



2024

OPENING OF THE 7th MPUMALANGA

*Provincial
Legislature*

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Mpumalanga Provincial Government



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MPUMALANGA
PROVINCIAL
GOVERNMENT



**OPENING OF THE MPUMALANGA LEGISLATURE ADDRESS 31 JULY 2024
DELIVERED BY THE PREMIER OF MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
HON. MANDLA PADNEY NDLOVU
10:00**

Speaker of the Mpumalanga legislature, **Honourable LL Masina**

Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga legislature, **Honourable S Masango**

Judge President of the High Court of Mpumalanga, **Judge Mphahlele**

Esteemed Members of the Judiciary

Hon Members of the National and Provincial Legislatures

Hon Members of the National Council of Provinces present

Your Worships Executive Mayors and all Hon Councillors

Chairperson of the Provincial House of Khoisan and Traditional Leaders, and President of Contralesa, **Kgoši Mokoena**

Chairpersons and board members of our parastatals

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

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

Leaders of the alliance

Leaders of the opposition parties

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

Esteemed guests' ladies and gentlemen



Madam Speaker

1. We invited families of five struggle heroes and heroines who courageously fought for our independence, we know that they are many in the Province.
2. These families include that of; **Gert Sibande** the Lion of the East, one of the ANC co-accused to stand trial in the treason trial of 1956 to 1961 alongside our struggle icon Nelson Mandela and 154 others.
3. **Nokuthula Simelane** from eMzinoni in Bethal an ANC struggle heroine, Minister Thembi Nkadimeng's sister who was murdered by the infamous Vlakplaas security operatives
4. **Nomoya Masilela**, a student who was a member of Congress of South African Students (COSAS) from EMzinoni Township in Bethal.
5. **Saul Mkhize**, a human rights activists who was gunned down by security forces whilst organizing his people against forceful removal from their land in Driefontein in 1983.
6. **Johannes Sweet Sambo** a struggle hero from Steenbok in Nkomazi, who was a thorn in the flesh of Eugene de Kock, an apartheid death squad commander. He was murdered and his body blown up beyond recognition with explosives by members of the apartheid security branch in Komatipoort in 1991.
7. We have invited these families because their children displayed selflessness and immense courageous leadership. They sacrificed their own lives, fighting for the liberation of their country. We regard them as martyrs. Their souls and spirits continue to live among us.
8. They remind us of our struggle icon, Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, who said whilst on his death row, before he was hanged by the Apartheid regime:

"My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them. They must continue the fight."
9. These martyrs heeded this call from Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, and it encouraged them to fight on. Eventually, the people of South Africa were liberated from the apartheid bondage.
10. We believe that the blood of our struggle heroes and heroines from this Province, whose families are with us today, **indeed nourished the tree that is bearing the fruits of our freedom**. We dare not fail this martyrs.
11. I would like to request all these families to stand up so that we can acknowledge and recognize their presence, in remembrance of our fallen heroes.
12. In the future, we will invite many other families whose relatives fought so hard for this democracy that we are enjoying today.



Madam Speaker,

13. Beloved People of the place of the rising sun, Mpumalanga; I stand before you as a servant of the people. I regard my deployment to Premiership as an opportunity to serve our people, and **definitely not to be served**. I vow to remain a servant to my own conscious and to be an ambassador of the truth.
14. As the Premier, I will utilise the office to work for the people of Mpumalanga.
15. My agenda is **to implement the manifesto of the governing party and the statement of intent, adopted by the Government of National Unity (GNU)**. We are going to work, and use our incumbency to give services beyond self, to the people of Mpumalanga. There will be no stagnation.
16. We thank the millions of South Africans of all races who went to the polls on the 29th of May 2024 to exercise their democratic right and voted for the political parties of their choice.
17. The 2024 NEP elections were peaceful, free and fair. We accepted the will of the people and **I feel honoured and humbled by the confidence the governing party has bestowed upon** me to be the Premier of Mpumalanga Province.
18. I would like to thank all our political parties for deploying credible public representatives to the legislature. They committed to work with us, and that the Chamber will not be reduced into a circus but a place for robust engagements.
19. Members have assured me that **we will unite to achieve a common purpose**; to assist one another, to strengthen one another, **to complement one another**, to offer and give support to one another, **bound by a common vision of find working together**.
20. We all agree that it is in the course of doing work that human error is committed. We will own up and correct our mistakes.

Madam Speaker

21. Allow me to also pay special tribute and acknowledge the contribution made by my fellow colleagues who came before me as Premiers of this beautiful Province. Hon Dr. Mathews Phosa, Hon. Ndaweni Mahlangu, Hon. Thabang Makwetla, Hon. DD Mabuza and my immediate predecessor, Hon. Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, who is now the chairperson of National Council of Provinces (NCOP). All these capable leaders made an enormous contribution to the development and growth of Mpumalanga.
22. We would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of all our former Premiers as the cadres deployed by the ANC to lead government in this Province. They laid the foundation for the government's achievements we are part of today.

