

7th Administration

State of the Province Address 2025



Limpopo Premier
Dr. Phophi Ramathuba



The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people



<https://www.limpopo.gov.za>

#7thAdministration

#diloditshentshitse



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER
OF LIMPOPO, DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA AT THE
LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, LEBOWAKGOMO,
ON 27 FEBRUARY 2025 – Version 5**

Speaker of the Legislature, Honourable Makoma Makhurupetje,
Deputy Speaker, Honourable Tebogo Mamorobela,
Members of the Executive Council,
Honourable Members of the Legislature,
Permanent Delegates to the National Council of Provinces,
Chief Whip of the Legislature,
Members of the National Assembly present,
Judge President of Limpopo Division of the High Court and
other Members of the Judiciary,
Her Royal Highness, Queen Modjadji VII of the Balobedu
Queenship,
Her Royal Highness, Queen Manyaku Thulare, the Acting
King of the Bapedi Kingship,
Representatives of the Mphephu Royal House of the
Vhavenda Kingship,
Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional & Khoisan
Leadership, Hosi Pheni Ngove,
Esteemed Traditional Leaders, of note, The first female
Senior Traditional Leader to be recognised, Hosi N'wamitwa
II

Your Worships Executive Mayors and Mayors,
Bishop Dr BE Lekganyane of the Zion Christian Church,
Bishop Dr JE Lekganyane of the St Engenas ZCC,
The leadership of the Governing Party, the African National
Congress in Limpopo, led by Vhamusanda Vho-Reuben
Madadzhe,
Leaders of Opposition Political Parties,
Former MPs and MPLs,
Director General and Heads of Departments,
Stalwarts and Veterans of our struggle,

Provincial Commissioner of the South African Police Services,
Heads of Chapter Nine and Ten institutions,
Leadership of Faith-Based Communities,
Leadership of Organised Business and Labour Youth,
Women and Community Leaders Distinguished Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen and all the people of our vibrant province,

Ndi Matsheloni! Thobela! Avuxeni! Silotshile! Gooie More! Good Morning!

Today, I stand before you not merely as the Premier of this vibrant province but as a custodian of our shared dreams, aspirations and collective future.

As we gather in this esteemed chamber, let me first acknowledge the rich tapestry of our heritage that weaves through the very fabric of Limpopo - where the tributaries of Palala, Mogalakwena, Sand, Mutale, Shingwedzi and Lepelle accompany the majestic Limpopo River into the Indian Ocean, nurturing the land and the spirit of our people.

Honourable Speaker, allow me to begin with a rather profound sense of sorrow and solidarity following the tragic loss of members of the South African National Defence Force in the Democratic Republic of Congo almost a month ago. Eight of those are from Limpopo. We took our time last week to pay our last respects, honouring their families for the sacrifice their sons made.

We would like to thank the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, President and Head of State, His Excellency Mr Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa for having given these sons the highest honour, befitting their bravery, Full Military Funeral with Honours.

Equally so we thank the President for ensuring that all those who sustained injuries are evacuated safely back home to receive reliable and high-level quality medical care. We once more wish them speedy and full recovery.

As we honour the memory of the departed, let us reaffirm our commitment to the ideals they fought for - a peaceful, united Africa where every nation can flourish. Their bravery will forever be etched in our hearts, serving as a reminder of the vital role we all play in promoting peace and stability in pursuit of our goal of building a better Africa and a just world.

Honourable Speaker, we are standing here to deliver our first State of the Province Address as the 7th Administration. We have spent the past six months crafting a delivery framework for the next five years.

In line with Cabinet decision to approve the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP 2024-2029), we also reviewed our Limpopo Development Plan (LDP 2025-2030). The process was participatory and inclusive, consulting key stakeholders including municipalities and the private sector. This will inform our work as the 7th Administration.

The LDP 2025-2030 is a strategic blueprint designed to propel our province towards sustainable growth, economic resilience and social upliftment. It serves as an implementation instrument of the National Development Plan, a guiding framework for provincial departments and municipalities, including the private sector, fostering collaboration across sectors to tackle critical challenges such as unemployment, poverty and inequality. Our focus is on inclusive development that uplifts all our people.

We commit ourselves to the pursuit of inclusive growth, job creation, reduction of poverty while tackling the high cost of living; as we build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

In his State of the Nation Address, President Matamela Ramaphosa buttressed this when he said:

“Our most urgent task is to grow our economy so that we can create jobs, reduce poverty and improve the lives of all South Africans.”

Honourable Members, in my inaugural address on 02 August 2024, I spoke of hope, a beacon to guide us on our journey as we navigate the turbulent waters of socio-economic challenges.

The people of Limpopo have once again spoken when they overwhelmingly mandated the African National Congress to continue with the work we have started 30 years ago. In thanking them, as the 7th Administration, we commit to work tirelessly in making sure that the fruits of our liberation accrue to them.

As we commemorate the 70 years of the Freedom Charter, we will reflect on this journey, while considering the landscape of our province, a tapestry woven with both challenges and triumphs.

Honourable Members, according to Census 2022, Limpopo's population has grown to 6,5 million people, an increase of 1.2 million since 2011. This growth brings with it added responsibility to ensure that every resident can thrive and enjoy the benefits of a caring government.

While Limpopo's contribution to the national GDP has risen from 7.2% to 7.7%, the stark and painful reality, Honourable Members, is that at the end of 2024, our unemployment rate stood at 31.9%. This we cannot allow to continue under our watch. The traditional way of doing things has not yielded our desired results, our people, especially the youth, are

getting impatient, hence it is time for us to kick the box and start thinking afresh.

Honourable Members, we have seen our province's economy showing resilience in sectors like mining, government services, finance, trade, personal services and transport.

