

Salutations

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga
Legislature;
Deputy Judge President A Ledwaba
Speaker of the National House of Assembly for the Kingdom of
Swaziland, Ms E Dlamini
Members of the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces
present;
Members of the Executive Council;
Honourable Members of the Mpumalanga Legislature;
Former Premier of the Province
Executive Mayors, Councillors and leaders of SALGA;
Consul of the Republic of Mozambique', Ms Ester Tondo;
Provincial Commissioner, General Ntobela;
Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders,
Traditional Leaders;
The Director-General Dr Nonhlanhla Mkhize,
Chairpersons and CEOs of our parastatals;
Heads of Departments and Municipal Managers;
ANC Provincial Secretary, Cde. Lucky Ndinisa and the entire Leadership
of the Alliance;
Our special guests,
Representatives of labour, business, religious and other community-
based organisations;
Distinguished Guests and all Dignitaries present here today;
Compatriots;
Comrades and Friends;
Ladies and gentlemen.

The Context

1. Honourable Speaker, the Ruling Party has been, and still is leading the process of deepening democracy in our country – a process that is gradually approaching the maturity phase.
2. It is a process that is guided by our Constitution which happens to be the supreme law of the country.
3. Over the past twenty years of democracy, we, as the Ruling Party, ensured that all our government work follows the dictates of the Constitution.
4. Honourable Speaker and Members, we took such a posture, and will continue to do so because the people of this country declared that the elimination of apartheid and the creation of a truly just and democratic South Africa must be driven by a Constitution that is based on, ***inter alia***:
 - A state that promotes the growth of a single national identity and loyalty binding all South Africans.

- A state that will ensure that an all-inclusive economy serves the interests and well-being of all sections of the population;
- A state that abides by its constitutional duty to take active steps to eradicate the economic and social inequalities produced by racial discrimination;
- A state that shall devise and implement a Land Reform Programme aimed at abolishing all racial restrictions on the ownership and use of land;
- A state that shall protect the rights of workers, women, children, older persons and people living with disabilities;
- A state that shall be non-aligned but committed to the principles of the Charters of both the United Nations and the African Union - Charters whose primary objective is to achieve world peace and disarmament; and above all;
- A state that shall have a government based on the will of the people.

5. Honourable Speaker, let us focus on the will of the people - on the 7th of May 2014, our people went out in numbers to the polls to cast their votes for a government of their own choice.

6. The Ruling Party once more emerged triumphant from these national elections.

7. Our people renewed the Mandate of the Ruling Party for the fourth time despite the barbs and missiles hurled at it by all those who do not share the same vision of the majority.

8. Through their votes, our people have, once more, charged the Ruling Party with the responsibility of forging ahead in its endeavours to realise the injunctions of the Constitution.

9. Fundamentally, they demand from the Party that it continues to lead our journey towards the democratic society envisaged in the Freedom Charter.

10. Honourable Speaker, allow me to take this opportunity to, once more, express our gratitude to the people of our country, particularly those living in the Province, for electing the African National Congress to lead the transformation and developmental agenda of our beloved country.

11. We feel humbled and privileged indeed for being chosen once more as the preferred agents of change.

12. For this transformation to happen, the vision of a national democratic society must be anchored on shared values, patriotism and an inclusive sense of national identity.

13. As we approach the future we are cognisant of the need to build on our rich liberation history and heritage to consolidate partnerships across society that will fortify social cohesion.

14. In this regard, we will continue to celebrate, honour and immortalise the contribution of our liberation heroes and heroines to deepen democratic values and forge a common sense of nationhood.

The Mandate

15. Today, we stand before this august House to say to the people of the Province:

- We are your loyal servants who have your best interests at heart. We have demonstrated this role in the past and commit to do so going forward.
- Yes, we have come to pledge our commitment towards the implementation of the priorities that you have raised in the 2014 ANC Manifesto.
- Indeed, we re-commit ourselves to pay dedicated attention to facilitating job creation, improving the quality of education and increasing the life expectancy and quality of life of all the citizens of our the Province.

