten (10) Mpumalanga residents who perished.

4. Madam Speaker, our own son, a young most talented golfer, Shalom Lebakeng from Malelane, Nkomazi Local Municipality was invited to play in the Presidential four (4) ball at the 2025 Presidential Golf Challenge which took place at the Atlantic Beach Golf Course in Cape Town.

5. His performance was very impressive and he received some accolades from the President's Foundation. We are proud of our son and the Premier's foundation will pay for his tuition fees.

6. Honourable Speaker, members and the people of Mpumalanga, it is a privilege and a humbling experience to stand before this august House to prepare people's hearts and minds to receive feedback on what Mpumalanga Provincial

Government has accomplished in the last seven (7) months, since we took the oath of office and shared with you our vision for the future of this beautiful province, the place of the rising sun.

7. As a government of the people, today's occasion gives us an opportunity to account to the people, by reflecting our performance and progress towards building a better life for the people of this wonderful province.

8. The State of the Province Address takes place in the wake of many other important and momentous events in our calendar which include, amongst others:

- ***the ruling party's 113 years' anniversary celebration of its existence with the January 8 statement in Khayelitsha Cape Town***

- *a number of Makgotla including the government cabinet lekgotla and our own EXCO Lekgotla which took place recently.*
- *the 2025 State of the Nation Address by His Excellency President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa,*

9.In his 2025 State of the Nation Address, His Excellency, President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa reminded us of our most urgent task of **growing our economy, creating jobs, reducing poverty and improving the lives of all South Africans.**

10.Growing our economy will restore the dignity of our people and lead them to a place of abundance, prosperity and ease, a national democratic society.

The Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP)

11. The 7th Administration, as detailed in the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), emphasizes the following key priorities:

- ***Driving Inclusive Economic Growth and Job Creation***
- ***Reducing Poverty and Tackling the High Cost of Living***
- ***Building a Capable, Ethical, and Developmental State***

12. Whilst these three strategic priorities are interrelated and interlinked, ***driving inclusive growth and job creation*** is viewed as a top priority.

13. All spheres of government, clusters and sectors will prioritise relevant economic interventions towards increased prosperity and **equality for all the people of Mpumalanga.**

14.Honourable Speaker and Members, the **ideal** economic growth envisaged for the province is underpinned by the following strategic objectives:

- ***Economic growth rate of 3% and more***
- ***Reducing the unemployment rate to 25% and below***
- ***Facilitating domestic and foreign Investment targeting at least R50 billion worth of investment.***
- ***Reducing the poverty rate to less than 35%***
- ***Creating at least 60 000 and more job opportunities per annum***
- ***Reducing income inequality***

15.We need a strong government that directly and indirectly supports the economy. This can be done by developing integrated transport networks and industries, as well as by creating a safe and orderly environment.

The Economy

16. We will continue to build the economy of the province. This growth is crucial for creating job opportunities and fostering hope in our communities.

17. Our improvement of unemployment rate from 36.2% to 34.7% is significantly higher than the national average and youth unemployment is particularly high. Yesterday statistics SA released their social profile of the youth report for the period 2014-2024. The report reveals that Youth unemployment in the province has increased by 8.2% from 41.8% in 2014 to 50% in 2024. However, there was an improvement on the youth unemployed graduates from 19% to 9%.

18.Honourable Speaker and Members, we do not state these figures casually, as they mean that the social budget has to be increased.

19.We welcome any form of social assistance that helps low income social households. Our communities are benefitting from social grants and welfare services.

20.Our economy is not growing at a rate that allows us to absorb many people into productive employment. The stagnation in domestic growth has been caused in part by the global economic conditions.

21.Amongst others, the volatile commodity prices in the mining sector create uncertainty and make it difficult for investors to predict the future.

22.The province will focus on driving economic growth to create more job opportunities, despite current uncertainties.

23.Over the next five years, we will target economic growth that creates approximately **300 000** additional and sustainable work opportunities.

24.For us to achieve these targets, the government will intensify its existing programmes and launch new innovative programmes in the key economic sectors of the provincial economy.

25.We will continue to prioritise Agriculture and Forestry; Mining; Manufacturing; Tourism, Renewable Energy, ICT (Information and Communications Technology) and the Arts and Crafts industries.

