



office of the premier
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



POLICY & BUDGET

VOTE 1 2025/26



"Mpumalanga, a Province that works for all"

POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH OF THE OFFICE OF THE PREMIER, VOTE 1 (2025/26) PRESENTED BY THE PREMIER, HON MANDLA PADNEY NDLOVU IN THE LEGISLATURE

DATE: 25 JULY 2025

TIME: 14H00

Speaker of the Mpumalanga Legislature, Hon **Makhosazana Masilela**

Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga Legislature, Hon **Sam Masango**;

The Chief Whip of the governing Party, Hon **Eva Makhabane**;
Hon Members of the Legislature;

Hon Members of the Executive Council

Executive Mayors and all Councillors

ANC Provincial Secretary Cde **Muzi Chirwa** and the leadership
of the Alliance

Leadership of the leagues

The Director General, Ms **Maggie Skosana**, HODs and All
Officials

The Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and
Khoi-San Leaders, and President of CONTRALESA, **Kgoši Mokoena**;

Our esteemed guests seated in the gallery, and those following
this session through various Media Platforms;

Good afternoon, nhlikanhi lowunene, Sanibonani, Lotjhani,
Dumelang.

PROVINCIAL MTDP 2024-2029

1. Once again, it is a pleasure to come to this august house to present the budget vote 1 for the financial year (2025/26) of the Office of the Premier.
2. Hon Speaker, in February this year, the province held *Makgotla* to finalize and adopt the Provincial Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP). The MTDP is a blueprint with a set of objectives and plans to guide the 7th administration to reduce the impact of socio-economic challenges of unemployment and poverty.
3. Since the adoption of the MTDP as the blueprint for the 2024–2029 period of the current administration, my office has guided the development of the Strategic Plans (SPs) and Annual Performance Plans (APPs) for Provincial Departments and Public Entities. We assessed the institutional plans for alignment with the priorities of the 7th Administration.
4. The main objective of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024–2029 is to strategically guide the work of the 7th Administration to achieve the goals set out in the

Statement of Intent of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the National Development Plan (NDP), which are:

- A dynamic, growing economy;
- A more equal society, where no person lives in poverty;
- A capable state delivering basic services to all citizens;
- A safe and secure environment; and
- A cohesive and united nation.

5. To achieve these goals, the MTDP 2024-2029 identifies three Strategic Priorities which will be implemented across the organs of state:

- Strategic Priority 1: Drive inclusive growth and job creation.
- Strategic Priority 2: Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living.
- Strategic Priority 3: Build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

6. These three Strategic Priorities, with a set of policy choices and priority interventions, will be implemented across all government institutions and overseen and monitored by the centre of government, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluations (DPME).

7. This approach aims to focus on the efforts and resources behind an achievable set of goals that can drive delivery while presenting a clear vision for the society we want to create. While they do not displace other programs and commitments, they are essential to the economic growth agenda. This approach also requires collaboration with non-state role players, including business, labour and civil society.
8. As part of the mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of the MTDP 2024-2029 in the province, the signing of Performance Agreements annually with MECs is a hard and fast pillar. We have developed an Annual Provincial Program of Action (PPOA) to guide the work of the various clusters. The PPOA is a propeller to track and review our progress in the implementation of the MTDP through the Makgotla sessions to be convened bi-annually.
9. Using the three-cluster mechanism in coordinating the work of provincial departments, a special focus will be on monitoring the implementation and evaluating the effectiveness of the priority interventions, espoused in the Provincial Medium-Term Development Plan and the Provincial Program of Action.

- 10.** Through the **Economy Cluster**, we will be monitoring the implementation and results of **Strategic Priority 1**, of driving inclusive growth and job creation. This focuses on achieving rapid, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, which is key to eradicating poverty, reducing unemployment and inequality, and integral to the wider transformation of society.
- 11.** The Cluster will be monitoring the reduction of unemployment to 25 per cent, the investment target of R50 billion, the reduction of poverty to less than 35 per cent, the employment target of creating 60,000 jobs per annum, and improving income inequality, over the next five years.
- 12.** Through the Social Cluster, we will monitor the implementation and results derived from **Strategic Priority 2**, of reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living. The cluster will focus on title deeds and housing subsidies provided to the poor, achieving the targets on life expectancy, reduction of maternal, infant and child mortality, access to universal health coverage, education and skills outcomes, access to ECD program, access to higher education, and social cohesion.