16. Of course, our work, as government, will be mainly guided by:

- The **National Development Plan** which provides a detailed roadmap for development in the years leading up to 2030.

It is a national plan that aims to eliminate **poverty** and reduce **inequality** by 2030, and it “lays the foundation for long term planning for the radical socio-economic agenda over the next 20 years.”

- It will also be steered by **our Mpumalanga Vision 2030 Strategic Implementation Framework**, which provides a provincial expression of the key priorities, objectives and targets enumerated in the NDP; and
- We will further be informed and guided by the **Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path** whose primary goal is to place our economy on a sustainable growth trajectory.

Creation of decent work and sustainable livelihoods

17. Honourable Speaker and Members, it is of critical importance that all these frameworks are geared towards the realisation of the objectives of the **second phase of the transition** – a phase which, in essence, accentuates the acceleration of the economic transformation agenda.

18. It is a phase during which our provincial economy must grow above **5%** annually if we are to make a positive impact on the lives of the **30.4%** of our population that remains without work. **78.3%** of this unemployed cohort comprises our youth.

19. Honourable Speaker, we do not state these figures glibly – let us be clear from the outset, the second phase of our transition will not be “a walk in the park”.

20. The labour unrest and the persistently sluggish economic environment in Europe and the United States continues to impact negatively on growth.

21. Reports also indicate that a year of low investments and ongoing efforts to reduce household debts held economic growth back further.

22. In addition, output potential is constrained by an extreme skills shortage within the country.

23. Honourable Speaker and Members, in our first term of this second phase of our transition, the Ruling Party will be paying more attention to gearing the economy towards robust economic growth that leads to exponential job creation and development

24. Fundamentally, over the next five years, we will target economic growth that is above 5% per annum and such economic growth will be expected to create approximately **390 000 additional and sustainable work opportunities by 2019**. This means that a total of **78 000 work opportunities** must be created per annum.

25. Honourable Speaker, for us to realise these steep targets, government must intensify its existing programmes in **the key economic sectors** of the provincial economy.

26. We will continue to prioritise agriculture and forestry; mining; manufacturing; tourism and ICT (Information and Communications Technology)

Strategic Infrastructure Development

27. Government will increase investment in the **Infrastructure Build Programme** in order to create substantial employment. Simply put, more money will be spent on improving hospitals, clinics, education, logistics and economic infrastructure.

28. We are going to prioritise strategic economic infrastructure to support development and service delivery. This involves, inter alia:

- The construction of dams to increase bulk water supply and support agriculture;
- Investing in irrigation infrastructure;

- Addressing bulk water and sanitation infrastructure, particularly to deal with overflowing sewer systems;
- Dealing with the **road infrastructure network**, particularly those areas affected with high volumes of trucks;
- Investing in **broadband infrastructure** to enhance connectivity;
- Prioritising the improvement and expansion of the **road network in strategic towns** that have shown rapid growth recently, namely, Mbombela, Emalahleni, Ermelo, Middleburg, Mashishing and Secunda.

29. Honourable Speaker, we will be prioritising strategic infrastructure projects to support key economic sectors. This will include:

- The establishment of an International Convention Centre (ICC)
- The establishment of a Cultural Hub
- An ICT Call Centre
- The establishment of a Fresh Produce Market

- The establishment of a High Altitude Sports Training Centre
- The Moloto Rail Corridor Development

30. As the ANC-led government, we are planning to spend approximately **R18.5** billion in the next five years to support the ***Infrastructure Build Programme***.

31. I must quickly point out that this capital investment will be inadequate to fund all of these projects. Therefore, we will be talking to private sector and foreign investors, encouraging them to join us in these initiatives aimed at growing the provincial economy and creating sustainable and decent jobs for our people.

32. Honourable Speaker, let me take this opportunity to welcome the commitment made by President Zuma in his State of the Nation Address with regard to the implementation of the National Infrastructure Plan.

33. The huge capital investment that will be directed to the energy complex; the tourism, telecommunication and agriculture sectors will definitely benefit the Province a great deal.