Hitting the ground running since taking over the office

Madam Speaker

23. Since my first day in office, I have engaged with a number of internal and external stakeholders.
24. I have met with all departments to understand the current state of their readiness to serve the 7th administration and deliver quality services to the people of Mpumalanga.
25. I have met with one of our Chapter 9 Institutions, the office of the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA) **to receive a report on**

the audit outcomes of our departments and local government.

26. I have met with the **top leadership of the SAPS to pledge my support for their work**, but also **raise our concern about the high levels of crime in particular Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBV and F), car hijacking, murder and hijacking of projects by the so called ‘construction mafias’**.

27. I have engaged with the SIU to get an update on the number of investigations conducted in the Province, **including the unfortunate colluding of government officials and private sector to line up their pockets while people were dying of COVID 19**.

28. I have also engaged with a number of businesses, big and small, representatives of labour unions and black business formations. **They have all expressed their desire to work with us in building an inclusive economy**.

29. I will continue to engage with other stakeholders in days, weeks and months to come. **We invite all our stakeholders to partake in finding solutions to our problems instead of putting all their trust on politicians**.

30. This year marks 30 years since we attained our democracy.

31. Thirty years ago, President Nelson Mandela was sworn in as the first democratically elected President of South Africa. In his inaugural speech President Mandela said;

“Let there be justice for all, let there be peace for all, let there be work, bread water and salt for all.”

32. It therefore gives me pleasure and honour to re-affirm that, **as a nation, united in diversity and driven by common purpose**, we have the ability to fulfil the promises that our President Mandela made to our people on that fateful day.



Unity in Diversity

33. As people of Mpumalanga, we are encouraged by Mahatma Gandhi when he said,

“I offer you peace, I offer you love, I offer you friendship, I see your beauty, I hear your need, I can sense your feelings. My wisdom flows from the highest source, I salute that source from you. Let us work together for unity and love.”

Madam Speaker

34. These words of wisdom on unity encourage us to carry a profound message of **hope; love, caring for one another; forgiveness, friendship and peace.**

35. This is the message I am bringing to you today, as people of Mpumalanga. **We promise not to disappoint you; we dare not to fail you.**

36. It is now time for our people to unite for the common purpose, and that purpose is to serve the people of this province.

The Context

Madam Speaker

37. Long time ago, Aristotle warned us, just like OR Tambo did in the recent past in that: **“it is harder to preserve than to found a democracy.”**

38. Charles Dickens speaks of the ‘spring of hope’ and of a ‘winter of despair’ in one breath. He describes the spring of hope as a period with the best of times and the worst of times, the age of wisdom and the age of foolishness, the epoch of belief, the epoch of incredulity or disbelief, as its highlights. On the other hand, he describes the ‘winter of despair’ as being characterized by us having had everything before us, and when we found ourselves having nothing before us.

39. He was referring to our present day lived experiences. What encourages us as the people is to develop an attitude of the Spring of Hope despite all the challenges we are facing and we will continue to face as a nation. We have never lost hope and we shall never allow ourselves to be the prisoners of a Winter Season of Despair.

40. We are a nation built of unfailing strength. There will be times when we will falter and commit mistakes but we shall rise again like the Phoenix rising from the ashes.

41. Whatever challenges we have faced, we have always joined hands together **as one nation, one Province, one people,** and responded accordingly.

42. We have demonstrated this resilience during the most difficult moments of our lives and during the global financial crisis, and even in the most trying period of our existence, the COVID 19 pandemic era.

Our Mandate

Madam Speaker

43. Allow me to congratulate his Excellency President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa on his well-articulated Opening of the Parliament



Address he delivered on Thursday the 18th of July 2024. We fully support all the initiatives and the priorities of the Government of National Unity (GNU) as contained in his address.

44. We are fully committed to the statement of intent which has become the foundation of the Government of National Unity.

45. Our work as government is informed and influenced by among others;

- the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;
- the **social contract we entered into with our people during elections through our election Manifesto**,
- the National Development Plan (NDP),
- the newly conceptualized Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP),
- the Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, and
- the statement of intent of the government of national unity
- Institutional and procedural limitations on powers.

The Economy

Madam Speaker

46. Our focus and priority is the implementation of socio-economic interventions aimed at intent and **resolve to maximise job creation, eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities.**

47. We have entered into a social contract with our people through our election Manifesto and other policies like the **NDP, that act as a compass guiding all of us through various pathways, whose final destination is the full realization of economic emancipation of our people.** We promised our people that we will pay special attention to amongst others:

- Working with the private sector and our social partners, we will create jobs for all our people on a much larger scale and support entrepreneurship development.*
- We will build industries to achieve an inclusive economy that leaves no one behind and no one should be excluded; we will invest in infrastructure leading to the massification of job creation;*
- We will tackle the high cost of living by strengthening comprehensive social security and intensify food security through our agricultural programmes.*
- We will invest in the people by ensuring that local government delivers on its mandate and it provides clean water, proper sewer systems that are functional and good road infrastructure.*
- We will deal with the social ills that are afflicting our people like drug and alcohol abuse, Gender Based Violence and Femicide that leads to the fragmentation of family units and the breakdown of societal cohesion;*
- We will improve public transport; improve the quality of education and build skills that are relevant to the local industries.*
- We will ensure quality health care by fully embracing the much anticipated national health insurance; build more houses and provide basic services to all; and keep our homes and streets safe, protect our borders and fight Corruption.*
- We will build the developmental state capable of meeting the needs and aspirations of our people by promoting nation building*



and social cohesion.