- 13.** The Governance Cluster will be monitoring the implementation and results of **Strategic Priority 3** of building a capable, ethical and developmental state. The cluster will monitor governance, proficiency, and competency of state institutions and public entities in serving citizens.
- 14.** Additionally, the Cluster, in collaboration with the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA), will oversee the implementation and outcomes of the District Development Plans.
- 15.** We will also oversee local government, public entities, and law enforcement agencies to combat crime, fight corruption, and elimination of gender-based violence and delivering of basic services.
- 16.** Promotion of a foreign policy that supports the culture of human rights and peace while strengthening ties within Africa and with the broader world will be high on the agenda of the Cluster.
- 17.** Lastly, the Office of the Premier will develop an MTDP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the Provincial

Evaluation Plan 2025-2030, to measure and evaluate the performance, impact and sustainability of the MTDP 2024-2029.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

18. Hon Speaker, when I presented the Policy and Budget speech of the Office of the Premier last year, I indicated to this house that we would prioritize effective monitoring and evaluation, which plays a critical role in development and provision of service delivery to our communities.

19. I am glad to announce that we have successfully reconfigured the organizational structure of the Office to strengthen its capacity and capabilities for integrated monitoring and evaluation of the Medium-Term Development Plan and the District Development Plans, amid the complexities of the public sector development environment.

20. Hon Speaker, the complexity of the challenges confronting our province and our country makes it compulsory for us to undertake research studies. Research will help the Provincial Government to determine the impact of every

legislation, policy, program, and project to the lives of the people of Mpumalanga.

21. In assessing the effectiveness of these interventions, the Office of the Premier has prioritized the evaluation of some programs in various provincial departments. In this regard, five evaluation studies have been concluded, whilst six are underway.

22. We have concluded a study on the assessment of the effectiveness of the Governance Structures in the Primary Health Care Facilities for the Department of Health. This study sought to assess the effectiveness of the aforesaid governance structures in our health facilities.

23. In the evaluation of the tourism development program, we have assessed the state of Mdala and Mkhombo Nature Reserves, under the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT), which sought to ascertain the implementation of the revitalization plan of the nature reserves. Both are vital assets that are essential for effective conservation and preservation of economic growth and sustainable environment.

- 24.** The assessment of the Sakh'abakhi Contractor Development Program, under the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport sought to evaluate its implementation and outcomes.
- 25.** The scope of the research studies was cast wide to include an assessment of the implementation and the effectiveness of Transversal Contracts, hosted by the Provincial Treasury. Through this study, we aim to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness thereof to determine if the expected results are realized.
- 26.** Similarly, with the Household interventions for sustainable livelihoods (HISL) by the Department of Social Development, to assess the implementation and its effectiveness. The program seeks to address the poverty and unemployment challenges through the provision of integrated social and economic support to poor households.
- 27.** As standard practice, we will share the findings and recommendations of these studies with the public and through our websites once we have handed over the reports to the respective Accounting Officers of the affected departments.

28. Hon Speaker, as alluded to earlier on, that six evaluation studies are underway and will be concluded by the end of the 2025/26 financial year. These include:

- to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Program spearheaded by the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA);
- to assess the effectiveness of the Oversight and Monitoring on Policing, and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the Tourism Safety Monitoring programs in the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison (DCSSL);
- to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the *Phezukomkhono mlimi* implemented by the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA);
- to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the Premier's Youth Development Fund in the Office of the Premier (OTP); and lastly,
- to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the Louisville Road Paving project in the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport.

29. Once again Hon Speaker, the intention of these evaluation studies is to generate systematically scientific evidence on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of our programs. The time of celebrating the implementation of activities without results is over.

30. Our interventions and performance should be measured based on the results and the impact they have on the lives of our people, the environment and economy. There is no more room for mediocrity complacency.

31. Moving into the 2025/26 financial year, the goals and targets of the 7th Administration are Big and Audacious. To achieve these, we will continue strengthening our leadership and oversight roles as the centre of power of the provincial government.