34. Therefore, as a Province, we are going to augment our involvement in these initiatives so that we can realign our strategic projects accordingly.

35. Honourable speaker, Mpumalanga, like the rest of our country, requires a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive economic growth path. Our focus must therefore be on the bridge that our learners must cross from quality education to gainful employment.

36. For this, we need to create a platform in the Province that fosters closer relations between government, industry and institutions of learning.

37. Over the next five years, our partnerships with business will prioritise socio-economic development programmes that ensure that our youth become active contributors to a growing economy.

38. We will focus on providing access to workplace learning opportunities through internships and learnerships.

39. We will create opportunities for out of school youths to benefit from artisan development programmes rolled out with our private sector partners.

40. Honourable Speaker, we must emphasise that the work that will be pursued over the next five years builds on the strong foundation established by the past four administrations of the ANC-led government.

Priorities on Economic Growth and Job creation

41. As we begin our term, we will be focusing on a small number of carefully selected priorities and initiatives to stimulate rapid economic growth and the creation of decent jobs.

42. Looking at the **agricultural sector**, government will be pursuing the Fresh Produce Market initiative – a project that we are driving together with the Sultanate of Oman.

43. To guarantee supply to this market, government will be:

- Providing comprehensive support to farmers for targeted **commodities**;
- Prioritising **land reform farms and state land that is lying fallow** to increase production;
- Investing in **irrigation schemes** for sustainable production;
- Providing comprehensive support to **small scale farmers** and cooperatives.

We will take deliberate actions to establish youth cooperatives in the sector and provide the **necessary infrastructure and finance, including** implementing **targeted skills development** programmes for these young people.

In addition, we will be engaging with established commercial farmers to create skills development, mentorship and **placement opportunities** for young people in the sector.

44. With regards to the **mining sector**, we will fast-track the implementation of the resolutions of the Mining Lekgotla held in 2012. In particular, we will reinforce our support to those projects that are already underway.

45. Together with the private sector, we will continue to prioritise the key focus areas that we identified, namely, human capital development; urban renewal and rural development; small business and cooperative development; sustainable environmental management and research and development.

46. We will accelerate the implementation of the following:

- The 'IKUSASA Project' with SASOL;
- The projects that we are pursuing with BHP Billiton; namely, the Maths, Science and Technology Academy, the Water reclamation project and the rehabilitation of closed mines for the purposes of agricultural production.
- The Project Charter with ESKOM, which covers the majority of our Key focus areas and
- The Project Charter that we agreed upon with SAB.

47. We are also rigorously pursue the projects identified together with mining houses operating within the Province.

48. This involves:

- The establishment of **industrial or supply parks** to develop SMMEs and cooperatives in those areas where mining operations are taking place;
- The rejuvenation of mining towns, focusing mainly on the development of Bulk Infrastructure; and;
- The establishment of the **Skills Development Hub** around Emalahleni aimed at skilling, in the main, our '**Out-of-School**' youth.

49. The **Artisan Training Centre** built by Hydra Arc will also play a significant role in this regard. We will be concluding a Partnership Agreement with this company very soon. We are targeting a total number of **5 000** young people to be trained over the next five years.

50. We will develop a **Provincial Industrial Development Strategy** to guide our strategic efforts to encourage the development of the manufacturing sector of the Provincial economy.

51. Among others, this strategy will look at improving the competitiveness and capabilities of firms within the province, including the promotion of structural transformation.

52. The establishment of **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** and the revitalization of underutilized industrial parks in former homeland areas will also be prioritised.

This will, undoubtedly, create opportunities for investments and the development of small businesses and cooperatives in the manufacturing sector.

53. Transportation, telecommunication and the energy industry will form a major part of the Provincial Industrial Strategy.

54. Honourable Speaker, with regard to **tourism**, government will continue, through its parastatals, to intensify the implementation of the ***Mpumalanga Tourism Growth Strategy***.