26.Honourable Speaker and Members, let me remind those who may have missed my input during the debate of the President's 2025 State of the Nation Address about two weeks ago, on what this province is doing to address some of these challenges:

- 999 685 learners in Mpumalanga benefit from the national school nutrition program, a government initiative to provide meals at our schools.
- 73 723 learners are ferried to 353 schools daily through another government initiative, the scholar transport program.
- We have since funded 238 youth owned enterprises at the tune of R257, 9 million through the Premier's Youth Development Fund. An initiative aimed at empowering the youth, women and disabled people.

- There is so much that we are doing to re-skill our unemployed youth graduates to equip them with knowledge and wisdom in order to be absorbed by the industries.
- The Province plans to soft launch the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market by April 2025 as we prepare for its full operations.
- We are engaging with international partners, including Oman and China, to build trading relations and explore markets for agricultural products.
- On operationalisation, 156 jobs will be created on the market floor, a total of 150 000 subsistence farmers and small scale farmers will have access to trade their products.

- We are also expecting to create an additional 105 000 jobs at a farm level.
- A total of 1 600 SMMEs, four (4) per ward will be supported to start their own businesses that will trade their products with the market.
- To empower smallholder farmers, the province will introduce new and indigenous technologies to enhance productivity.

27.Honourable Speaker, in Mpumalanga *kubhunya lithuli*. Infrastructure development is linked to human development and job creation.

28.The province completed a provincial infrastructure masterplan 2060 in line with the NDP and National Infrastructure Plan to ensure economic growth and job creation.

On Health

29.The province is making strides towards the successful implementation of the NHI, aiming to ensure universal access to quality health care.

30.Thus we have a date with President Ramaphosa to come and open the state-of-the-art health facility, ***Middelburg Hospital, with 220 beds.***

31.287 out of 292 clinics have achieved ideal clinic status, meeting the National Health care standards.

32.160 clinics meet all the required health regulations and are fully certified by the Office of the Health Standards and Compliance.

33.Working with the private sector, we will be launching the micro-grid (solar system) at

Siphosensimbi Clinic in Emalahleni to ensure uninterrupted 24-hour service amidst load shedding.

On education

34. The province is investing in the development of our children.

35. We are the 3rd best province in the country whose learners have entered Grade 10 and completed Grade 12 in record time.

36. We have now completed the building of six boarding schools which enrolled 6 438 learners from farm schools in our three District Municipalities. Mkhondo boarding school will be operational in the second school term.

37.We have finalised the planning of the school for learners with disability, and the building will commence in the next financial year 2025/26.

38.We are prioritising the eradication of 53 old schools which were built by communities and the re-roofing of 81 asbestos schools.

39.Eskom has donated the micro-grid solar system for Blinkpan Primary School in Middelburg to enhance connectivity.

On roads

40.The length of our road is 13 387km, of which 40% is surface and 60% gravel.

41.Our goal is to have at least 75% of our road network attaining a minimum classification of 'good' by 2031.

42.We plan to eradicate ARMCO culverts by 2031.

Two teams per district were established for the *kubhunya lithuli* programme of pothole patching, regravelling and cleaning of drainage structures.

43.In the past we used to only see ring roads and major interchanges in urban provinces, but today we can proudly say in Mpumalanga, we have over five with the recently constructed ones in Karino and Montrose.

44.We are constructing a bridge over a railway line in Emalahleni.

45.We thank the Department of Transport through SANRAL for widening Moloto Road, upgrading of R40 and N2. We have requested the Department of Transport through PRASA to consider Mpumalanga rail corridors when restoring metro rail corridors in other provinces.

Access to basic services

46.Our government deserves recognition for improving access to clean water, 87% of the population now has access to reliable water

47. We commend the Ministry of Water and Sanitation, led by Honourable Majodina for authorising water releases from Jericho Dam to Mkhondo Municipality.

48.Through the intervention of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Rand water is now reliably supplying 20 mega litres of water to Thembisile Hani Municipality per day.

49.Major water projects are implemented to address shortage of water.

50.The construction of the Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme is underway, to supply

bulk water to villages in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality at the cost of R2 Billion to be completed in the 2025/26 financial year.

51.Amsterdam and Sheepmore Bulk Water Supply Scheme at Mkhondo Local Municipality, the project is progressing well above 40% construction. It is planned to be completed in June 2026, with a total project cost of R550 million

52.Driekoppies Bulk Water Supply Scheme phase 1a, which was halted will resume construction works and be completed during the 2025/26 financial year.