- *We will drive transformation led by Honest, Dedicated and Capable Leaders. We will work hard for a better Province and our Country (South Africa), Continent (Africa) and a better world.*

48. These commitments we are making today are a matter of utmost importance, driven by urgency in order **to address the triple challenges of high unemployment, poverty and inequality**. They are underpinned by the three main priorities of the Government of National Unity which are:

- Drive inclusive growth and job creation
- Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living
- Build a capable, ethical and developmental state

Madam Speaker

49. When we presented the State of the Province Address earlier this year, we gave the nation both Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) review and 30-year performance review.

50. Both these reviews confirmed to us that **the Province has made remarkable strides in the areas of socio-economic development, we have broadened our social safety network for the poor and the vulnerable and we are extending our basic service delivery into the deep rural areas.**

51. However, we admit that this is far from being enough, and **there are indeed pockets of serious shortcomings, some much more severe than others.**

52. We have made progress in reducing poverty and expanding basic services to reach the majority of our citizens in Mpumalanga, but there is still more to be done.

53. The value of Mpumalanga's economy has grown exponentially from R64 billion in 1994 to R550 billion (current prices) in 2023, **making Mpumalanga the 4th largest economy of the 9 Provinces (almost 8% share of SA's GDP).**

54. Our provincial economy has always been the most resilient even during economic downswings; recording growth higher than the national growth, however the first quarter of 2024 saw our provincial economy shrinking by 0.5%.

55. Despite this first quarter shrinkage, there is still hope. **During the last quarter of 2023 our provincial economy created more than 63 869 jobs.** This is commendable given the fact that our economy is facing headwinds and is fraught with uncertainty.

56. Our Province has a very youthful population approximately 60% of the population consist of economically active people (15 to 34 years of age). Therefore, this young generation provides us with significant human resources for future economic growth and sustainability. Youth unemployment, especially **young unemployed graduates**, remains a serious concern.

57. We observe the misalignment between the available skills of our graduates and the necessary skills that are required by the industries. We need to capitalize on this youthful energy and provide them with necessary skills.

58. We need to pay special attention to the levels of poverty and inequality in our Province. **Following years of decline in the population that lives below the lower bound poverty lines, there has been a significant increase from 48.1 per cent to 50.2% recently.**

59. Our government will come closer to this space especially with social assistance to the most vulnerable. **No one should go to**



bed on an empty stomach. We expect all departments to make a contribution to this challenge led by the Department of Social Development.

60. It is therefore incumbent upon us to redouble our joint efforts if we are to achieve the war against poverty targets as set out in the National Development Plan and our own provincial anti-poverty strategy.

61. We have to work hard and grow the provincial economy at a rate of between 3 and 5% per annum to create new job opportunities to reduce youth unemployment rate.

62. We have identified at least four areas that we think need special attention for job creation and the absorption of large scale unemployed youth especially those with very low levels of skills. These are young people who are **out of school, out of work** and **out of any tertiary education.**

63. We will pay special attention to sectors such as mass infrastructure programmes, manufacturing and beneficiation, **mining and energy, agriculture and forestry**, tourism and cultural industries, **including the green economy.**

64. Considering that 23.2% of our GDP comes from mining, we should **convene a Mining Indaba/Summit** to discuss the future of mining in the province, but most importantly, to develop a program of action which will benefit mining communities.

65. We must affirm the Africans, women and young people in the entire value chain of mining in this province from the extraction to the processing of the minerals into final goods or their secondary economic life.

66. The ANC's manifesto priority number 1 is about creating a jobs plan for the province. This point was succinctly put by Minister Gwede Mantashe when he debated the President's opening of parliament speech and argued:

"We must, therefore, put our heads together and come up with a formula that will work and ensure that employment is created. To do this, we must focus on the primary sectors of economy to anchor growth and development, which include mining, agriculture, and petroleum."

67. To ensure that Mpumalanga contributes in this focus on the primary sector of the economy, **we are going to establish a mining school and revive our agricultural schools starting with the one in Marapyane.**

68. Priority number 2 of the ANC's manifesto speaks eloquently about growing the economy of the country through industrialization.

69. In this 7th administration we are going to do our best to industrialise the economy of Mpumalanga, and where possible leverage on the factories which are now unused in the former homelands. Industrialization is important for both economic growth and job creation.