Yet, we must consciously industrialise, especially in sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture and construction to advance inclusive growth and job creation. These sectors have the potential to elevate our growth trajectory and create employment opportunities even for our low-skilled labour force.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND JOB CREATION

Honourable Speaker, our resolve is driven by the need to see Limpopo's economy growing and creating jobs. It is for this reason that we are still steadfast on developing Special Economic Zones, akin to planting seeds in fertile soil knowing that it will germinate, grow and bear fruits.

Six months ago, having spent enough time understanding the challenges towards the operationalisation of the long-awaited MMSEZ, we have developed a six-point plan and directed the MEC for LEDET to attend to all the outstanding issues that affected this bedrock of our industrialisation agenda.

We are proud to report to the House that various matters that contributed to delays are being resolved.

The land on the North site has finally been released by all the relevant national departments and the Musina Municipality Council would sit on 28th February 2025 to

finalise the rezoning of the land for use by the MMSEZ. His Worship Vho Meyara Vho-Mawela, Manana Xipikara Shirilele, na Vho-Chief Whip Vho-Mafela, this is a task you should execute with ease.

Honourable Speaker, there was a thorny issue on the South site requiring approval of township establishment. We are happy to report that the Makhado Municipality Tribunal will sit tomorrow the 28th of February 2025, to finalise this matter. This approval will lead to the rezoning of the land and then hand over the site to the Operator.

Having had these matters attended to, we shall now direct the MEC for Provincial Treasury to release funds that we withheld earlier for reprioritisation. This will then allow MMSEZ to resume with its operations.

Our next task will be to monitor and put our South Site Operator on terms to see the project taking shape in the 2025/26 Financial Year.

Honourable Members, Unlike MMSEZ, the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Special Economic Zone is a low hanging fruit, abuzz with potential, just waiting for us to plug in.

Our recent meeting with the Minister of Department of Trade Industry and Competition (DTIC) resolved to finalise the process of designation of the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Special Economic Zone by doing, amongst others, stakeholder engagement.

We are pleased that by the end of March 2025 the DTIC shall have concluded the designation process, opening way for the implementation of the SEZ.

To date we already have over R10 billion investment commitments of which if fully implemented will translate into thousands of jobs.

The groundwork is being laid through our Industrial Park with the infrastructure development already underway. In partnership with Glencore Mine, through the MOU we recently signed, a Skills Development Centre has been established.

Whilst this is in place, we direct the MEC for LEDET to facilitate integrated skills development plan to be responsive to the SEZ programme.

This is not limited to economic zones; it is about cultivating a landscape where opportunities blossom for all.

Honourable Members, Limpopo's Investment Growth and Industrialisation Agenda is the first thread in our fabric of progress. Last year we made a commitment that our investment conference will have to be done completely different, where the focus will not just be on pledges, but with follow up on the pledges made.

We are proud to report to this house that our 4th Investment Conference was a resounding success, raising up to R120 billion in pledges, far surpassing the R50 billion we had targeted. I would like to commend the collective efforts towards the realisation of this achievement.

Even more pleasing is that 60% of the recent pledges are earmarked towards renewable energy, which is a panacea to the current energy crisis.

We recently signed agreements with various companies that made pledges on the margins of the 2025 Mining Indaba held in Cape Town.

Neuromorphogenics Africa (Pty) Ltd, in partnership with Mukhufi Agro-Processing and Essential Oil, a local

entrepreneur, made a R9,8 billion investment pledge for Mopani Solar Project. Significant progress has been made so far in planning the project that will use both wind and sun to generate power.

Solar and wind projects in Mopani are breaking ground and mines in Fetakgomo-Tubatse are pioneering solar ventures, ensuring sustainable energy for our growing industries.

The Limpopo Premier and the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to South Africa joined by the leadership of Sinosteel Samancor TFC PV for a ground-breaking ceremony in Steelpoort, Tubatse for a solar plant in November 2024.

As a reminder this investment will have the capacity to produce 1000 Megawatts of solar photovoltaic power. However, in compliance with the applicable legislative framework the plant is producing 100 Megawatts. The project is anticipated to create between 1000 to 1500 jobs.

Honourable Speaker, whilst we acknowledge the current challenges we are facing regarding load reduction in some areas, we want to reassure our people that, working with the Minister of Electricity and ESKOM, we will resolve these challenges.

As a reminder, in 1996 only 36% of our people had access to electricity. As we speak, according to the General Household Survey of 2023, 97,1% of our people have access to electricity, putting Limpopo as number one in our country.

This simply means that an ordinary household in a village can charge cellphones, switch on their lights and watch their favourite soaps, *Muvhango*, *Giyani Land of Blood* and

Skeem Saam, unlike in the past where to watch my favourite soapie, *Bophelo ke Semphekgo* of Mme Lydia Mamokgokoloshi, I had to go to the local store and had to part ways with my last two bob (20 cents).

Honourable Members, work has already begun to ensure that the remaining 2,9% may have access to electricity in the next two years, especially with the alternative energy mix that we are bringing to the fore.

One of the projects launched by the Minister Dr Ramokgopa, after the famous, first of its kind, November 2024 President and His Cabinet's visit to Limpopo, is a solar powered energy project in the Musina Municipality. Five villages with 1 002 households in Madimbo, Mabvete, Tshiungani, Masea and Matshena will, by the end of April 2025, have access to solar energy.

This will be a game-changing experience as these communities would not only be having access to electricity for the first time in their lives, equally, 5G network connectivity.

The availability of these alternative energy sources would not stop the continuation of expansion of the grid.