SERVICE DELIVERY MONITORING TOOL (SDMT)

32. Hon Speaker, in order to improve adequate tracking of service delivery for services rendered by Provincial Departments, my office will be rolling out the implementation of the Service Delivery Monitoring Tool (SDMT) in collaboration with the Department of Cooperative

Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA).

- 33.** The SDMT will serve as a tool to address the challenges faced by the Mpumalanga government in delivering services to its people. It will allow citizens to communicate issues, file complaints, and track both resolved and unresolved incidents through an application on their devices.
- 34.** The SDMT is currently being rolled out in phases. Phase one was completed in June 2025, and entails developing both functional and technical requirements systems for each provincial department so that we establish a strong monitoring and evaluation framework.
- 35.** The functional requirements aim to enhance civic engagement by enabling citizens to report service delivery issues via a mobile application, which includes real-time reporting, geo-spatial reference, as well as early warning system to alert provincial authorities of emerging challenges. Meanwhile, the technical requirements focus on building a secure, scalable, and integrated back-end infrastructure to support the tool's functionality.

- 36.** The completion of Phase One culminated in a comprehensive blueprint that will guide the development of other phases of the SDMT, including Prototype Development, user testing, and eventual system rollout.
- 37.** Hon Speaker, this tool marks a strategic milestone in strengthening the province's service delivery ecosystem by equipping the Office of the Premier with a sophisticated monitoring and evaluation tool, laying the groundwork for responsive governance and enhanced accountability through a data-driven and citizen-centered approach. The full implementation of the SDMT APP will be concluded by the end of the current financial year (2025/26).

TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MPUMALANGA RESEARCH & INNOVATION INSTITUTE

- 38.** Hon Speaker, I cannot over-emphasize the critical importance of using research as a basis for evidence-based decision making. The countries which are more progressing in job creations and economic development are those that are investing more on research. I hinted to this August House during last year's policy and budget speech that a provincial task team was established to oversee the establishment of the Mpumalanga Research & Innovation Institute (MRII).

- 39.** Initially the task team comprised of representatives from two eminent Universities in the country, namely; Witwatersrand and the University of Pretoria. It gives me pleasure Hon Speaker to report to the house about the expansion of the team to include the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Tshwane University of Technology as well as the University of Mpumalanga, all of whom have come on board as members of the provincial task team.
- 40.** We have consulted extensively on this matter, and this has propelled us to develop a bill that gives the mandate and establishment of the MRIL. The office has drafted a Bill on the establishment of the MRIL and we are currently consulting with governance structures for their inputs.
- 41.** The draft Bill will then be advertised and public hearings across the three District Municipalities of the Province, will be held through the law-making process of the Legislature. Once the law-making process is concluded, the Bill will then be endorsed as a legislation that govern MRIL by the Legislature.

42. Parallel with the Bill process, the task team has secured office space for the MRII at Tshwane University of Technology where the MRII will be hosted.

43. Once established, the Mpumalanga Research and Innovation Institute will undertake relevant research and translate the new knowledge created to drive transformative societal impact in line with the Medium-Term Development Plan as well as the National Development Plan. This includes research and new knowledge generation that will:

- Inform our policy development;
- Improve our planning for implementation;
- Strengthen integrated service delivery both at provincial and local government level;
- Strengthen economic, social and sustainable development
- Build state capacity and inform decision making through evidence-based data
- Enhance the wide range of strategic initiatives that are being put in place to fast-track the improvement of the lives of people in our province.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- 44.** Hon Speaker, the Office coordinated the South Africa-Mozambique Inter-Ministerial Meeting in collaboration with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), to discuss the post-election violent protest, blockage at the Lebombo-Ressano Garcia Border Post, the effect thereof as well as mitigating measures to normalize the situation. The meeting took place in Malelane on 18 December 2024.
- 45.** The office supported the Nkomazi Special Economic Zone and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism for easy pass at the border for their participation at the 29th International Trade Fair (FACIM 2024) under the South African Pavilion on 25-31 August 2024.
- 46.** Mpumalanga was represented by six SMMES from Emalahleni, Victor Khanye, Govan Mbeki and Dr JS Moroka Municipality. These delegations conducted engagements with prospective investors to the SEZ and investment leads are normally realized over a period of time.
- 47.** Processes to renew Memorandum of Understanding with Maputo Province of Mozambique are underway. A draft MoU

and Draft Action Plan is now available after the sitting of Joint Technical meetings, to develop these for consideration by the administrative heads of both provinces. The 2024 National Elections in Mozambique interrupted the process.