Building a Capable, Ethical and Developmental State

70. We are giving priority to integrated planning, implementation, accountability and service delivery. We have listened to our people and we are mindful of their concerns with poor performance in some areas of basic service delivery.

Madam Speaker

71. The 7th administration is committed to addressing all these issues that are of great concern to our people.

72. We are going to **partner with private sector to augment our technical skills which include; civil engineering, project management as well as financial management.**



Madam Speaker

73. When we addressed the nation during State of the Province (SOPA) early this year we committed ourselves to embark on the following programmes:

PUBLIC SAFETY

Madam Speaker

74. We remain concerned by high levels of crime in our Province. Of grave concern to us is Gender Based Violence and Femicide committed against women and girl children.

75. We recently saw a growing number of girl children who are kidnapped and murdered in our communities. **We commend the arrest of the perpetrators of these heinous crimes.** We call upon our communities to be alert at all times and work with law enforcement agencies.

76. Our Province is **not a “nest for criminals and druggies”**. We further welcome the **apprehension of 95 foreign nationals after police uncovered an illegal military training camp in White River.** Lapha eMpumalanga si Vuth’ umlilo, futhi se kwenele! Siyabopha.

77. **As part of our efforts to curb crime, we will deploy at least 1200 crime prevention wardens who will assist to enhance Safety and Security in our community.**

78. These wardens will be trained and placed in hot crime sport areas all over the Province. They will work together with SAPS.

79. In order to intensify our efforts in making sure that our road users are safe, we will be adding 80 vehicles on our existing fleet of traffic officers.

Healthcare

Madam Speaker

80. Healthcare is a right not a privilege. Every man, woman and child in South Africa should have access to health care, regardless of their income.

81. Since 1994 we have been extending quality healthcare to our people. Our primary priority remains clear – **reduce mortality rate and increase life expectancy. We have seen remarkable improvement in the life expectancy of our people.** We now live longer.

82. **Approximately 14,2% of the population of Mpumalanga are said to be living with HIV and AIDS.** It is our duty to ensure that those who should be on ARV treatment are actually receiving it, so that we should reach our 95% of those who know their status, 95% of those who are on treatment and 95% with undetectable levels of HIV.

83. **New HIV infections are reduced as viral load decreases, thus, reducing HIV-related mortality and morbidity among people living with HIV and AIDS.**

84. This will promote a long and healthy life among people living with HIV and also allow them to actively participate in the country’s economy. This will in turn, reduce health care expenditure, particularly hospitalisation, reduce dependency on grants and reduce the number of orphans and expenditure on orphan care.

85. **We urge people, especially men not to delay in seeking medical care.**

86. We are still struggling with clinical skills in the management of gynaecological emergencies. We will therefore prioritise the establishment of gynaecological Units in Sister Mashiteng Clinic in Steve Tshwete, and Oakley Clinic in Bushbuckridge Local Municipalities. The Department will appoint six advanced midwives; three for each clinic in order to improve the child mortality rate.

87. Furthermore, our commitment to improve our health outcomes is to fast track the construction and maintenance of health facilities as follows:

- Complete and Operationalise of New Middleburg Hospital
- Full operationalisation of Mmamethlake Hospital
- Continue on the construction of Mapulaneng Hospital
- Planning and designs of Linah Malatjie Tertiary Hospital, and
- Expansion of tertiary hospital services (Oncology Unit) for Rob Ferreira Hospital

88. To improve our emergency services, we will be adding 20 specialised ambulances, and build three more clinics. The Alexandria Clinic in Bushbuckridge, Langkloof Clinic in Thembisile Hani and Lebohang Clinic in Govan Mbeki Local Municipalities.

Education

Madam speaker.

89. The three main priorities for socio-economic transformation of our society is anchored on an education system that delivers quality outcomes.

90. To prepare our learners for a better future and better outcomes at matric level, **we have to prioritise the foundation phase which is a critical phase**, that is the Early Childhood Development (ECD) phase. We will accelerate this building blocks upon which learning can take place.

91. Improving learner outcomes tops our agenda, and we know that this is only possible if we systematically improve the quality of our learners' education experience.

92. We are aware that **literacy and numeracy** are the basic building blocks for sound education. Therefore, adequate resources are allocated to improve our learners' performance in these subjects, especially our grade 3, 6 and 9 learners.

93. We are subsequently working hard to retain the missing 30% of children between Grade 1 and Grade 12. We have to acknowledge that our matric pass rate has been improving but there is a room for better outcomes.

94. As part of our efforts to eradicate farm schools, **we have built boarding schools. We are now focusing on the construction of new schools and additional classrooms in the fast growing towns and expanding rural villages in our Province.**

95. A number of schools were built and renovated to make the environment of learning and teaching conducive. **We will be handing them over to the communities.**

96. Six Primary schools were built: Magogeni Primary, Mpumelelo Primary, New Klarinet PS, Mbatini Primary, New Doornkop, and Msholozhi Primary School.