Honourable Speaker, esteemed colleagues, and the resilient people of Limpopo,

The Ministry of Electricity, in close collaboration with the Limpopo Provincial Government, will address the growing municipal debt and illegal electricity use through an integrated strategy focused on stabilising municipal electricity businesses.

Central to this partnership is the Active Partnering initiative, which includes comprehensive auditing and upgrading of

metres, direct billing systems linked to Eskom, aggressive debt recovery measures and robust infrastructure refurbishment.

Additionally, a targeted Programme to Eliminate Load Reduction will be piloted in Nkowankowa within the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

This programme will entail public awareness campaigns, expanding Free Basic Electricity coverage and quantum to reduce the burden on indigent households, implementing smart meters and advanced metering infrastructure.

Together, these interventions aim to restore business confidence, enhance revenue management, reduce illegal connections, and significantly improve municipal service delivery, ultimately supporting local government's broader developmental mandate .

Today, I stand before you with a vision that propels our province into a new era of energy empowerment and economic revitalization. In partnership with the Ministry of Electricity, Limpopo is poised to become the first province in our nation to achieve universal access to energy. This ambitious goal will be realised through a strategic blend of grid-connected and innovative microgrid solutions, ensuring that every household, from our bustling towns to the most remote villages, is illuminated with reliable and sustainable power.

Our commitment does not end there. In a ground-breaking initiative, we have identified three municipalities - Maruleng, Elias Motsoaledi, and Thabazimbi, as pioneers in municipal energy security. These municipalities, in collaboration with the Provincial Government and the Ministry of Electricity, will spearhead the development of their own generation schemes utilizing cutting-edge renewable energy

technologies. This endeavour will ensure municipalities reduced their reliance on bulk service providers, which will lower the cost burden of bulk electricity costs. This initiative is not merely about powering homes; it is about igniting local economies, enhancing the quality of supply, and making energy more affordable for all.

By embracing these transformative projects, we are not only addressing the immediate energy needs of our communities but also laying the foundation for sustainable development and economic growth. Together, we are lighting up Limpopo's path to a brighter, more prosperous future for every citizen.

A commitment noted from this house last year was that Eskom was going to build new transmission lines that would also help accommodate renewable energy across the province.

Honourable Members, our City of Stars, Polokwane, has recently been graded to level six (6). This means that our ideal of getting a metro is within reach. The reality is that our city is growing, requiring bulk infrastructure support like electricity.

It is against this background that we welcome progress made thus far of the construction of 400 kilovolts line connecting Medupi Power station to Polokwane. To date 150 kilometres of the total 220 km line has already been constructed.

There are other 400 kV lines that are still in development in Nzhelele, Borutho-Silimela, Foskor-Spencer, Foskor-Merensky and Leseding that are anticipated to be completed by 2029.

Honourable Speaker, we have spoken about how agriculture is a backbone of our existence as Limpopo. We also acknowledged that whilst most of our communities can sustain themselves off the land, it is ideal that we put the land to good use by adding the commercial element in our operations.

In our Opening Address in 2024, we committed to implement the integrated emerging farmers support programme. To that effect, we invited Ms Wendy Moshakga, a mother who raised her children by selling vegetables from her backyard garden.

We used her as an example that Limpopo remains the leading province in terms of people who can work the land without the land. Today we have invited Ms Wendy Moshakga again, as a special guest to the Premier, this time around she is a testimony of our commitment towards supporting emerging farmers.

Through the departmental support, Ms Wendy Moshakga who was operating from her backyard garden is now operating in a 20-hectare land. In six months' time she has been able to expand and diversify her operations from vegetables only to include both poultry and livestock farming. She managed to create, as a start, four jobs. We are saying this to showcase that we are not men and women of empty words, but of tangible commitments.

Honourable Speaker, today we take a moment to also reflect on another success story of achievement in our nation, particularly in Limpopo, where we have this remarkable story to share. We invited the founder of SAMPADA Private Equity, a young black entrepreneur to inspire fellow black entrepreneurs, highlighting that with determination, anything is possible.

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a pivotal moment, emphasising the need for food security and resilient systems. SAMPADA used the challenge as an opportunity to transition from building malls to sustainable farming, producing strawberries for export to Dubai, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, all run by a dedicated team of young black women.

It is during this period where Mr Bafedile Mafologele and his business partner embarked on cattle farming venture, starting with just 27 cattle. Today, they manage over 3,000 cattle and have expanded their irrigation from 15 to 300 hectares. SAMPADA is on track to become the largest 100% black-owned red meat producer in Limpopo, creating over 300 jobs.

This success story exemplifies what can be achieved through commitment, hard work and resilience without any sense of entitlement.

Our Integrated Emerging Farmers Support Programme has supported 14,939 farmers across various commodities.

Ten Smallholder farmers have been identified for commercialisation programme during the 7th Administration. We are committed to assisting smallholder farmers in accessing markets and enhancing their productivity, hence to date, 139 agribusinesses have been assisted with marketing services.

Honourable Members, the last time we were here we made a clarion call for establishment of agro-processing plants within the province. It is in this connection that we are pleased to report that a yogurt processing plant shall be established in Polokwane and a beef abattoir shall be constructed in Mookgophong in the foreseeable future.

The relevant MECs will give details on these aspects during their budget votes.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has advanced the implementation of the Revitalisation of Agriculture and Agro-Processing Value Chain (RAAVAC) plan, focusing on various agricultural sectors to boost production and support the Limpopo Development Plan.

Honourable Speaker, it pains me every time I drive past the once renowned Zebediela Citrus Farm; seeing it in its hollow state, failing to rise from the ashes. This is despite our recent interventions where seven boreholes were drilled and a master plan completed, with expectations for fruit production, as committed in this august house, yet not much has materialised to date.