48. The Office collaborated with DIRCO on the coordination and hosting of the Minister of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation outreach program accompanied by Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Heads of Mission of the G20 countries, Consul Generals, African Union and business representatives on 23 November 2024, 20 countries participated. The purpose was to lay the ground for South Africans to understand the significance of hosting the upcoming G20 summit.

49. The embassies donated equipment such as laptops, television sets, Liquid Crystal Display writing boards and other items to Mahlale High School. DIRCO hosted a reception gala dinner in the evening in Hazyview. The Mpumalanga Tourism Parks and Agency (MTPA) also sponsored an excursion to the Kruger National Park, a luncheon for the ambassadors as a courtesy, and to showcase what the province could offer in wildlife tourism.

- 50.** South Africa's Presidency of the G20 countries, effectively from November last year, has culminated into the hosting of multilateral functions in our province.
- 51.** In April and May this year, we hosted the G20 Education Indaba in White River, and the G20 Research and Innovation Working Group at the University of Mpumalanga, respectively.
- 52.** We also hosted the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion in May, and recently the G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group in July, both at the Kruger National Park.
- 53.** Recently as far back as last week, we have successfully hosted the G20 Development Working Group at Kruger National Park also as part of the build up to the G20 summit in November 2025.
- 54.** We are now preparing for the G20 Tourism Outreach activities to be held in the three Districts this week. These build-up events will culminate in the Tourism G20 Ministerial meeting in September 2025, and are key to reposition Mpumalanga, as a leading tourism destination and enhance economic growth and economic development globally.

JUST ENERGY TRANSITION AND GREEN ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT

- 55.** The Office together with its partner, Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency, has established a technical structure for Just Transition and Climate Change Steering Committee which sits regularly and assess projects and programs for Just Transition and Climate change.
- 56.** During the financial year 2025/26, we will facilitate implementation and monitoring the Just Transition Governance implementation plan as well as coordinate Just Transition partners. In carrying out these strategic activities, there will be high levels of oversight that is exercised to ensure the implementation of Just Transition in a just and fair manner.
- 57.** There will be a high level of assurance that those who are affected by the transition to renewable energy are reskilled and employable and that the province can benefit from economic spin offs along the entire value chain.

58. The Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency will be responsible for the implementation of the Just Transition and the Office will exercise coordination and provide oversight services. The province has accepted that JUST ENERGY transition will coexist with coal hence initiatives such as carbon capture research and programs must be fully supported.

RATIONALIZATION OF MPUMALANGA STATE OWN ENTITIES

59. Hon Speaker, the review of the Mpumalanga Public Entities was conducted to identify possible gaps, improve efficiency and efficacy, as well as determine mitigating measures. This will have a ripple effect in the province's efforts to generate own revenue and increase on investment and development at large.

60. During the financial year 2024/25 all the four Public Entities, namely the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency, Mpumalanga Economic Regulator, and Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust, were reviewed and reports presented to the committee on the Review of Mpumalanga Public Entities.

61. The review looked at legislative mandate, financial sustainability, project management, corporate governance, socio-economic infrastructure, corporate strategy and performance as well as audit outcomes for the entities. The report has outlined findings and recommendations that will improve the efficacy of these entities.

62. In the financial year 2025/26, we will prioritize the monitoring of the implementation of recommendations as outlined in the report by the entities and parent departments. This will assist entities to improve on their efficacy and efficiency leading to improving their performance and fulfilment of their mandate.

STRENGTHENING THE COORDINATION AND DELIVERY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

63. Hon Speaker, in order to attract investment into the province, infrastructure development remains a corner stone of development in the province. To achieve the objectives of eliminating poverty, reducing unemployment and inequality as well as promoting economic inclusivity, we need to have the capability and capacity to plan and deliver infrastructure effectively and efficiently. Hence the Office has taken a

decision to establish a Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

64. Currently, Hon Speaker, the Office has finalized the proposed organizational structure which will lead to the establishment of the Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit within the Office of the Premier.