Infrastructure

Madam speaker,

97. The province will be investing more on infrastructure development. While we will be initiating new projects, **we have to budget for maintenance of our existing projects and completion of incomplete roads.**

98. Patching of tar roads which have reached their life span is a waste of people's money. It creates tension between the communities and government because after 3 months of spending people's money, the road gets eroded again.

99. We commit to capacitate the Department of Public Works Roads and Transport to maintain our roads instead of relying on service providers. As a start, four District teams have been established, four jet patchers, yellow fleets and busses to transport workers, were also purchased. We continue with operation Vala Zonke.

100. We declared war on potholes, every day the teams should patch potholes and re-gravel our roads.

101. As part of the revitalization programme, the province will be undertaking the following significant transport infrastructure projects:

- Rehabilitation of Road D1723 (Luphisi Road) between Road D636 and P258/1 in Mbombela (6.82 km)
- Reconstruction of Driekoppies bridge in Nkomazi
- Construction of a Road over Rail Bridge in Emalahleni
- Upgrading of Road D3954 and D3958 between Casteel and Zoeknog in Bushbuckridge (9.0 km)
- Resealing of Road D2943 Langelooop and KaMhlushwa (Driekoppies Road) in Nkomazi (7 km)
- Upgrading of Road D2950 from D797 to Dhludluma including Ring Road (8 km).

102. There is an urgent need to rehabilitate and upgrade the Mbalenhle to Secunda Road. We call on the private sector including SASOL to come to the party and make a meaningful contribution towards this project.

EPWP Critical in our poverty alleviation

Madam Speaker

103. The President recently launched the 5th Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in a drive to create employment opportunities and experience. A great deal of effort is also needed in this 5th phase of this programme to strengthen its delivery ethos since it empowers small business to become enterprises.

104. The EPWP remains the backbone of creating employment in the Province. Hundreds of thousands of our people have benefitted through this programme since it was established. In the next 5 years, the Province has set a target to create a total of 215 692 work opportunities.

105. These include 129 415 (60%) of women, 118 631 (55%) of youth and 4 313 (2%) of people with disabilities. These opportunities will be created across all sectors of our economy



Welisizwe Rural Bridge Programme

Madam Speaker

106. Transport is one of the vital enablers of any communities' socio-economic activities, especially rural communities where many essential services are located at some distance away from urban towns and cities.

107. Therefore, the provision of steel bridges enables access to work, education, health and other services that are part of these rural communities.

108. The Welisizwe Rural Bridge Programme was established to provide targeted mobility services in rural areas.

109. To date, we have completed 4 bridges in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality while a further 17 bridges are planned for Nkomazi, Mbombela, Bushbuckridge and Chief Albert Luthuli.

Renewable energy resources in Government Buildings

Madam speaker,

110. Climate change further highlights the need for innovative solutions of renewable energy resources and available technologies.

111. Solar energy, in particular, ensures a sustainable environment.

112. Last year, we started with the implementation of solar panel technology at Mmamethlake Hospital and Riverside Government Complex. Given the number of public buildings that need clean and reliable energy, **this initiative will create approximately 1000 jobs**, along the entire value chain, including manufacturing, installation, operation and maintenance over the next 5 years.

113. Mpumalanga has been the energy hub of South Africa for the past century. In addition to an extraordinary inheritance of mineral resources, Mpumalanga is also endowed with enormous solar and wind resources. With the advancement of technology, it is now feasible to transform these wind and solar resources into energy and value for the province.

114. We have worked closely with some of the investors in recent years, particularly through our Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency, to remove development barriers, resulting in the acquisition of business authorizations and the financial close of some utility-scale projects.

115. It brings me great pleasure to announce the following major projects, which will change the landscape of our province in the coming years by creating more job opportunities and ensuring inclusive economic growth:

- **Umbila Emoyeni:** I appreciate **Steriti Green** for their massive **R25 billion** investment in this project, and I am informed that the first phase of the project would deliver **R4.8 billion** to the province.
- **Green Hydrogen Power Development:** My special appreciation to **Hydrogène De France Energy (HDF)** for strategically expanding into Mpumalanga Province, to contribute to resolving the shortage of electricity-generation capacity. This is an investment of approximately **R54 billion** that will be invested in the country.
- **Natural Gas:** Congratulations to **Kinetiko Energy** on their **R155 million LNG** pilot project in Amersfoort Natural gas as a promising solution to the country's energy crisis.



OPENING OF THE 7th MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

- **Carbon Capture, Storage and Utilization:** Additionally, I would like to congratulate the Council for Geoscience on finishing the Leandra pilot project.
- **Battery manufacturing:** We appreciate the ongoing discussion with **Manganese Metal Co (MMC)**'s for projected growth plans.
- **Hyshif-Aviation Fuel:** Finally let me express my gratitude to the consortium comprising **Sasol, Enertrag, Linde and Hydrogen** participating in one of the leading Hydrogen projects which is taking shape in the province, where the HySHiFT renewable hydrogen project is developing sustainable aviation fuel.