55. This will include, among other things:

- The implementation of a comprehensive ***marketing and branding strategy***
- Investing in the development of ***liberation heritage routes*** as part of the overall tourism product offering;
- Providing comprehensive support to ***small businesses*** and cooperatives in the tourism sector;

- Diversifying our tourism product offerings, including expansion of ***opportunities for rural and township establishments***;
- Investing in building ***infrastructure capacity*** to introduce tourism products that prolong the stay of tourists in the Province; and most importantly;
- Taking measures to improve the ***level of security*** in our nature reserves whilst reducing incidents of poaching and enhancing the ***safety of tourists and our valuable natural assets***.

56. Honourable Speaker, ***Information and Communications Technology*** will be critical to support and facilitate the strategic objectives that each sector must pursue.

57. As part of addressing the digital divide, government will:

- Deploy ICT solutions to improve ***service delivery*** in health, education and other key services; and;
- Identify opportunities for ***small business development*** in the ICT sector.

58. Honourable Members, what one must underscore is that the realisation of these strategic objectives in the different sectors won't be possible without the involvement of the private sector and community organisations that are keen to create a better for all the people of our Province.

Land and Agrarian Reform for Rural development and sustainable livelihoods

59. Honourable Speaker and Members, coupled with the focal areas highlighted above, the ANC-led government will be intensifying its work towards the promotion of an **inclusive rural economy**.

60. We will increase investment in rural development by accelerating the implementation of the ***Comprehensive Rural Development Programme*** in the eight identified municipalities, basically building on the excellent work that we, and our communities, have done over the past five years.

61. The roll-out of rural infrastructure in those municipalities has impacted positively on improving access to education, primary health care and housing and has enabled mobility through upgraded access roads.

62. Therefore, we will continue to place communities at the centre of this programme so that they may become the masters of their own socio-economic destinies.

63. We will continue to ensure that local people benefit from business opportunities, skills development programmes and employment opportunities created by the local economy.

64. Of course, the provision of comprehensive support to small businesses and diversified cooperative development mechanisms will continue to occupy our attention.

Priorities for Rural Development

65. Honourable Speaker, in the 2014/15 financial year:

- The ANC-led government will be strengthening ***agricultural production*** and agro-industries;
- We will be increasing investment in agricultural infrastructure to support ***small holder farmer development***.
- Definitely, attention will be given to the development of strong ***urban-rural linkages*** to grow sustainable rural enterprises; and
- Government will be scaling up its services with regard to the provision of roads infrastructure, clinics, integrated schooling systems, houses, electricity, and the provision of water and sanitation.

66. Crucially, the new regulatory framework for land use will be institutionalised so that development initiatives are properly guided and supported in all our municipalities.

Education

67. Honourable speaker, the socio-economic transformation of our society depends on the quality of our education system.

68. There is no doubt that no other investment yields as great a return as the investment in education.

69. An educated workforce is the foundation of every community and the future of every economy.

70. As His Excellency, our President re-emphasized, “education remains an apex priority for this government.” The National Development Plan’s vision for 2030 is that South Africans should have access to “education and training of the highest quality characterised by significantly **improved learning outcomes**”.

71. This future scenario is one that we, as the Provincial government, have wholeheartedly embraced for our citizens.

72. We are determined to ensure that our young people are well-equipped to navigate themselves through educational institutions that will grow and nurture them for future success and prosperity - from pre-school through to their first placements in the world of work.

73. Honourable speaker, we are satisfied that we have laid a solid foundation to improve the performance of our education system in the Province.

74. We have made significant progress when it comes to increasing the **access to quality education**. The last five years alone saw us investing **R2.91 billion** in education infrastructure.

75. We have built 25 new schools and 26 Grade R facilities and we have made great strides in ensuring that mud and unsafe structures are eradicated.

76. As we approach the next five years, we will place special focus on initiatives and interventions that improve quality.

We are determined to ensure that our levels of access and enrolment are matched by equal levels of completion.

77. This will require that we improve our education system at all levels, starting with working towards realising the goal of two years compulsory pre-school education.

78. Currently we have approximately **135 741** children registered for **Early Childhood Development** in schools and community based centres and 1030 public schools offering Grade R. Our mandate over the next five years is to increase these figures, but first and foremost it is to match access with quality.