65. We are currently seeking concurrence from the Minister of Public Service and Administration. While the establishment is underway, we have taken a decision to use services of external consultants to assist the office with work of infrastructure monitoring and the appointment of the suitable company is at final stage.

66. The scope of the Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit will carry out the following activities amongst others:

- Review of project plans and project designs
- Projects preparations and packaging to solicit funding
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation of infrastructure projects

BATHO PELE

67. The Office of the Premier remains committed to the effective implementation of Batho Pele principles as a cornerstone for driving Public Service Transformation, such as, Africa Public Service Day, Khaedu, and Integrated Public Service Month, which will ensure that service delivery, is people-centered, transparent, and accountable. These initiatives support the aspiration for the realization of priority 3 of the MTDP of building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR

68. In our quest to entrench accountability, the Office will continue to monitor the performance of HODs and all Senior Managers, through the signing of Performance Agreements and conducting of Performance Assessments.

69. In strengthening our coordination role, my Office will continue to facilitate the process of reviewing organizational structures of departments to align with the priorities of the 7th Administration.

PREMIER'S YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FUND

70. Hon Speaker, inclusive growth and job creation is the apex priority for the Seventh Administration. Government, clusters and sectors must prioritize interventions aimed at stimulating more rapid and inclusive growth. Our contribution to the priority on driving inclusive growth and job creation relates to the Premier Youth Development Fund.

71. We have seen and recorded the growth and sustainability of Youth Enterprises contributing to our provincial economic growth and economic development through realization of job opportunities created. Since its inception, the Premier Youth Development Fund through the Youth Enterprises has created new jobs of more than 800. These jobs were created in various economic sectors such as manufacturing, mining, green economy, tourism, agriculture amongst others.

72. In 2024/25 financial year, a total of 66 Youth enterprises benefited from the fund, and an amount of R90.7 million was approved for disbursement.

73. In 2025/26 we have set aside R103 million for the Premier's Youth Development Fund to propel young people of the Province of Mpumalanga to participate in the economy. As

part of our commitment towards youth development, a Provincial Youth Development Strategy will be developed to strengthen planning and implementation of youth targeted programs in the province. The office has set a target that 30% of our procurement must be from youth owned companies in 2025/26 financial year.

ON MAINSTREAMING SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

74. Hon Speaker, with regards to mainstreaming services for persons with disability, we have developed the Provincial Policy on Disability which is en route for approval before the end of the second quarter.

75. The policy serves as a blueprint for accelerating the advancement of the rights for persons with disabilities and embeds disability considerations across all programs and projects while identifying targeted opportunities and investments in key areas to drive and accelerate persons with disabilities' responsive transformation. In our effort to ensure economic inclusivity, the office has set a target of 7% of our procurement for companies owned by persons with disabilities.

ON TACKLING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE (GBVF)

76. As part of tackling Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, we have established Rapid Response Teams on GBVF in all 20 municipalities which are chaired by the Executive Mayors. The purpose of the RRTs-GBVF is to provide swift multi-sectoral responses on GBVF related matters at the local level.

77. In addition, we have launched the Mpumalanga Provincial Council on GBVF, which I have the honor to chair with the assistance of my co-chair, Ms Nomalanga Ngwenya from the Civil Society. The structure serves as a provincial accountability platform that will provide progress on the implementation of the Provincial Strategic Plan on GBVF, which was approved in November 2024. The roll-out of the Strategic plan needs adequate resources, political and administrative support.

78. In this financial year, my office will be closely monitoring the implementation of the plan and provides support to municipalities to ensure the effective functionality of RRTs.

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL AIDS COUNCIL (MPAC)

- 79.** Hon Speaker, the Mpumalanga Provincial AIDS Council (MPAC) has reviewed decisions of the council. These include the budget for coordination of HIV, TB and STIs activities in municipalities that was increased.
- 80.** The Provincial Implementation Plan for HIV, STIs and TB for 2023-2028 in line with the National Strategic Plan for HIV, STIs and TB has been developed, validated and is now undergoing the last stages of approval through relevant structures. In the current financial year, the Executive Council will endorse the Provincial Implementation Plan to ensure full implementation with relevant stakeholders.
- 81.** The Global Alliance plan to end AIDS in children by 2030 was successfully developed and validated. It will be launched together with the Provincial Implementation Plan for HIV, TB and STIs also during the current financial year.
- 82.** Recognizing the shrinking financial support, due to the cuts in international funding, it is now public knowledge that such action is likely to cause human catastrophe in the future. A Provincial Resource Mobilization Committee was established purposefully to mobilize resources to support

and bridge the funding gap for sustainable implementation of the PIP during its life span.