Infrastructure Funding Options

Madam speaker,

116. Mpumalanga is uniquely situated between four provinces, namely Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal, Free State and Limpopo and two countries, Kingdom of Eswatini and Mozambique resulting in high traffic volumes.
117. The number of heavy trucks erode our roads, place an extra burden on the maintenance and rehabilitation demands of our provincial roads.
118. The fiscus alone is not capable to fund the massive infrastructure hence other means of funding are being explored. These include Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) with mining houses and other funding sources such as the Budget Facility for Infrastructure (BFI) through Infrastructure South Africa.
119. We are planning to transfer more than 1 000 kilometres of roads to SANRAL in order to reduce maintenance backlogs.
120. Planning and designs have commenced for the establishment of a **multi-purpose arena** due to a strong need of an indoor facility to host major events, conferences, conventions and any other economic activity within the City of Mbombela. It will attract different tourism activities such as sports events.



Infrastructure Funding Options

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Agriculture

Madam Speaker

126. Mpumalanga Province is renowned for its vast agricultural land potential supporting a diverse range of crops and livestock.
127. The region boasts an impressive array of fertile soils, favourable climate conditions, and abundant resources.
- 128. This makes the Province an essential agricultural hub that contributes significantly to the country's food security and economic growth.**
129. In this 7th Administration we will advance Mpumalanga's standing as an Agribusiness economy to exploit the massive potential of this crucial sector as a labour intensive job creator and central to food security, poverty and hunger reduction.

Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES-III)

130. A recent survey on food and Nutrition Security has found that, **only 29% of households in the Province are food secure, thus leaving the majority of our households comprising 71%, as food insecure.** Nkangala District at 26%, is the most food insecure of the three Districts, followed by both Gert Sibande and Ehlanzeni Districts at 20% each.
131. We welcome the support from the Presidential Employment Stimulus which supports no less than 15000 household beneficiaries with agricultural food production and inputs to grow household produce for subsistence.
132. As a Province we are committed to contribute to this effort to ensure every household produce food and reduce food insecurity. We therefore need to pay special attention and invest heavily on agriculture and give meaningful and measurable support to our emerging and commercial farmers.



Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market

Madam Speaker

133. We are about to operationalize of the long-awaited Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market that is nearing its practical completion.
134. The Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market is designed to provide a trading platform for local, national, and international export for our farmers to grow their businesses.
135. The Province has secured a market operator that is expected to assist us to manage and transform the trading of fresh fruits and vegetables for our black farmers, **taking an advantage of markets created by the Africa Free Trade area and the growing BRICS platform and the Middle East.**
136. Our key partners including the National Department of Agriculture, NAMC, IUCMA, and APAC, are actively collaborating to establish the MIFPM as a world-renowned market. **Together, we will elevate the status of Mpumalanga's fresh produce market to new heights.**
137. The market forms part of the urgently needed large scale investment in agriculture to lift the provincial economy.
138. In line with Agriculture, and Agro Processing Master Plan (AAMP) that seeks to achieve a globally competitive agricultural and agro processing sectors, the Province has put focus on the **development of the medicinal plants** with emphasis to hemp and cannabis agro processing facilities.
139. Our working together with other stakeholders is starting to yield results. **We have over 40 farmers who have received their permit to plant industrial hemp within the Province.**
140. This is very encouraging because we are now sure that our people will also benefit from the introduction of this new commodity which has been recognized as new gold. As a Province we are working hard to fulfil all statutory pre-requisite requirements whilst preparing for the necessary infrastructure.

Madam Speaker

141. It is anticipated that 156 sustainable direct jobs will be created at the market floor upon operationalization and 115 000 sustainable direct jobs will be created at farm level. Further, more job opportunities from market agents, AgriHubs, Porters, and employees of tenants operating within the Market Precinct will be created.
142. The Department has successfully appointed an operator for **Mkhuhlu Agrihub**, serving as a vital link between farmers and government.
143. Over 74 farmers are beneficiaries of this intervention in the current financial year.
144. We are envisaging to finish the **Mkhondo Agrihub** during the 2024/25 financial year. We are expanding the services that benefit our farmers to other Districts.
145. **Our support to the land reform farm beneficiaries at Senteeko Tea Estate restituted to Shamile CPA, continues to bear fruit with 250 jobs created.**

146. Agro-processing of the harvested tea into medicinal products will be the next phase with more job opportunities to be created.

Mpumalanga Agri-Park:

147. With the land donated to the Provincial Government by SASOL, the establishment of the Mpumalanga Agri-Park is yielding positive results.

148. We have since completed a 20 sow piggery facility and handed it over to Esperanza Co-Operative for commercial production of pigs.

149. Similarly, **we have completed and handed over the refurbished 7 broiler houses for production of 35 000 chickens for various co-operatives in the Govan Mbeki area to be traded to, among others our Government Nutrition Programme.** We are now completing the construction of vegetable tunnels for additional local producers.