Honourable Members, our diagnosis is that there are challenges within the Community Property Association, hence we have elevated the matter to the relevant national ministries for their intervention.

Six months ago, we made an undertaking that we shall work on resolving the challenges facing Lebowakgomo Chicken Abattoir and Mashashane Hatchery.

We can now report back that all the outstanding infrastructure challenges have been resolved by both LEDA and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. We are now at advanced stage for their operationalisation.

There have been setbacks because of vandalism in the broiler houses that were anticipated to supply the abattoir. These setbacks mean that the people of Lepelle-Nkumpi who were meant to be employed there are still unemployed.

We would like to implore the community to take the responsibility of protecting these facilities.

Our two MECs have intervened and are monitoring the situation closely and we are hoping this intervention will result in operationalisation of the project sooner, than later.

Honourable Speaker, we are planning to expand macadamia and avocado farming in Vhembe, Thulamela Municipality (Senzi Avomacs Farming) and Mopani, Tzaneen Municipality (Makgoba Afrika).

In vegetable production the department will support 37 projects across the province, amongst them are Tanani Matiko Disabled & Multipurpose, Modikwa Farming, Mohlakamosome Cooperative, Nwanedi Ablution and Mazeli. The support will come through the development of irrigation systems, water reservoirs and pack sheds across various farms by March 2026.

Initiatives to support red meat production include improving water storage, fencing and animal handling facilities across various projects to enhance livestock management.

Honourable Speaker, we are planning on hosting the Provincial Agricultural Expo to promote investment in high-value crops and acquiring mechanisation equipment to assist farmers with infrastructure development during this coming financial year.

Part of our work is to support the SMMEs as they play a critical role in job creation. To this effect, we have put in place the Integrated SMME and Cooperatives Development Plan as we made an undertaking in this house previously. We have also established the SMME Support Fund with a ring-fenced budget.

Sadly, we have encountered a serious under-performance over the last 3 years with disbursement of loans to SMMEs. Amongst others, reasons provided are that prospective clients are not meeting set qualification criteria, which is unacceptable. We are directing the MEC for LEDET to work with the agency, LEDA, to review all its criteria so that LEDA can fulfil one of its mandates.

On the brighter note and as per our commitment, 30% of our Procurement spend has been ring-fenced for the SMMEs and Cooperatives. The target set for SMME spend is 70% as per the LDP and by the end of the third quarter of the current financial year we had achieved 60% spend.

Honourable members, inclusive economy means that we must increase our support for small enterprises, entrepreneurs and cooperatives with focus mainly on women, especially rural women, in our case, youth and people with disabilities.

We are therefore directing the Economic Cluster to devise implementing mechanisms that will improve the participation of all the designated groups in the economic activities of our province. In any case this is in line with our manifesto as the governing party, the African National Congress. We dare not fail!

Honourable Members, you will be pleased to know that for the period April 2024 to January 2025, as a province, we have achieved a 30-day invoice payment compliance rate of 99.78%, placing us among the top two provinces in the country. This, we believe, has a greater impact on how we continue to support business and grow the economy of the province.

Six months ago, we made commitment to continue with the work of revitalising the industrial parks through maximum

utilisation of our entities. We are well on course to make sure that this is achieved.

Honourable Speaker, in finalising the LDP 2025-2030 we acknowledge that infrastructure planning and programme management, with specific focus on water, roads, energy and sanitation are vital for supporting economic development and job creation.

We acknowledge that water access in Limpopo has regressed to 64.2%, leaving 35.8% of our people without this necessity. The growing population is adding onto the burden of ailing water infrastructure across municipalities.

In our 2024 address we committed to ensure that a functional Provincial Water Task Team to coordinate implementation of Provincial Water Intervention Strategy will be established.

The Provincial Water Task Team with its Technical Working Group, under the leadership of the Office of the Premier has since been established. To date, a draft working document has been presented to the Mayors for inputs. Follow-up district road shows will be held with Mayors and MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA).

In addition, having declared war on inadequate access to water for our people, we have started with targeted intervention where a War Room to support water services authorities has been created and it is fully functional.

As a matter of fact, we have started with the Polokwane Municipality and shall continue to apply the same strategy across all water services authorities.

We acknowledge, Honourable Members, that the increase of 1,2 million in population has not been met with same in terms of infrastructure development. Unfortunately, our #HiNwaMatiFridays campaign which was meant to accelerate water provision to our people has not materialised as expected.

It is for that reason that we will work with Water Boards, Department of Water and Sanitation, Water Services Authorities, in particular municipalities, to find solutions to water needs.

DWS is currently implementing a number of projects including the raising of the Tzaneen Dam wall which is currently at 40%, while the pipeline from Nandoni Dam to Nsami Dam has been completed, supplying water to Giyani as needed.

The remainder of the work to make people of Giyani to have access to water is at reticulation phase by Mopani District Municipality.

Honourable Speaker, since our last visit in September 2024 when we launched the #HiNwaMatiFridays at Homu village in Giyani, significant progress has been registered. The first phase covering 24 villages has taken shape, with twelve (12) villages receiving water, seven (07) of them reached practical completion of reticulation and five (05) still under construction until June 2025. Your Worship, Executive Mayor Councillor Shai, one village at a time and I know, together, we will get water to all our people.

Honourable Speaker, it is a fact that roads infrastructure is a key enabler for economic development and job creation. The recent floods that have devastated our province have caused a major setback on progress that we were making towards roads infrastructure development, be it

#DikgerekgereWednesdays wherein we were prioritising internal capacity for maintenance of our 13 500 km of unpaved roads, or our #ThibaMekoti campaign that focussed on patching potholes on the 6500 km of tarred roads.