83. The Provincial Private Sector Forum was launched on the 05th of December 2024, which includes (Government, Civil Society, and the Private Sector) through support from SANAC. This structure will be inducted on its roles and responsibilities during the course of the current financial year.

84. We continue to encourage communities to go for TB screening and perform regular testing for HIV to ensure early treatment. Communities of Mkhondo Municipalities received TB screening on the TB Day as part of activities towards the commemoration of this important event.

85. Sector assessments and audits will be conducted in local municipalities and civil society elections for local municipalities, will be held in this financial year.

STRENGTHENING COORDINATION OF MILITARY VETERANS

- 86.** Hon Speaker, the Office will continue to lead efforts to further improve the lives of military veterans through coordination of government support and enhance services provided to military veterans in the province.
- 87.** In the 2023-24 financial year, the Office of the Premier and Military Veterans Council working with National Department of Military Veterans established the database for Military Veterans in the Province.
- 88.** During the 2024/25 financial year, the Military Veterans program of action was monitored and managed to offer a bursary for one student to study towards being a pilot and a number of houses were built for qualified members. The Office has finalized the proposed organizational structure which will give effect to the establishment of the Military Veterans Unit within the Office of the Premier. We are currently seeking concurrence from the Minister of Public Service and Administration.
- 89.** In this current financial year, we have enhanced the Military Veterans Council with additional members to ensure proper

coordination of the services required by military veterans. We will continue to coordinate the implementation of the Military Veterans Program of Action (PoA) as well as the establishment of Military Veterans units and desks within the Office of the Premier and District Municipalities.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION

90. Madam Speaker, we have approved an Integrated Provincial Communication Strategy to entrench a structured way of communicating government work. The strategy is the vehicle through which we will deliver information to our communities in various ways, using mass communication platforms.

91. The strategy is aligned with the digital era which is propelled by the data driven age and the Artificial Intelligence (AI) which play an integral part of information dissemination.

92. We will further coordinate outreach programs with direct public engagements to mitigate negative public trust, fueled by the high prevalence of fake news and misinformation that portray government in a bad light.

FIGHTING FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

- 93.** Hon Speaker, to restore public confidence in the provincial government, the Office will continue to investigate cases of fraud, corruption and maladministration, and monitor the implementation of recommendations.
- 94.** In an effort to further institutionalize ethical behavior, we will review and implement the Provincial Anti-Corruption Strategy across all Provincial Departments and Municipalities. Furthermore, all Departments and Municipalities will also be monitored on compliance with the Public Service Integrity and Ethics Framework.
- 95.** In this financial year, we will capacitate communities on how to detect and report fraud, maladministration and corruption in order to enhance public trust.
- 96.** The Office will train officials as investigators in the current financial year as part of the Workplace Skills Plan which will strengthen the internal expertise of the Integrity Management, Forensic Investigations and Security Management Unit to investigate reported cases without fear or favor.

- 97.** We are monitoring investigations conducted by all Provincial Departments, the SIU, Public Protector as well as in-house investigations, to ensure the full and prompt implementation of all recommendations in order to promote accountability.
- 98.** In pursuit of a public service with integrity, we will subject officials to the prescribed vetting process on a continuous basis, in collaboration with the State Security Agency.
- 99.** The national Ethics Institute has developed and approved the Code for Ethical Leadership in Local Government for Municipal councillors and officials. The Office of the Premier, in collaboration with COGHSTA and SALGA, are currently rolling out workshops throughout all Municipalities.
- 100.** Lifestyle audits will be conducted if red flags are identified when processing financial disclosures by designated officials.

IMPROVING AUDIT OUTCOMES

101. Hon Speaker, the Office of the Premier remains committed in its effort to improve Audit Outcomes in all the Provincial Departments, Entities and Municipalities. Accordingly, it has continued to collaborate with the Provincial Treasury and COGHSTA in this effort.