Tourism

Madam Speaker

150. The Province prides itself with natural attractions and is ranked 2nd in international tourists' arrivals who are enthused by the wildlife, scenic beauty, heritage and culture.

151. We will accelerate infrastructure upgrade and maintenance programme of state-owned tourism assets to unlock tourism investment opportunities.

152. Our focus is to create new tourism products working with tourism private businesses and SMMEs through medium and long-term concessions to attract local and foreign investments.

153. Our aggressive revitalisation of the nature reserves will focus at Mdala, Ohristad Dam, Mthethomusha, Andover, Loskop dam, Manyeleti, Mabusa, Songimvelo, and Blyde River Canyon.

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Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA)

Madam Speaker

156. In addressing the silo effect of building human settlements without bulk infrastructure, we have decided to merge the two departments: Human Settlements, and Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs into one department of Cooperative Government, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA).

157. The provision of bulk infrastructure, especially for water and sanitation by municipalities shall occupy much of our efforts in the next coming 18 months.



158. COGHSTA, working closely with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Department of Electricity and Energy and DHS, **must coordinate and monitor the implementation of the resources focused at eliminating the existing backlogs in the province**
159. A thorough analysis of audit outcomes of our municipalities has revealed significant gaps in financial reporting, a deteriorating financial health in local government, revenue management issues, inadequate project planning and monitoring skills, poor performance reporting, non-compliance with laws and regulations, particularly in Supply Chain Management (SCM), and weak Budget and Treasury offices as key challenges contributing to poor audit outcomes.
160. To address these challenges, COGHSTA, South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and Provincial Treasury (PT), **working with municipalities, will lead, support and monitor the implementation Integrated Municipal Support Plan (IMSP).**

Bulk Infrastructure

161. The provision of bulk infrastructure plays a key role in the development of integrated human settlements across the province.
162. The Department will support the Local Municipalities in the provision of bulk link infrastructure to ensure that internal services are properly connected to serviced sites.
163. The projects currently being implemented are:
- Steve Tshwete - Rondebosch bulk water and sewer
 - Emalaheni LM - Wildebeesfontein (Phola Iraq) - bulk sewer,
 - Bushbuckridge LM - Kumana Rollestone - bulk water,
 - Thaba Chweu LM - Mashishing Ext 6, 108 & 110 bulk sewer
 - Msukaligwa LM – Ermelo Ext 44 – bulk sewer
 - Chief Albert LM – Silobela servicing of sites
164. Within the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) period, our government will be implementing the following projects:
- 400 housing opportunities will be provided = to the gap market, that is, beneficiaries who earn between R 3 501 – R 22 000 per month
 - 25 000 Servicing of sites (Upgrading of Informal Settlements & Integrated Residential Development Programme)
 - 20 000 Individual Units Top Structures will be built
165. In **Nkangala District**, Loskop Regional Water scheme is at an advanced stage of implementation where in 54 194 households are expected to benefit. This project is planned to be completed in 2025; and 20 Mega Litres of water will be distributed to augment water deficiency in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality.
166. The planning for the Western Highveld scheme is underway. The scheme will supply water to areas of Mathanjana in the Dr JS Moroka once completed.
167. In **Gert Sibande District**, Amsterdam (Mkhondo LM), Government is currently constructing Gabosch Dam at the cost of R556 million and is expected to be completed by 2026. This dam will serve as a storage facility during drought to enable the communities to continue receiving water.
168. In Lekwa, an intervention to resolve the sewer challenges is underway and R350million has been set aside as an immediate intervention while the upgrading for both water and sewer is at final stage with planning.



169. The Province is working closely with National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in strengthening Local Government in dealing with issues of water quality (blue drop) and sewer management (green drop) in an effort to improve the livelihood of our communities.

170. In **Ehlanzeni**, the pre-feasibility study for the construction of Mbombela Dam: by DWS has been completed. The result of this process puts Mountain View Dam site (in the Kaap River located south of Nelspruit) as the preferred location of the Dam.

171. The focus now in 2024 is to do a detailed engineering investigation on the Mountain View site. This will take about 18 months to complete.

172. The construction of this dam is earmarked to commence in 2026.

Basic Services

Madam Speaker,

173. In partnership with our municipalities, through the District Development Model (DDM), we must refocus our efforts on addressing the outstanding backlogs within the next 18 months through targeted interventions utilizing our MIG, RBIG, and WSIG grants.

174. We shall be working together with DWS to ensure that critical interventions in the following municipalities; Thembisile Hani, Emalaheni, Msukaligwa, Dipaleseng, Lekwa, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Bushbuckridge, Nkomazi, Thaba Chweu and City of Mbombela is accelerated.

175. In collaboration with the DWS, more bulk water infrastructure will be rolled out at the cost of approximately R1.2 billion to upgrade the capacity of water supply for the benefit of our communities. We are aware that water is life and sanitation is dignity.

Traditional Leadership

Madam Speaker,

176. We would be supporting and finalizing the reconstitution of the Traditional Councils before the end of the financial year.