53.Planning is at an advanced stage for a number of bulk infrastructure projects to be implemented in the next coming years:

54.Rust de Winter Bulk Water supply, Msukaligwa bulk Water Supply Cluster 1, upgrading of Mkhuhlu Waste Treatment water works

55.The feasibility studies on the proposed construction of the Mbombela Dam at Mountain View is at an advanced stage.

56.The budget allocation for Water and Sanitation Infrastructure Grant (WSIG) for the 2025/26 financial year is R585 992 million

On Tourism

57.We aim to increase the tourism industry's contribution to our GDP from 5, 8% to 8%.

58.The province plans to increase public and private infrastructure investments, through key tourism infrastructure programmes which include amongst others; the development of a cable car

in Mariepskop Mountain, water waves, the Barberton Makhonjwa World Heritage site, and many others.

59.The introduction of these new products in the market will increase our market value from 21,6% to over 25% and become the lead province on international arrivals.

On Mining

60.The contribution of mining to Mpumalanga's GDP decrease from 23.2% to 19.9% and this decline could be because of the challenges in the logistics and backlogs in the harbours. We are however, confident that the progress registered by the operation Vulindlela in resolving our country's logistics crisis will help us to improve our output in the sector but its contribution is still

significant, in the main coal mining in the Nkangala and Gert Sibande District.

61. Mpumalanga depends heavily on coal as a source of economic value, employment and energy.

62. 80% of the country's coal production comes from Mpumalanga. We are home to 11 of the country's 14 coal fired power plants which account for 70% of Eskom's operating capacity, critical in enhancing energy stability in our country.

63. We support Just Energy Transition and there are several projects that are implemented in the province.

64. Coal is critical in our strategy to drive both economic growth and development in our province, and in achieving our economic growth

target of 3%, as announced by the President in his SONA.

65.While we support Just Energy Transition, we also support a research on carbon capture which is being explored in its viability towards mitigating carbon emissions in the region.

66.We invite mining companies that stand to benefit from this research to assist in funding this initiative in the spirit of District Development Model.

67.Honourable Speaker and members, I am deliberately retelling my debate on SONA to demonstrate that I was not just grand standing, I am a man of his word.

Commitments we made during OLA

68.Honourable Speaker and members, commitments were made by the former premier on the 2024 SOPA and myself on the Opening of the Legislature. We always promise less and we did not disappoint at all.

69.Indeed, Madam Speaker and members we have completed almost all projects that we promised to complete.

70.The programmes aimed at improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable sectors of our society regardless of race, class or creed.

71.We have expanded access to basic services, housing, education and skills, health, food security, safety and security, social and economic infrastructure, and economic growth.

72. These projects include amongst others:

- ***A 220 beds Middleburg Hospital in Nkangala District which will be officially opened by His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa***
- ***We have completed CHCs and Clinics in Casteel, Kanyamazane, Oakley, Driekopies, Botleng, and installed CT scan units in Witbank and Rob Ferreira hospitals thereby reducing the number of child mortality and maternal mortality in the province.***
- ***We have managed to complete and handover the following new schools that is Magogeni PS, Mpumelelo PS, New Klarinet PS, Mbatini PS, New Doornkop School, Msholozi Primary School, Yinhle-Lentfo Primary school, Mpisi-Jameyana, Sibukosetfu secondary***

School, Phulani Primary School, Morelig Combine school, Mapaleni Primary school and Mpilo Primary School

- ***The following schools are under construction while others are earmarked to be constructed during the 2025/26 financial year: Long-tom Secondary, Rockdale Extension 24 Primary, Chayaza Secondary School, Tidimalo Primary School, New Perdekop Secondary School, New Ermelo Secondary School, Silulu Secondary School, Mokibe Secondary and George Mayor School and others. In total, we will be constructing 29 schools.***
- ***The government has ensured Provision of Additional Classrooms in overcrowded areas, and to that effect, the Implementing Agent is finalizing the***

evaluation process on the appointment of contractors for the additional 40 classrooms in Mbombela.

- We have completed a total of 575 houses since last financial year to date as follows: -
Emakhazeni: 205 houses in Madala, Sakhele and Gugulethu - Steve Tshwete 370
282 houses of which 285 were delivered at Kwazamokuhle Ext.1&9 and 88 houses in Rondebosh.
- **During the Presidential visit to the province December 2024, President Ramaphosa joined us in handing-over three completed Welisizwe bridges to the community in Thembisile Hani Municipality. These bridges have made life better for learners who go to school across the villages, traders now have access to new markets and friends and**

relatives can now pay each other visits.