We are, however, a resilient people that would not be deterred by such circumstances. Instead, challenges make us stronger and navigate better. We shall overcome. We shall repair these roads, we are going to fix these bridges. In partnership with different stakeholders, including the SANDF, mining houses operating in our province and SANRAL we shall bridge over these troubled waters.

Honourable Members I made a call to community members to make input into my first State of the Province Address. Allow me, therefore, to firstly welcome some of the the responses and comments on our social media platforms. Majority of those emphasised attention required on various roads across the province. We may not be able to respond to all the individuals' comments today, we have therefore directed the MEC for Limpopo Department of Public Works Roads and Infrastructure to work with members of the Infrastructure Cluster to prioritise and classify various roads in our province, be it local, provincial or national roads.

This work will assist us in prioritisation of roads requiring urgent attention including the type of rehabilitation needed. The MEC for DPWRI will elaborate further during his budget vote speech.

Honourable Speaker, six months ago, we made a bold commitment to focus on building internal capacity within our Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure. To that effect, you saw us not only celebrating the procurement and subsequent delivery of our 300 units of yellow fleet, but

also welcoming new recruits of plant operators and general workers who will be key towards continuous maintenance of our roads.

Let me take this opportunity to commend the sterling work by the MEC Sebatagolo Rachoene (Phakana a Hlabirwa) and his team of men and women who are working very hard to try to respond to the infrastructure challenges.

Our partnership with the private sector has yielded desired fruits, wherein we have seen projects like the Ga-Malekane (Steelpoort) Bridge constructed, easing travel in that part of Sekhukhune and bringing much desired economic benefits for the area.

Honourable Speaker, our learners are not only denied access to education because there are no bridges to cross the river, equally, there are no classrooms to attend those lessons because of the floods that wreaked havoc in our province.

It is for that reason that we have taken a decision to establish a disaster reserve fund which will cater for such unforeseen occurrences exacerbated by effects of climate change.

The decision to establish the fund was taken by EXCO informed by the turnaround time in the classification and declaration of disaster in terms of Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002, not forgetting that climate change effects will be with us for a very long time.

The MEC for Finance will give details on this matter during the Provincial Budget Speech because not only are roads and schools requiring this urgent funding, but health infrastructure, human settlements, libraries and all other public amenities.

Honourable Members, after this we must earnestly plan around strengthening the provincial disaster management centre, its capacity to respond, its locations as well as resources to enable it to respond promptly to any disaster that strikes.

REDUCE POVERTY AND TACKLE THE HIGH COST OF LIVING

Honourable Members, in the spirit of renewal, we undertook a comprehensive audit of our incomplete infrastructure projects, similar to a gardener tending to a neglected garden.

We have reactivated many of these dormant initiatives, breathing life into Maphutha Malatji Outpatient Department and clinical support building, which now stands as a beacon of hope in health care accessibility for the people of Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality.

Many of our projects are now in full bloom, actively being implemented. However, we acknowledge that some flowers have not yet blossomed, specifically, the Lebowakgomo Emergency Medical Services, the PMU schools, Lemana and Thusanang schools.

We call upon our dedicated team at the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, alongside our implementing agencies to diligently finalise an action plan to ensure these projects equally flourish.

Honourable Members, the Limpopo Department of Education stands as a steadfast lighthouse, illuminating the path toward quality basic education, as enshrined in Section 29(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. This section is not merely a legal obligation; it is a

promise to every citizen that education is a right, not a privilege.

It is on that note that we are improving School Readiness by successfully implementing the National Integrated Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy. This has allowed 138,226 children aged 0-4 years to access registered ECD programmes.

We have funded, through our Department of Education 2,100 registered ECD centres and we have trained 720 practitioners on the National Curriculum Framework.

Honourable Speaker, we are doing this to lay a solid foundation for emergent literacy and mathematics. We have furthermore, invested in the future by having enrolled 40 ECD practitioners at the University of Venda to pursue a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Development.

This investment is like planting seeds that will grow into a forest of educated minds, ready to tackle the challenges of tomorrow and contributing to the exceeding of the 2% economic growth target that we are aspiring to achieve by 2029.

Honourable Speaker, our Province has witnessed a remarkable rise in Grade 12 (matric) learner performance, with the overall pass rate soaring from 79.5% in 2023 to 85.1% in 2024.

We want to take this opportunity to once more congratulate the Matric Class of 2024 which has made us proud as a province and helped us to be counted amongst the top 6 in the country. From having been at some stage, the permanent resident of number 9 to where we are today is no mean feat.

Our words of special appreciation go to the sterling political leadership of our MEC, Vho-Nyamuofhe (Muofhandala) Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya, mukololo wa Songozwi thavha ya Vhadzanani. Muilafuri muila gwanda la nari and all her generals, from our Acting HOD to the last educator.

Our new goal is to elevate this pass rate to surpass the current, with aspirations to finally reach 90% in the long-term.

In this digital age, we are embracing the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) by equipping schools with technology that enhances teaching and learning. This commitment to innovation is not just about keeping pace; it is about leading the charge into a future where our learners are prepared to thrive.

Focus Schools

The Limpopo Department of Education is also placing focused attention on planning, resourcing and delivery. They are further designating Focus Schools that will offer curricula aligned to the economic sectors in the province.

Prioritised Curriculum offerings and alignment will include subject fields such as Agriculture, Mining, Tourism, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

The implementation starts in the 2025/26 MTEF with a baseline of 27 Focus Schools already designated, including eight Schools of Agriculture that have been established with a target of 55 Focus Schools in the outer year of the MTEF.

School infrastructure development is the final piece of our educational puzzle. We are dedicated to creating conducive

learning environments by providing adequate classrooms, sanitation and water infrastructure to our public schools.