177. The Province in liaising with the Department of Traditional Affairs Nationally will roll out a programme of finalizing the reconstitution of Traditional Councils before the end of the financial year.

178. We shall further ensure that the applications for the recognition of Senior Traditional Leaders as well as Headman/Women are attended to with the expediency it deserves.

179. The Province shall continue to provide the tools of trade in the form of offices, vehicles as well as communication devices in ensuring that the Traditional Leaders are provided with the necessary equipment to do their work for the communities.

180. We are however, concerned about the continued murder cases of Traditional Leaders in the Province.

181. This scourge has gone far too long and warrants urgent attention of the law enforcement agencies. A special task team will have to be established to address this matter of heinous criminal activities



Madam Speaker,

182. In the words of President Ramaphosa when he delivered the State of the Nation address, the government of national unity intends to turn South Africa into a construction site.

183. We are joining the President in that pronouncement, and we will turn Mpumalanga into a massive construction site as well. To succeed in doing so we will rely on **the District Development Model and its National, Provincial, District and Local Champions.**

Madam Speaker,

184. As we embark on the next phase of implementation, of the DDM in particular the infrastructure projects, the Premier Coordination Forum (PCF) will assume its critical role in overseeing the execution of the DDM One Plan across all sectors.

185. We will also intensify efforts to unlock the full potential of various programmes and projects initiated through the DDM, ensuring that they deliver tangible benefits to our citizens and drive sustainable development.

Social Development

Madam Speaker

186. As a Province we are part of South Africa's efforts to implement enabling legislation, and its ratification of various global declarations, including Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

187. These legislative documents specifically focus on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, and the endemic nature of Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF).

188. The appointment of the GBVF Council will be fast tracked as required by the National Strategic Plan on GBVF. Through a joint effort with the Target Group Committee and Amakhosi, we are conducting workshops at Traditional Councils to raise awareness among communities about GBVF, specifically targeting vulnerable groups such as women, children, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and individuals with albinism.

189. All our institutions should support the call made by the President to support women entrepreneurs to maintain and grow their business, to set aside 40% of procurement for women.

190. Together with Amakhosi and the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC), the Province is collaborating with supporting structures to ensure that Ingoma/Koma is implemented efficiently, reduces fatalities, and that unlawful initiation schools are closed down.

Madam Speaker

Culture Sports & Arts

191. The Province will continue to host **Provincial events** which attracts tourists. These events boost the economy and create much needed job opportunities.

192. The Province will continue to support big events like Mpumalanga Cultural Experience, Innibos Arts Festival, 013 Summer Blaze, Annual All White Picnic, Dikoma Cultural Festival, Barberton Makhonjwa Marathon, Mpumalanga Show and National Sports Tournament.



193. I will like to congratulate and bid farewell to one of our own athlete from Nkomazi Local Municipality, Collen Mahlalela, who was selected by SASCO to be part of the team that will represent RSA at Paralympic 2024, in France during the August month.

194. I also wish all our national athletes who are representing South Africa at the Olympics currently underway in France, well.

Better Africa and Better World

Madam Speaker

195. We will continue to support our national government in its efforts to work with other nations to bring peace in the World, in particular in the Middle East, in Central Africa and in Eastern Europe.

196. We join all those who are calling for peace in DRC, peace for the people of Gaza in Palestine, Israel, and Mozambique and the cessation of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine. Let there be peace among nations.

Conclusion

Madam Speaker

197. I have a dream, and my wish is to realise my dream in my lifetime. My dream is for **the province of Mpumalanga to reach amongst others:**

- Our Provincial targets for 2030 on the average economic growth of 5%, unemployment rate of 5%, have 2,1 million people working, 0% young graduates' unemployment rate, and zero rise poverty rate.
- I want all households to have access to basic services.
- All households have access to shelter.
- Our law enforcers to arrest without fear.
- That a girl child from e-Pienaar should be able to go to school with no fear and come back home safely.
- To build a Tech-Savvy generation all over the Province.
- That every girl child from rural areas must have access to sanitary towels, and boy children to own dignity bags.**
- That the four Jet patcher teams need to work our roads on a daily basis.
- Shortening response time for ambulances.
- Our Community health care centers be open and operate 24 hours.
- Complete eradication of pit latrines toilets in all our schools

198. I have a dream, a dream that embrace all of us, you and I, the people of our glorious Province, Mpumalanga.

199. Ladies and Gentleman, for us to realize this dream, **we have to take cognizance that it cannot be business as usual, but that it has to be business unusual.** A road less Travelled.

200. It will be unforgivable to fail our People and it will be a huge disappointment to the masses.

201. The Only route for us to take for not failing our people is for all of us to adopt, 'The Business Unusual' stance.

202. I am inviting you Ladies and Gentlemen to work tirelessly and defend my Dream. Yes, to defend Our Dream.

**Hi Khensile
Siyabonga
Siya Thokoza
Rea leboga
Thank You
Baie Dankie**