- We have completed and handed over vegetable tunnels at Dr JS Moroka and in the City of Mbombela, supporting cooperatives in the area.**
- In Gert Sibande District Municipality thirty-two thousands two hundred and twenty-four (32 224) households benefitted from the upgrading of Phumula Outfall Sewer pipeline.**
- Construction of sewer reticulation network in Amsterdam is almost complete and will benefit One thousand and nine households (1009) in total.**
- Refurbishment of Elukwatini Sewer Pump Station has been completed and will benefit Fourteen Thousand Seven**

Hundred and Fifty-One (14751) households.

- **In Nkangala District Municipality, a total of Hundred thousand, eight hundred and two (100 802) households will benefit from the refurbishment and upgrading of Phase 2 Waste Water Treatment Works in Delmas.**
- **The replacement of asbestos bulk supply line in Ga-Phahla and Siyabuswa has reached completion stage.**
- **The replacement of asbestos water pipes to reduce non-revenue water in Botleng has been completed benefitting Ten Thousand and Seventy (10 070) households.**
- **The construction of Klarinet and Siyanqoba Phase 2 link and bulk water**

supply lines are almost complete to benefit Thirty Thousand Three hundred and Eighty-Two (30 382) households

- **The construction of Matheysensloop to Kwaggafontein Booster Pump Station and drilling of boreholes in Marapyane in Dr JS Moroka Municipality has been completed. This will benefit Eleven Thousand Three Hundred and Sixty-Four (11 364) households.**
- **Through the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the province is currently developing a Provincial Bulk Water and Sanitation Master Plan to assist with planning and implementation of bulk water and sanitation infrastructure projects.**
- **Local municipalities across the three districts are implementing infrastructure**

projects funded through the private sector, own funding, Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), Water Services Infrastructure Grant (WSIG) and the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) to address water supply shortages.

73. Honourable Speaker and members, I stand here to assure the People of Mpumalanga that all hands on deck, we are committed to the course of our province.

MTDP Programmes 2025-2029

74. We are turning Mpumalanga into a large construction site by investing in Infrastructure Programme to create substantial employment.

75. Large amounts of capital will be dedicated to improving economic and social infrastructure

which includes constructions of hospitals, clinics, roads and bridges, education and new logistics.

76. We are calling on private sector to partner with government in implementing all these projects since the demand is very high.

77. For the next coming five years we are going to prioritise strategic economic infrastructure to support development and service delivery. This involves, inter alia:

Anchor Agricultural Projects

78. We are at the initial stage to operationalize the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market.

79. We are supporting black commercial farmers and developing them to be on par with their white

counter parts.

80. As part of enhancing the value chain we are deliberately investing in large scale irrigation infrastructure projects to expand agricultural production.

81. We have fully operationalized Mkhuhlu Agrihub to support our School Nutrition Programme. Mkhondo Agri-hub was affected by storm and we are repairing it. We are working with Dr JS Moroka to complete the building of the Agri-hub. We plan to build the last Agri-hub in Nkomazi Local Municipality.

We want our Agri-hubs to be model centres of excellence, and common usage facilities for the benefit of all farmers within the Province, in particular, women, youth and people with disabilities.

82. We have initiated the Draft of Mpumalanga Government Nutrition Sourcing Bill, 2024, which seeks to empower emerging farmers to maximise the available opportunities in the Agricultural sector; facilitating and ensuring consistent market for farmers to supply specific commodities to the Provincial Government's Nutrition Programmes.

83. We are in a process to finalise the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement with the Land Bank and other financial institutions to activate Blended Finance Schemes to revitalise agricultural-based operations on land restitution and redistribution.

Tourism Catalytic Projects

84. Ladies and Gentleman, the realization of Mariepskop Cable Cart Mountain project is no longer a dream far, I am happy to announce that budgets for feasibility studies has already been set aside.

85.We must accelerate the God's Window Skywalk Public-Private Partnership Project.

86.We call upon Private Sector to partner with us to build the Barberton Makhonjwa World Heritage Site.

87.We must conceptualize, initiate, plan and implement the Water-based entertainment theme park (water waves).