79. We will focus on ensuring that our youngest minds and bodies are able to learn and play with the quality materials and equipment required to prepare them for seamless entry into the primary schooling system.

80. We will further augment these efforts with the establishment of a Provincial **Early Childhood Development Institute** that conducts training for ECD practitioners and develops top-notch teaching and learning materials for the impressionable minds in our care.

81. In the current financial year, we will commence with the establishment of the Early Childhood Development Institute. This ECD Institute is expected to be operational by January 2015.

82. We need to increase the number of Grade 12 learners who can gain entrance to university, from 25.9% currently to at least 34% in 2019.

83. For this increase to materialise, we must make sure that our learners can all read, write and count at age-appropriate levels.

84. Whilst a minimal improvement in performance has been recorded in our 2013 **Annual National Assessment**, only 58% of our Grade 9s achieved 50% or more for literacy and a disturbingly low 2% of our Grade 9s achieved 50% or more for mathematics.

85. This is an untenable situation, and our Department of Education has already taken steps to engage schools and education specialists to support the utilisation of these **ANA results** to inform our strategies for improved school performance.

86. In the current year, our efforts will be directed towards increasing the numbers who pass **mathematics and science**.

87. Currently, 25.2% of our Grade 12 learners achieve 50% or more in mathematics. We would like to see this figure increase to 50% by the end of this five year term.

88. In order to reach this target we will undertake programmes that accelerate the training of maths and science educators.

89. This year, we will complete the resourcing of the Province's **Maths, Science and Technology Academy** and its sub-hubs in order that we are able to train and place 1000 maths and science educators by 2019. The Academy is expected to be operational by 2015.

90. Honourable speaker, as we talk of improving the quality of our children's schooling through deeper **investment in teacher training**, learning materials development and distribution, we are mindful that the teacher – learner exchange must take place in an environment that is safe, secure and conducive to learning.

91. This environment is not only dependent on infrastructure that meets the requirements of minimum norms and standards; it is equally reliant on effective and **efficient governance systems** within the school community.

92. Our education department is working closely with stakeholders and partners to develop and implement an **infrastructure funding and delivery model** that accelerate the eradication of backlogs, whilst making provision for the development of critical facilities such as laboratories and computer centres in schools offering maths and physical science.

93. Currently, 57% of our schools offering maths and science have laboratories and computer centres. We would like to see this figure at 70% by the end of 2019.

94. Whilst infrastructure provides a visible backbone for our education system, the leadership and governance of our schools is what gives that system life.

95. In the current financial year, we have prioritised support to **underperforming schools** to improve performance across all grades.

96. As a Province, we are already working with our teachers, principals, school governing bodies, parents and private partners to ensure that we successfully tackle the ongoing challenge of underperformance.

97. We will hold the principals of the schools accountable for under-performance while ensuring that we institutionalise appropriate tools and a credible assessment system for the appointment and development of school principals.

98. Ladies and gentlemen, our children deserve the brighter future that a sound and holistic education can afford them. In the words of our nation's father, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, "no country can really develop unless its citizens are educated."

Health

99. Honourable Speaker, it is imperative that the growth and development of our province is underpinned by the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

100. As a government, we have committed ourselves to supporting a long and healthy life for all.

101. This in effect means that we have undertaken to provide our citizens with an effective and efficient health care system that is accessible, professional, affordable and responsive.

102. However, whilst we have made some progress in improving the health status of our citizens, particularly at the level of primary health care services, we are concerned that the performance of our provincial health care system continues to indicate deep seated systemic challenges.

103. Whilst over **R2.57 billion** has been invested in health infrastructure, and our hospital revitalisation and improvement programmes have improved the quality of health care across the Province, we remain unsatisfied with the current state of affairs.

104. Honourable speaker, the Executive Council has been forced to take drastic and decisive action to address the state of healthcare in the Province. We have placed the Mpumalanga Health Department under **curatorship**.