Honourable Members, we are proud to report back that we have started with our programme of opening new schools and new blocks of classrooms. Just the day before yesterday we were, together with the MEC, in Sekhukhune, Elias Motsoaledi and Makhuduthamaga Municipalities, handing over Dikgalaopeng and Mpelegeng primary schools, respectively.

We will be opening one, at a time until all our schools are conducive for learning and teaching.

We are however concerned and worried that majority of our infrastructure projects are not completed in the stipulated period leading to projects budget escalation and under expenditure especially on conditional grants where money is returned to the fiscus. This is mainly as a result of the so-called construction mafias who stop projects, delay projects while making unjustified demands.

We are calling upon communities to work with traditional leadership and relevant departments to make sure that communities benefit within the framework of the law when a project is being implemented.

Our experience in Mpelegeng School in Sekhukhune, according to the principal, is that our Executive Mayor, Her Worship Cllr Maena Bahula (Mma go Noga Mogaleadi), had to intervene for construction to resume after threats from the construction mafias. This is the kind of leadership we must encourage across our province: tshwara thipa ka bogaleng! The eradication of pit latrines is a priority and we are on track to address the remaining backlog of 19 schools in the upcoming 2025/26 Financial Year.

Manana Xipikara na n'wina Vachaviseki hinkwenu, Lembe leri nga hundza hi tavisile leswaku hi ta tirhisana na Nkulukumba Holobye wa Dyondzo ya Henhla, Dokodela Nobuhle Phamela Nkambane, ku katsa na vurhangeri bya Yunivhesithi ya Thekinoloji ya le Tshwane, vona Muchaviseki Xandla xa Chanselara, Professor Tinyiko Maluleke, ku sungula rhavi ra Yunivhesithi leyi eGiyani.

Manana Xipikira, ha tinyungubyisa hi ri xifundzha-nkulu xa Limpopo hikuva migingiriko yi ya emahlweni ku tumbuluxa rhavi leri. Murhangeri wa rhavi leri u thoriwile na swona u ta sungula ntirho nhweti leyi taka ya Nyenyankulu.

Hambi swi tano, hi twa ku vava hi ko ka leswi yinwana ya mi-ako ya khale ka Kholeji ya Giyani yi onhiwile, leswi lavaka kuri yi rhanga hi ku lunghisiwa. Swi nga leswi, tidyonndzo ti ta sungula lembe leri taku ra 2026, endzhaku ka loko hi ta va hi lunghisile miako.

Yunivhesithi leyi leri ri ta dyondzisa ti dsondzo to fana na thekinoloji na swa vurimi.

Mohlomphegi spikara, mopresident wa naga Morena Matemala Cyril Ramaphosa nakong ya ge a etetše naga ya Sekhukhune o file taelo go mohlophegi Tona ya Thuto ya Godimo gore a šomišane le boetapele bya profense ya rena ya Limpopo go kgonthišisa gore kholetje ya tša meepo le mesomo ya botegeniki ya matsogo e a tlhongwa mo lefaseng la ga borena la Sekhukhune.

Ke ka fao re tšereng matsapa a go boledišana le tona ya thuto go phethagatsa taelo ya mopresidente. Tona ya Thuto ya godimo o tshepišitse gore ngwageng o tlogo wa ditshelete o tla thoma lenaneo la go aga Community Skills Centre. Re leboga Kgoshikgolo Mmagorena Hlapogadi ka

gore o re thekga kudu mo morerong wo o mogolo wa go aga Kholetje ya tsa meepo.

Bahlomphegi, morero o mongwe o mogolo ke go kgonthishisha gore dikantoro tša selete tsa mmusho tša Sekhukhune di tloge mo Lebowakgomo di boele gae gabo tsona, ka gore taba ya gore moofisiri wa tsa maphelo a tloge kliniki ya Praktiseer a tlisha diforomo gore di tlo saeniwa mo seleteng sa Capricorn mo Lebowakgomo ga se yona.

We have therefore resolved to revive the Inter-Ministerial Committee to expedite the relocation process.

Honourable Speaker, we need a healthy community to grow the economy. In recent years we have seen an improvement in life expectancy.

This is a result of our health interventions that are primary aimed at the enhancing longevity of our people. We have been able to increase life expectancy for women from the age of 56.6 in 2001 to the current 68.3. We have similarly been able to increase life expectancy for men from age 52.9 in 2001 to the current 63.2.

This is attributed to our progressive response to management and treatment of infectious disease, mainly HIV/AIDS, TB, STI and Malaria. We are, however, concerned about the increase of burden of disease as a result non-communicable disease, the so-called lifestyle diseases.

Honourable Speaker, in our quest to continue utilising advanced technology to accelerate healthcare delivery, we are for the first time in the process of acquiring a Positron Emission Tomography (PET) CT Scan unit worth R42 million, for the Nuclear Medicine Department at Pietersburg Hospital.

Honourable Members our investment during the 6th Administration of procuring and commissioning ambulances annually is bearing fruits, as evidenced by the ambulance response time where in the urban and rural response times were realized at 98.2% and 98.7% respectively.

Our commitment towards 24 hour service can only be achieved by adequate nursing personnel at our clinics, hence recruitment processes of 313 professional nurses and 40 staff nurses are underway.

Health is a labour intensive department and NHI will require not only medical officers but specialists to successfully implement, it is on that note that we direct the MEC for Health to work with the MEC for Finance to prioritise appointment of medical officers. On a positive note we have seen an improvement in the increase in number of medical specialists recruited to above 160.

The construction of the provincial Central Academic Hospital is progressing satisfactorily, with progress on site above 23%. This hospital will render high quality medical treatment for complex cases while developing clinical skills for our medical students. In addition, the hospital is expected to conduct medical research as we strive to advance treatments and develop new medical therapy.