88.We must fast track the funding model and Public Private Sector Partnership in implementing the International Conference Centre (ICC).

89.As a province using our advantage we need to Champion investment in renewable energies

marking a major shift towards a cleaner energy economy in the province.

Implementing the Provincial Industrialization Strategy

- 90.** We need to identify Private Sector Partnerships and implement Mining and Metal Technology Park (Supplier Park)
- 91.** We must enhance and extend the Metal Incubation Programme. The closure of the Highveld Steel has led to job losses and we are engaging various investors to resuscitate it.
- 92.** We need to fast track the implementation of the first phase of Nkomazi SEZ (logistics hub). We have since appointed the Board and acting CEO.

93. We are prioritizing Township and Rural Economy. A study will be conducted that will hasten the implementation of the township and rural economy including the resuscitation of the Industrial parks.

94. We need to Revisit revitalization of the Social Enterprise Development Programme and implement it in all government infrastructure programmes.

95. We should engage SASOL once more on the Petro-chemical Industrial Park.

Economic Infrastructure: The Engine for Growth

96. Honourable Speaker and members there are many government buildings that are lying unused and are now being vandalized. We have already identified all existing government

buildings within the three spheres of government working through the District Development Model. We should repurpose and productively use them, like Elijah Mango.

97. We must pay special attention and maintain rural and Agriculture Feeder roads used by our farmers and our rural communities.

98. Tourism infrastructure is very key to attracting and retaining domestic and international tourists, we therefore must attend to it.

99. Coal haulage roads play a very important role in facilitating the movement of coal and other commodities in and outside of the country. Mpumalanga is a gateway to at least 5 provinces and two countries. Working with SANRAL we must maintain this critical road infrastructure.

ROADS

100. We have a total of ten critical Corridor roads in our Province. While we are prioritizing corridors that support our Tourism Industry, such as the Panorama Route, Nelspruit Sabie Graskop, Matibidi Ohristad Mashishing Dullstroom Belfast, Sabie Hazyview Kruger Corridor and lastly the Graskop Hazyview Acornhoek Manyeleti Corridors.

We should also pay attention on the corridors that link our Province with other Provinces and countries.

101. These Corridors have been identified and this will not only improve infrastructure but create foundation for long term inclusive Economic growth. It is such initiatives that turn these corridors into opportunities that benefit the economy of our Province.

102. 1041 kilometres of provincial roads have been proclaimed as National Roads. All identified roads have been transferred to SANRAL with an exception of Acornhoek to Manyeleti Road which did not meet the criteria of proclamation, it will be prioritised by the Department before this financial year. It is important to note that the condition of this transfer is that there will be no tolling and reduction in funding.

Partnership/Collaborations

103. We are very excited to announce that we have officially commenced with Road P171/1 between Mashishing and Roosennekal in the Limpopo border which is a collaborative effort between Department of Public works, Roads and Transport and the Mining houses:

- Northam Platinum Limited
- Dwarsrivier Chrome Mines

- Glencore
- Rustenburg Platinum Mines
- Two Rivers Platinum
- Sancor Chrome.

104. The P171/1 Project estimated construction cost is R350million excluding Vat. These mines are contributing 60% and the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport contributing 40%. We thank these participating mines for their valuable contribution in infrastructure investment in the Province. The Province continues to explore Partnerships to accelerate project implementation and improvement of provincial road network.

105. For far too long the maintenance of bulk infrastructure has been neglected. We need to invest in building and maintaining our bulk and internal infrastructure.

106. Mpumalanga is well positioned and suitable for investment in Solar farms and solar plants. We must exploit our competitive advantage in this sector.

107. These are projects that require proper planning with clear and vigorous implementation plans. The projects are implementable and it will be easy for the province to get funding.

108. We are going to remove the red tape and unnecessary government bureaucracy and make it easy for investors to do business with our province.

109. The time has come for us to think outside the box as directed by the President. We are going to massively embark on Public Private Partnership (PPP) for those provincial projects which designs are completed but we have no funds for construction.

110. We have met a number of private sector partners and state owned institutions to pave a way forward on building partnerships. We will be signing a memorandum of understanding with some of these companies which includes ABSA, FNB, Nedbank and Standard Bank, Vodacom, MTN, Telkom SA, Seriti, Exxaro, NAFCOC, Provincial Youth Chambers and South African Sugar Association and many more that we are still going to meet.