105. We can no longer tolerate the instances of **mismanagement and neglect** in our hospitals and healthcare facilities that persist despite our ongoing efforts to address these issues at both the political and administrative levels.

106. It stops now.

107. The leadership and our citizens have spoken unanimously in favour of a **total overhaul** of the health system in this Province, and we are prepared to do just that.

108. Our principal focus is, of course, on the needs of our patients and we have prioritised the provision of food, linen and waste removal services with immediate effect.

109. Simultaneously, we will make available the resources and capacity required to implement **a turnaround strategy** for our health care system that ensures that we move towards creating a robust foundation for the implementation of the **National Health Insurance**.

110. As we transform and improve the health care system, we are intervening at health facility level to improve leadership, efficiencies and **overall functionality** to ensure that all health facilities meet the needs of communities.

111. Most importantly, we will introduce strict performance and accountability measures to ensure that the leadership core of our hospitals perform at the required level.

112. Early this week, I met with all the CEOs of our hospitals to agree on a set of key deliverables over the next few months as part of the overall strategy to **improve performance of our hospitals**.

113. Among other key interventions, we will ensure that business processes in the financial and supply chain management systems are improved so that all leakages are addressed with immediate effect.

114. We will strengthen the integrity of contract management practices to realize savings and eliminate wastages in the procurement of goods and services, which are core to the operations of a hospital.

115. The inefficiencies in the current food contracts will be addressed as a matter of priority to ensure that leakages are stopped at all levels. The same attention will be given to the linen contracts.

116. We believe if these identified leakages are stopped the Department of Health will be in a position to focus on the improvement of primary health care.

117. This year, a review of financial, human resource and administration delegations in the Department will be carried out as a matter of urgency in order to ensure that more efficient processes in institutions enable quality service delivery while maintaining effective internal control systems.

118. Each institution will be directly supported with the necessary resources to ensure that we improve the quality of health care delivery.

119. Honourable Speaker, we are committed to working towards a healthcare system that is characterised by **high-quality, universal coverage** that is provided in a cost-effective way.

120. It goes without saying therefore that we have prioritised the following areas to address the current status quo:

- Improved operational and strategic efficiency of the provincial Department of Health;
- Improvements in the regional hospital network;

- Provision of adequate infrastructure in line with prescribed standards;
- Appointment of sufficient qualified and professional personnel;
- Establishment of an effective and efficient medical supply distribution system.

121. The many and varied challenges facing our healthcare sector require significant additional **technical and financial resources**, and as a Provincial government, we openly invite our social partners and private sector counterparts to work with us to ensure that we can restore and enhance health care services in the Province.

122. Honourable speaker, the significant challenges currently plaguing the healthcare system in our Province must be dealt with swiftly and emphatically. In the meantime, our task continues to be the provision of accessible, quality healthcare services for our citizens.

123. As we deal with the operational challenges facing the department, we must continue our work to increase life expectancy and reduce child and maternal mortality ratios.

124. As a Province we are still burdened by **an HIV prevalence rate of 35.6%**, which is higher than the national average of 29.5%.

125. In response, we will implement **a comprehensive HIV and Aids programme**, in partnership with key stakeholders, which is innovative and responsive to the “on the ground” socio economic complexities facing our vulnerable populations.

126. Our area of focus in this regard will be the Gert Sibande district where the prevalence rate is currently 40.5% - the second highest in South Africa.

Integrated Sustainable Human Settlement

127. Honourable Speaker, we are all aware that the uncompromising posture of government towards economic growth and development required a simultaneous re-assessment of the pressing issues associated with human settlements.

128. The product of that assessment culminated in the Integrated **Sustainable Human Settlement – Breaking New Ground concept**. The primary purpose of which is to eradicate informal settlements in the shortest possible time and also transform, socio-economically, our spatial settlement patterns.

129. As Members are aware, the previous administration piloted this concept in three areas, namely, Klarinet in Emalahleni; Balfour in Dipaleseng and Mashishing in Thaba Chweu.

130. We have drawn lessons from these projects and we believe that we are now ready to roll out this new approach at a faster rate.