Honourable Speaker, six months ago we directed the MEC for Social Development, MEC for Health and MEC for Transport and Community Safety to lead us in convening the Provincial Social Crime Summit, working in partnership with the South African Police Services.

Honourable Members, the successful summit attended by more than 200 delegates, representing relevant and wide-range of stakeholders was convened on the 1st week of

December 2024. Resolutions of the summit are being implemented, hence in our province it is a serious crime to encounter an underage pregnant girl child and not report it.

We are calling on our people to desist from the abuse of substances and alcohol as these are the contributory factors to the high number of domestic and gender based violence and femicide as well as other serious crimes.

We are continuing with efforts to ensure that our province is a safe haven free from crime. The more reason our law enforcement agencies are on the ground daily fighting crime. We are setting up roadblocks, conducting awareness campaigns and fighting illegal mining.

Madam Speaker, we have done well with coordination of campaigns on safety, road and social ills.

We would like to extend our words of appreciation to you, to members of Legislature, members national assembly and NCOP, not forgetting all executive mayors and mayors who heeded our call as Executive Council to support our Arrive Alive campaigns during festive season.

Road safety is everybody's business. Road safety is not just a festive season campaign, but an all-year round activity.

As part of fighting poverty, our Social Development department is currently implementing social relief programmes wherein nearly 8,000 individuals facing hardship due to disasters and other social conditions are being assisted.

On the other hand COGHSTA's mandate is clear: to provide housing, access to basic services and economic opportunities. Out of the 4 555 units target, 4469 housing

units were completed including 54 for military veterans. This outstanding improved performance has resulted in additional R500 million allocation for 2023/24 and 2024/25 Financial Years. Lets take this opportunity to congratulate honourable tatana Basikopo Makamu for turning things around.

This is indeed an affirmation of the Stats SA report that Limpopo performs better than all provinces in providing formal dwelling.

Honourable Members, the creative industry has become part of our sunrise economy. Our recent successful bid to host Bafana Bafana after a very long time will go a long way not only in encouraging social cohesion but also positive economic spin-off for the entire province.

We will continue to work with the municipality to make sure different sporting codes are hosted within our city.

Honourable Speaker, as endeavour to protect and preserve our culture and heritage our province continues to host the Marula and Mapungubwe Festivals.

We shall continue to support, profile while uplifting the standard of these festivals so that they have a national and marketable footprint.

In two days' time we will be hosting the annual Marula Festival. As a build up to this festival we have held a successful marathon and the Ku luma Vukanyi (taste of the first fruit of Marula).

Social cohesion has been further bolstered by the celebration of our national days—Freedom Day, Africa Day

and Heritage Day—which have united our communities in festivities and dialogue.

The series of community conversations and multilingual campaigns have not only promoted cultural diversity and indigenous languages but have also forged stronger bonds among our citizens, transcending tribal, gender and racial differences.

Our support for arts and culture extends to empowering our creative industries. Over 2,800 artists have been uplifted through a diverse range of events and creative projects. Furthermore nearly 1,300 practitioners have benefitted from capacity-building programmes designed to enhance their skills in writing, business planning and authorship. This investment in our creative talent is a testimony to our belief that arts and culture are powerful catalysts for economic growth and social regeneration.

Honourable Speaker, the participation in social cohesion activities have remarkably demonstrated how much we are one people as Limpopo. It is for this reason that we should steadfastly guard against elements that seek to draw us back to the apartheid and colonial times where people were separated along tribal lines.

We do not have room for tribalism in our province. We have dismantled its roots, coming out of inferiority and lack of trust in our ability to build a united and strong Limpopo. We must be proud of the Limpopo we are building

BUILDING A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

Our commitment to building a capable, ethical, and developmental state is unwavering. We have coordinated

the human resource development programmes as well as partnering with SETAs to develop skills across the province. There is a functional Limpopo Skills Development Forum where all SETAs participate.

Honourable Speaker, when we asked contributions to our speech on our social media platforms, @ChangingthingsS on X (formerly Twitter) says: *“The people of the province would like to hear the Premier announce that she will prioritise the engineering profession and engineers...”*

BE Seema on FaceBook also follows on the same trend saying: *“...I would recommend that the number of CAA (Chartered Accountants Academy) posts be increased from 04 to at least 10 so that the contribution towards the efficient control environment on the provincial entities, including the municipalities, can be enhanced and for the contribution on the strategy regarding the sustainable and growing business operations of the province.”*

It is for this reason, Honourable Speaker, that we shall engage on a campaign to increase rare professions within the province, bring skills back into the province, that will help build our economic output and governance.

With increased offerings in higher education and vocational training we are likely to keep most youth who are migrating to other provinces.

Honourable Speaker, our work is also to make our municipalities perform their duties through support. The District Development Model has been largely implemented across the province wherein we have already appointed all MECs as DDM champions.

Similarly, we have begun supporting municipalities by allowing the Executive Council to hold meetings in targeted municipalities in line with the DDM approach. We recently held our Extended Executive Council in line with the DDM approach in Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality.

Honourable members during our opening of the Legislature on the 02 of August 2024 following a number of complaints regarding dysfunctional Thabazimbi local municipality, we made a commitment that we will intervene and we will be decisive in our intervention. We would like to report that after a successful by-election a new council has been established and stabilisation process is progressing very well.

Honourable Speaker, service delivery goes hand in hand with clean governance, investor confidence is dependent on clean governance. There are pockets of excellence within our municipalities. Honourable Speaker, join us in extending our congratulations to Capricorn District Municipality, led by Her Worship, Executive Mayor Cllr Mamedupi Teffo “Mothokoa wa mmaseboko” and Waterberg District Municipality, led by His Worship, Executive Mayor Councillor Jack Maeko, for attaining clean audits.