To diversify and build a strong and resilient economy in the next five years, we will focus on the following:

111. Making Mpumalanga an Investment and Tourism destination of choice, by improving socio- economic and tourism infrastructure, strengthen tourism security and improve tourism marketing, Introduce innovative funding for key strategic economic infrastructure projects

through Public Private Partnerships.

112. We will open up the bid and request proposals for the fourth casino licence in the province. The responses will indicate to us if there is still appetite for this initiative to:

- Build industrialisation capacity through localisation, decarbonisation and economic diversification including the Mining Supplier Park and other related industries
- Leverage and repurpose existing and underutilized infrastructure to optimise socio-economic growth.
- Strengthen SMMEs' support as a catalyst for economic growth, and provide technical and financial sustenance to the informal sector
- Enhance skills development through upscaling

of business incubation and agricultural training

- Accelerate economic transformation that addresses the duality of all economic sectors and support Black Africans owned enterprises
- Identify strategic land for economic growth through land acquisition.

To build a Capable and Ethical State Governance

113. For us to build a capable state we must, as a matter of urgency:

- elevate the Project Management Unit in the Office of the Premier.
- Establish a central planning forum in Co-operative Governance Housing and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA).

- Coordinate regular investment programmes through MEGA, MER assisted by a specialist investment company
- Anchor Mpumalanga Research Institute with tertiary academic institutions

Social Investment

114. On basic education we need to increase access to education for learners with special educational needs and fast track the building of the school for learners with disability.

115. Work towards the establishment of schools of specialisation including but not limited to mining schools performing arts, sports excellence in technical and agricultural schools. These will be done in collaboration with our social partners.

- 116.** Support the popularization of schools sports to promote participation in sports activities as a career, healthy lifestyle and social cohesion.
- 117.** We need to fast track the establishment of a Multi-Purpose Arena with a 5000 sitting capacity at Mbombela Stadium.
- 118.** We must Improve access to library and information services in rural areas including providing mobile libraries where structures are not feasible.
- 119.** We must facilitate the registration of all privately owned Early Child Development Centres to create a provincial database.
- 120.** We must without further delays rollout eLearning Programme in Grade 10 and connectivity for teaching and learning to Quintile

1, 2 and 3. Our children will start to receive tablets from Grade 10 on this financial year.

Health Services

121. We want our people to be healthy wherever they are, that is why we are investing heavily on the overall healthcare.

122. From school healthcare to every facet of wellness be it physical and or mental wellness. We are a caring ANC led government. We are committing ourselves to reducing maternal mortality rate and neonatal mortality rate to the lowest possible figures.

123. We are committing ourselves to make sure that all clinics and hospitals by the end of this MTDP period have reached an ideal health facility status, and they are accredited to provide healthcare under the National Health Insurance

scheme.

124. We further commit ourselves to 95/95/95 UNAIDS targets for people living with HIV/AIDS that 95% will know their status, 95% will be on treatment and 95% will achieve viral suppression.

125. Honourable Speaker and members, the decision by the USA to suspend and possibly terminate the support we have been receiving on combating HIV/AIDS came at a very difficult time given the current domestic and global economic environment.

126. However, we are making plans to make sure that our HIV/AIDS programmes are sustained and our people get the services they deserve. Our plans are already in motion and we will tap on other social partners to augment what we are already doing in that space. Our

people should not panic.

127. We are also paying special attention on the committed terrible crimes in some of our health facilities. A decision has been taken to arm security guards who work in our health facilities in particular those that open for 24 hours.

128. The safety of our health workers is a priority. We urge community structures to work with the law enforcement agencies in fighting criminality. We have to protect our facilities otherwise they may be forced to close, much earlier than they are supposed to.

129. During the next MTDP period we will embark on the following health infrastructure projects:

- Construction of Linah Malatjie hospital to enhance tertiary health services in

collaboration with Infrastructure South Africa.