102. The Office has continued, through the shared audit services, to render internal audit services to four cluster departments. The shared internal audit services provide early warning signals to the Management of the cluster departments, which has assisted Departments to improve their audit outcomes.

103. We have seen an improvement in the **PFMA** audit outcomes when comparing the 2022/23 to 2023/24 financial years.

104. The Report of the Auditor-General shows that:

- Four Institutions, namely, COGTA, DARDLEA, MTPA and MER, managed to maintain a clean audit outcomes. This achievement increased from 4 institutions in 2022/23 to 5

in 2023/24, the 5th being PT. We congratulate these institutions and encourage them to continue flying the flag of Mpumalanga high since they demonstrate and maintain their clean audit outcomes.

- Nine Institutions obtained Unqualified Audit outcomes with Findings for the Financial Year ended 31 March 2024, the number has remained the same as in the financial year ended 31 March 2023.
- In the same vein, Hon Speaker, the outcome on qualified audit opinion shows improvement compared to the previous Financial Year where departments with Qualified audit outcomes were reduced from three to two.

105. Pertaining to the **MFMA** the Report of the Auditor-General shows that:

- Two Municipalities, namely, Ehlanzeni and Nkangala Districts managed to maintain the clean audit outcome. We congratulate these municipalities and encourage them to continue flying the flag of their districts high, through the exemplary leadership.

- There is no municipality that received adverse audit outcome in 2023/24 audit compared to 2022/23 where one municipality received an adverse outcome.

106. This clearly demonstrates the commitment of the Office in its effort to see all auditees in the province to improve audit outcomes to achieve clean audit, as is evident from above, the province has no disclaimed audit opinions.

107. While we may not achieve the clean audit outcome in the 2024/25 financial year, however, my Office has prioritized achieving clean audit outcome for the 2025/26 audit.

108. We have embarked on initiatives to strengthen the internal control systems which include, but not limited to capacitating the Governance structures and officials as well as holding them accountable for their area of responsibility, implementing consequence management etc.

109. Departments develop Audit Action Plans on how they will be addressing the findings by the Auditor-General South Africa and in addition, through the PMC and EXCO, the Office in partnership with Provincial Treasury review the Audit Action Plans of departments and the implementation

of the remedial actions at regular on-going basis and monitors the issue of unwanted expenditure (i.e. the unauthorized expenditure, irregular expenditure as well as fruitless and wasteful expenditure).

110. The progress in implementing the Action Plans continues to be monitored by the Premier, Provincial Treasury, Internal Audit as well as the Audit Committees.

111. Furthermore, the Executive Council and Premier's coordinating forums (PCF) continue to track progress and monitor the implementation of the commitments by the various departments and municipalities with a view to working towards further improving audit outcomes.

112. It is therefore singular and privileged, Hon Speaker, to table the budget of the Office of the Premier Vote 1, and I accordingly request the House to approve the amount of **R 493 827 000.00 (Four Hundred and Ninety-Three Million Eight Hundred and Twenty-Seven Thousand Rand)** for the 2025/26 financial year, allocated as follows:

- Program 1: Administration – **R 170 080 000.00 (One Hundred and Seventy Million and Eighty Thousand Rand)**

- Program 2: Institutional Development Support and Integrity Management - **R 237 062 000.00 (Two Hundred and Thirty-Seven Million, and Sixty-two Thousand Rands)**
- Program 3: Policy, Research, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation - **R 86 685 000.00 (Eighty-Six Million, Six Hundred and Eighty-Five Thousand.)**

113.Hon Speaker, as we near the end of Mandela Month, we would like to thank the contribution made for our people to have shelter, food on the table, school uniforms and blankets to keep them warm and all the goodies that were donated.

114.“In giving, you join the ranks of those who changed the world, one selfless act at a time,” said Steve Maraboli.

115.To our volunteers thank you for the support that you give to the people of Mpumalanga. Elizabeth Andrew was correct when she said “**Volunteers do not necessarily have time, they just have the heart.**”

116.We commit to do more and talk less. We will keep our commitment of utilising the little that we have to build our communities.

117.Madam Speaker, let us recall the wise words of u tata Nelson Mandela who inspires us as we strive to build a better province and a better South Africa:

“It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.”

I thank you.