131. We are ready to create Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements that are well-managed. This includes ensuring that economic growth and social development are in balance with the carrying capacity of the settlement's natural systems.

132. Such an approach embraces the principles of sustainable development, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and equity.

133. In essence, we envisage Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements wherein people will access all services and social amenities.

Priorities for Human Settlements

134. Honourable Speaker, for us to accelerate this important part of our work, we are going to ensure that all municipalities implement the **Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act** (SPLUMA) to guide and support development initiatives.

135. In essence, municipalities will be expected to revise their spatial plans and subsequently pass by-laws to effect this framework.

136. This will also apply to those areas that fall under the jurisdiction of Traditional Leaders.

137. As the Provincial Government, it is our understanding that this framework will assist us to roll out the three human settlement models that are reflected in the **Mpumalanga Human Settlements Plan**, namely, suburbs for your urban areas; nodal economic growth centres for your rural areas; and agri-villages for your farm dwellers.

138. What must be emphasised is that all these models are aimed at promoting sustainable human settlements.

139. Therefore, through the Intergovernmental Relations Framework, the three spheres of government, including the House of Traditional Leaders, will be expected to work together in settling our people according to the parameters defined by the Mpumalanga Human Settlement Plan.

140. As Provincial Government, we are going to come very close to the space of municipalities, particularly those municipalities that coexist with Traditional Leaders.

141. We are going to urge those municipalities to work together with the Traditional Leadership on issues of land use.

142. Similarly with the Traditional Leadership, we are going to impress the same message. Our people need basic services and this should be our rallying point rather than spending more time on conflict management, which in its nature, derail development of our people.

143. With due consideration of the current backlog, the ANC-led government prioritised access to basic services as part of promoting sustainable settlements.

144. To this end, we will continue to prioritise the supply of **Bulk Water Infrastructure** and the acceleration of reticulation in all municipalities.

145. **Sanitation** will also occupy the highest spot in our priority list.

146. As we speak, many of the sewer treatment plants are operating far above their capacities, causing spillage into our rivers.

147. Therefore, we will be working very hard to reverse this situation, ensuring that our water meets the '**Blue Drop**' standards.

148. The provision of electricity; construction of access roads, and the ongoing improvement of other social amenities remains on our radar screen.

Fighting Crime

149. Honourable members, in order for us to achieve the socio-economic objectives of our Province, we must have a solid foundation in place, and this foundation comprises the elements of a safe and **cohesive society** and an honest and capable public service.

150. It is a sad truth that 20 years of freedom have not automatically translated into feelings of safety and security for the vast majority of our citizens. Our women and children in particular continue to suffer unacceptable levels of violence and abuse.

151. Whilst our social crime prevention programmes have yielded results in terms of decreasing the incidence of **contact crimes** such as attempted murder, assault and robbery, the scourge of sexual crimes persists, and has in fact increased in the last year.

152. As I have stated before, it is time to stand up and shout NO! We will work closely with communities and all law enforcement agencies to ensure that we reverse this disturbing trend and protect the **rights of our women and girl children.**

153. As government, we have an obligation to ensure that our citizens are safe from danger and crime, but also to ensure that they are “socially secure”.

154. Over the next five years we aim to broaden the social protection coverage of our most vulnerable citizens, and this will be facilitated, amongst others, by increasing the number of social service professionals in the Province.

155. In the 2014/15 financial year, we will continue to implement programmes that focus on integrated social crime prevention strategies including paying special attention to rural safety and integrated school safety programmes.

156. We are also improving our services to victims of crime by establishing and strengthening **victim friendly facilities** in all our police stations to provide necessary support to victims of crime.

Towards a Capable Developmental State

157. Honourable Speaker, the realization of the 2030 Vision enumerated in **our National Development Plan** is dependent on the cultivation of a capable developmental state.

158. Our vision to build a National Democratic Society must be underpinned by the creation of a "state machinery" that has the **requisite capacity to intervene** decisively to deepen social transformation and progressively realize the socio-economic rights enshrined in our constitution.