- We are constructing Rob Ferreira Radiation Oncology Centre which will enable the province to completely treat cancer patients than relying in Gauteng.
- Construction of Mpumalanga Mental Health hospital to provide mental health services.
- A rehabilitation facility at Barberton TB Hospital to provide rehabilitative services to individuals with disabilities and those recovering from injuries to regain interdependence and enhance their overall quality of life.
- Finalising the establishment of Tertiary services at Rob Ferreira Hospital by constructing a bunker for oncology Services and insourcing nephrology services

- Modernise the delivery of health care services and maximum utilisation of available resources through implementation of tele-medicine.
- In this 2025/26 financial year, the Province is planning to build the following clinics amongst others: Siyabuswa CHC, Lebahang Clinic, Alexander Clinic, Langkloof Clinic, (upgrading) Lefisoane Clinic, Kinross and Barberton Clinic.

130. On the 19th of February 2025, Mpumalanga was the 1st province to launch the Provincial Council on Gender Based Violence and Femicide in Secunda. The Council is chaired by the Premier and assisted by a member of the civil society organisation Sisonke Gender Justice, Ms Nomalanga Ngwenya.

131. The establishment of the provincial council which is comprised of expertise from different

stakeholders follows the promulgation of the National Council on Gender Based Violence and Femicide Act in May 2024.

132. The new legislation facilitates the establishment of the Council, a statutory body charged with providing strategic leadership in the fight against gender-based violence and femicide in South Africa.

133. This multi-sectoral council will strengthen the national efforts to combat gender-based violence, using a more inclusive, focused and better resourced approach.

134. During the current MTDP period we will build the following social infrastructure projects:

- Establishment and operationalisation of the Khuseleka One stop Centre to provide

protection to victims of GBV and Femicide and Human Trafficking.

- Construction of government owned residential facility to provide care and protection for the elderly

Access to basic services

135. 87% of households in this province have access to water. This is a moving target as new informal settlements are mushrooming every year.

136. 95.9% of our households have access to sanitation, again this is a moving target for similar reasons.

137. 94% of our households have access to basic electricity.

138. The area that is lagging behind and we are working hard to improve is access to refuse removal which stands at a paltry 51%.

139. The DDM programme has been adopted by all three districts under one plan model.

140. Before the end of this financial year we would have built and completed all One Thousand, One Hundred and Seventy-Four (1 174) houses which were left incomplete for various reasons.

141. We want to improve our audit outcomes from five (5) clean audits to 80% by the end of the MTDP period. At least eight (8) or more municipalities must also achieve clean audits.

142. We will continue to support municipalities on their financial recovery plan, improve their audit outcomes and assist them to implement

their revenue collection strategies.

Social Cohesion through Culture Sports and Arts

143. Whilst our government has since 1994 been at the forefront of promoting social cohesion and national reconciliation, as a nation we don't seem to have made progress in becoming a cohesive society characterized by high levels of trust, a shared vision for a common future.

144. Our past history was filled with legislated polarization forcing us to occupy our own corners through racism and social exclusion. That is in the past, we need to find one another, strive to find something that can make us one nation despite our different backgrounds.

145. Whilst sports and arts have in the main

played its role in uniting us, it is not enough to only unite around sports and not find any other reasons to be united.

146. We believe that a provincial social cohesion dialogue is necessary for the people of Mpumalanga to unite behind one vision and common interest.

147. As government we will continue to support all signature events irrespective of their social orientation or interest. We also believe that we need to among others:

- Implement a social cohesion dialogues to combat racism, sexism and other forms of intolerance
- Continue with the implementation of signature events such as MP Cultural Xperience, Metro FM Awards and support Art of Legends and

Innibos, Arts Festival, 013 Summer Blaze, Annual All White Picnic, Dikoma Cultural Festival, Mpumalanga Show and Marathons.

- Financially support community based structures that implement social cohesion programmes in all Districts.
- Promote preservation of living culture through financial support of cultural events including imimemo that are organized by our Traditional Leaders.
- Coordinate national commemorative days and Gold panning championships
- Continue to undertake Resistance and Heritage Liberation Route projects and review geographic names
- Coordinate and participate in District and

Provincial tournaments for Big Walk, Aerobics, Youth Month, Women in Sports, and Sport and Active Projects on Sport Festivals and all other arts and culture events including school and community sports.

Safety and Security

148. The period under review saw a substantial decrease in some categories of crime whilst there was an increase in others. One of the most heinous crimes that was on the increase is Gender Based Violence and Femicide.

149. This crime has been declared a second pandemic, it therefore demands that the community work together with the police in combating it. We will be working closely with the newly installed provincial council on GBVF.

150. Government has ensured that Victim

Friendly Rooms (VFR) and GBVF desks are established in 85 police stations while in five police stations, police officers are still using their own offices. We will continue to monitor the functionality of the VFR to provide professional support to victims of crime and violence.