Their dedication to sound governance and financial accountability sets a commendable example, and we encourage all municipalities to follow their lead in achieving clean audits and strengthening financial management.

Additionally, several provincial departments have also achieved clean audits, reflecting good governance and prudent financial oversight. These include the Office of the Premier, Provincial Treasury, Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and the Limpopo Legislature and our entities the Limpopo Gambling Board, Limpopo Tourism Authority and Limpopo Connexion.

We urge all departments to work diligently to maintain and improve their audit outcomes. Those who have consistently received unqualified audits must remain vigilant, as complacency can lead to regression. We similarly call on all departments and entities to intensify their efforts towards excellence in financial accountability.

Let us continue to work together towards a harmonious, progressive, and well-governed province.

Madam Speaker, hardly a few days after President Ramaphosa had recognised the Queenship of Her Majesty Queen Masalanabo VII of the Balobedu Queenship, it rained for days to no end.

This rain from the east covered the whole of Limpopo and went on for the entire January 2025. Those of us who understand the legend of the Rain Queen were not surprised as we saw the connection between the heavens and the kingdom that has been restored to its rightful heir.

We would also like to celebrate the remarkable achievement of our Queen Masalanabo and congratulate her on passing her Grade 12, knowing that there is still room for her to continue her studies.

Honourable Speaker, once again, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Queen Manyaku Thulare (Hlapogadi) on her appointment as the Acting King of the Bapedi Kingship.

Kha vhoiwe Vhakololo Vha Masingo a ha Ramabulana,vhadulu vha Tshilwavhusiku, ni tou litsha ndu i tshi swa no lavhelesa naa? Pfamo i ya tou dzhena daka ro lavhelesa naa? Ari koni ngani u dzula fhasi ra tandulula ili fhungo, shango la kona u lala, ra do kona u vhuedzedza tshirunzi tsha vuhosi ha Vhavenda.

Honourable Speaker, on assumption of office, we were confronted by myriad cases and disputes involving traditional leadership. Some cases were in court and others were referred to the Office of the Premier for finalisation.

As the Provincial Government, we have begun the process of establishing an advisory panel which will be tasked with addressing disputes among traditional leaders. We urge all stakeholders to support this panel, ensuring that disputes are resolved amicably before escalating to the courts.

Honourable Members, as we approach the initiation school season, we have noted irregularities in certain districts where established guidelines are not being adhered to. We call upon all senior traditional leaders, who are custodians of initiation schools, to strictly comply with the laws that govern initiation practices.

The Premier's Advisory Team will provide a detailed schedule to ensure that initiation schools operate in alignment with the academic calendar. It is imperative that we strike a balance between preserving cultural traditions and ensuring that learners do not miss out on their formal education.

Honourable Speaker Limpopo is poised to play a significant role in the upcoming G20 meetings, hosting a series of important gatherings that will bring together global leaders and experts to discuss critical issues.

Over the course of 2025, Limpopo will welcome distinguished delegations from around the globe, turning our towns - specifically the enchanting Hoedspruit and the bustling Polokwane - into lively intersections of ideas and innovations.

From the Agricultural Chief Scientists' Meeting to discussions on the Digital Economy and Artificial Intelligence, our province will become a canvas where the brush strokes of collaboration paint a brighter future for all.

Imagine each meeting as a seed planted in our communal soil. The Agricultural Chief Scientists will sow ideas that can flourish into sustainable farming practices, enriching not only our local farmers but also ensuring food security for generations to come.

The Financial Architecture Working Group will cultivate the roots of fiscal know-how, nourishing the economic landscape of Limpopo, enabling it to grow stronger and more resilient.

In the realm of tourism, hosting the G20 is akin to opening the gates of our garden to the world. Each delegate, each guest, is a traveller who will uncover the hidden treasures of Limpopo - the majestic landscapes of the Kruger National Park and Mapungubwe, the rich tapestry of our cultural heritage and the warm hospitality of our people.

As they walk our paths and breathe our air, they will share stories of their experiences, becoming ambassadors of our province. This ripple effect will invite more visitors to explore the beauty that Limpopo has to offer.

Let us embrace the G20 meetings as an opportunity to showcase the richness and hospitality of Limpopo - a province that is ready to share its bounty with the world.

As we prepare our garden for this grand event, let us remember that the fruits of our labour will not just benefit us today, but will also sow seeds of opportunity for future generations.

Honourable Speaker, I would want to take this opportunity to appreciate the governing party, the African National Congress, for having given me the opportunity to serve the people of Limpopo.

We would also like to thank the standing and oversight committees of the Limpopo Legislature who have been instrumental in driving and monitoring of our work throughout. We still look forward to their guidance in this 7th Administration.

We also want to thank the provincial administration led by the Director General and HODs to DDGs and all public servants in the province. We thank you in advance because we know you are going to help us achieve our goals in the implementation of the LDP.

I want also take this opportunity to thank my family, my mother in particular, for the support, it has not been an easy time, but they have been able to keep up with me.

In conclusion Madam Speaker, Limpopo's transformation is not the task of government alone, it belongs to all of us. The private sector, communities and civil society must stand together as co-owners of this new chapter. We call on investors to seize the vast opportunities we are unlocking. We urge our people whether here at home or across the country and the world to bring their skills, networks, and investments back to build the Limpopo of our dreams.

Thank you!

Tel: 015 287 6000 Fax: 015 287 4462
Website: www.limpopo.gov.za
Mowaneng Building,
40 Has van Rensburg Street

PR 18/2025
ISBN: 978-1-77997-480-8
Title of Publications: SOPA 2025