159. It is a developmental state that intervenes to correct historical inequalities and plays a transformative role to create opportunities for more people.

160. Our task is thus two-fold. On the one hand, we need to enhance the **economic opportunities** of our citizens and drive a development agenda that caters for the social rights of the poor.

161. On the other hand, we must make sure that we have the requisite skills, competencies and processes in place to deliver our mandates effectively and efficiently.

162. In our transformative role, we will prioritise a robust response to the call for a **“radical socio economic transformation”** that gives rise to the “economic emancipation of our people”.

163. Our programme of action for the next five years prioritises improved economic growth and employment, and as such, we need to position our provincial government as an enabler and a facilitator of this envisaged progress.

164. The performance of government will need to improve drastically if we to achieve the socio-economic outcomes prioritised in the National Development Plan and Mpumalanga Vision 2030.

165. In the current financial year, we have prioritised a set of measures to improve governance and implementation capacity:

- We will enhance our monitoring and evaluation systems to strengthen accountability for performance and results;
- We will address the challenges that continue to plague our procurement, management and operations systems to ensure that these practices no longer reduce the impact of our expenditure or negatively affect service delivery;
- We will focus on Public Private Partnerships to leverage private sector resources and expertise in the delivery of well maintained, cost-effective public infrastructure;

- We will continue to systematise our anti-corruption policies. In this regard, we will build practical capacity to build wider transparency and accountability regarding supply chain management and procurement practices in local and provincial government;
- We will continue to strengthen financial management and internal controls to prevent the wastage of public resources. In cases where mismanagement occurs, we will intervene decisively to restore the integrity of management systems;

166. For us the performance of local government is critical in our efforts to respond urgently to the pressing issues that the communities raised and mandated us to prioritise as the ANC-led government.

167. Our immediate attention goes to fostering unity and commitment of leadership to ensure that the implementation of government programmes is accelerated.

168. At the same time, we will address **systemic capacity and institutional challenges** that impede our progress. In this regard, we will implement a comprehensive support programme to assist municipalities in responding to the development and service delivery needs of communities.

169. Honourable Speaker and Members, as government, we have a responsibility to mobilise all sectors of our society towards **a common vision** for Mpumalanga in which all its citizens, irrespective of colour, social status or creed, make a contribution towards shaping our collective destiny as a people.

170. It is a vision embodied in 'brand Mpumalanga' as ***the Place of the Rising Sun***, telling the story of a Province that abounds with economic opportunities, the story of a Province that is hard at work for its citizens, investors and visitors alike.

171. More importantly it is the story of the ordinary people of this Province, hard at work to meet and overcome whatever challenges lie ahead.

172. It is Our Story, the story of Mpumalanga, 'The Place of the Rising Sun'.

173. This year marks a significant period during which the Provincial Government will introduce a common brand that represents who we are as the Province.

174. All the institutions of government, including parastatals and municipalities will be expected to project and rally behind a common brand identity.

175. Our branding and marketing programmes across government will require effective coordination to ensure consistency in our messages as we interact and communicate with the people of the Province and the outside world.

176. We will continue to strengthen our communication services to ensure effective communication with the people of the Province, our partners and key stakeholders in business, civil society, and the global community as a whole.

Conclusion

177. As I conclude Honourable Speaker, let me emphasise that, for us to move South Africa forward, unity of purpose will always be central in our endeavours to create a better South Africa for all.

178. Robert Priddy puts it better when he argues that:

"Fortunately unification does not mean that everyone must believe the same or do the same or strive to look and be as like one another as possible...."

Most human problems remain insoluble until the various contrary views are brought together under the universal standpoint so as to hammer out an overall solution.

'Holistic' understanding arises when all partisans interests are viewed as parts of a whole...When the school is built, we again see this as an integral part of the whole school system of education.

All understanding aims likewise at some such unity of purpose, which leads on toward` attaining peace and unity of a more universal nature”

179. Let us continue to be united in our diversity and be diverse without fragmentation.

180. Together we can move South Africa forward.

181. **I Thank You**