151. The well-resourced units for victims of family violence, child abuse, and sexual offences units which are managed by SAPS which also provide the required services such as child protection to abuse children and exploitation cases. Currently there are 15 units in the province and located in the three districts and linked to the 90 police stations.

152. The province is collaborating with civil society organization to educate communities to report such cases and the implications of the withdrawal of these cases as it amounts to the hindrance to justice.

153. Government will continue to roll out Road safety education programmes targeting public transport sectors such as taxi association, taverns, Pubs, schools and any other community-based formations.

154. We have deployed Traffic Officers on a 24-hour basis to create visibility, maintain law and order on the roads but above all to **save lives.**

155. We need to enhance the road safety strategy to improve on the enforcement of all traffic regulations and policies.

156. The launch of the Highway patrol in October 2024 yielded positive results. Many arrests were recorded along the N4, N17 and a portion of the N12. Illegal firearms and other illicit substances were confiscated. CIT robberies are declining drastically in the

province.

157. To prevent and reduce crime we need to intensify the implementation of integrated crime and violence prevention strategy so that we can make our people feel safe and also be safe.

158. The president has indicated that Local Government challenges are also arising from the design of our local government system and has directed that the white paper on Local Government be reviewed for a modern and fit for purpose for local government system.

159. Many of the challenges in municipalities arise from the design of our local government system. He further directed a review of funding model for municipalities for their sustainability. As the province we will be participating on this initiative, and we will establish a provincial technical committee that will contribute to the

reviewal of the funding model for municipalities to change the face of local government.

160. As part of our drive to stimulate growth and build an inclusive economy that creates jobs; Mpumalanga will be hosting some very significant events this year which include amongst others:

- **Hosting Mpumalanga Mining Indaba**, where government and the private sector will be discussing the future of mining industry in the province and how to maximize growth; accommodate artisanal mining; open space for emerging miners and create massive job opportunities.
- **Hosting Mpumalanga Investment Conference** scheduled to take place during the first quarter of the next financial year where the province will showcase its

readiness for foreign and domestic investment in various sectors including ***Mining and Energy, Agriculture and Agro-processing, Forestry, Manufacturing and Beneficiation, Tourism and Green Energy.***

- **The province will be hosting the G20 ministerial** visit in September 2025. Last year the province hosted a number of G20 roadshows in which member states of the G20 showed tremendous interest in various sectors of our economy including mining, tourism, renewable energy and agriculture.

161. A tourism investment conference hosted in our province by the national department of tourism will also coincide with the G20 ministerial visit in September this year. It is imperative that stakeholders work collaboratively to implement these strategies, ensuring that the province not only thrives

economically but also preserves its natural beauty and cultural heritage for future generations. Mpumalanga can pave the way for a prosperous future, unlocking its full potential and establishing itself as a leader in sustainable economic development within South Africa and the SADC region.

Conclusion

162. Honourable Speaker and members, the key to overcoming our challenges is within us, and as we navigate our issues, we will uncover the answers that leads us to a brighter solution.

163. We will have to work together across party political divide, across races and across generational gaps and confront our challenges head on as one nation.

164. Mpumalanga known as a place of the

rising sun, offers hope with each dawn. Let us work together to benefit our Province and future generation. As Duke Ellington said: “A problem is a chance for you to do your best”. The challenges we face in Mpumalanga and South Africa are opportunities for us to rise above and strive for excellence.

165. We promised to complete Middelburg Hospital, we have done it.

166. We promised to launch a Provincial Council of the GBVF, and it has been launched.

167. We promised to transfer some roads to SANRAL, and we succeeded.

168. We promised that *kuzobunya lithuli* in Mpumalanga and *liyabhunya*.

169. Thomas Sankara once said “our revolution is not a public speaking tournament”.

170. We promised to fill all funded vacancies and we delivered. In our mist here Madam Speaker, I would like to unveil the new from the box, the DG of our Province Mrs Maggie Skosana, and our new HODs Ms Gloria Mazibuko (Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison) and Mrs Immy Serakalala (Department of Economic Development and Tourism).

171. We make commitments and deliver. We promise less and do more, for we are captains of our souls.

172. Failure is not an option. We must meet these commitments and deliver a better life for all.

I thank you, Ngiyabonga