



**LIMPOPO
LEGISLATURE**

It's your voice, use it!



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

LIMPOPO PROVINCE

ANNUAL HANSARD REPORT, 2024

OF THE

DELIBERATIONS AND DEBATES

OF THE

FIFTH SESSION

OF THE

SIXTH LEGISLATURE OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE

It's your voice, use it!

Vision

The Limpopo Legislature seeks to be a representative body, a vanguard of people's aspirations and interests towards a democratic, nonsexist, nonracial, united and a prosperous society.

Mission and Strategic Goals

The Legislature is an autonomous institution and an agent for transformation that strives to:

- defend, strengthen, deepen and maintain democracy;
- make quality laws and policies for the citizens of the province;
- have an effective and meaningful participation of the citizens in the law-making processes;
- articulate the needs and desires of the citizens;
- be a transparent, consultative and accountable institution;
- maintain norms set nationally for eradication of racism and gender imbalances;
- maintain norms set nationally for eradication of racism and gender imbalances;
- have a representative and accountable budget; and
- ensure provision, retention of competent skills and efficient utilization of human resources.

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MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL [CABINET]

Office of the Premier	Mr C S Mathabatha [Premier]
Education	Ms M M Lerule-Ramakhanya
Health	Dr P C Ramathuba
Social Development	Ms N A Ndalane
Economic Development, Environment and Tourism	Mr G R Monama
Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure	Ms C N Rakgoale
Transport and Community Safety	Ms F F Radzilani
Agriculture and Rural Development	Mr T A Mokone
CoGHSTA	Mr B R Makamu
Sport, Arts and Culture	Ms N G Kekana
Provincial Treasury	Mr S C Sekoati

OFFICE-BEARERS OF LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE

The Speaker	Ms R R Molapo
The Deputy Speaker	Mr T B Matibe
The Chief Whip	Mr M E Mokgonyana
The Deputy Chief Whip	Dr S M Mochadi
The Chairperson of Committees	Ms N S Monyamane
The Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Mr C B D Selane
The Leader of Government Business	Mr S C Sekoati
The Leader of the Opposition	Ms T A Maraga
The Acting Secretary of Limpopo Legislature	Dr I S Nkuna

MEMBERS OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE (in alphabetical order)**PARTIES REPRESENTED IN THE HOUSE:**

African National Congress (ANC)
 Democratic Alliance (DA)
 Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)
 Vryheidsfront Plus (FF+)

1. Aphiri, Mokgadi Johanna	ANC
2. Boshielo, Shela Polly	ANC
3. Kekana, Nakedi Grace	ANC
4. Lebea, Kedibone Margaret	ANC
5. Lekganyane, Nakedi Maria	ANC
6. Lerule-Ramakhanya, Mavhungu Maureen	ANC
7. Maharaj, Risham	DA
8. Mahasela, Mahlodi Caroline	ANC
9. Makamu, Basikopo Rodgers	ANC
10. Makhurupetje, Makoma Grace	ANC
11. Managa, Lilian	EFF
12. Maraga, Tshilidzi Annikie	EFF
13. Manganye, Tinyiko Florence	EFF
14. Mapoulo, Makgabo Lawrence	EFF
15. Maritz, Marcelle Frieda	FF+
16. Marule, Jacob Boy Otto	ANC
17. Maseko, Funani Jerry	ANC
18. Masekoameng, Mmabogahla Isaiah	ANC
19. Masemola, Namane Dickson	ANC
20. Mashamaite, Nkhola Victor	ANC
21. Mathabatha, Chupu Stanley	ANC
22. Mathe, Simon Matsobane	ANC
23. Mathye, Susani Violet	ANC
24. Matibe, Tshitereke Baldwin	ANC
25. Matlou, Leswafo Joshua	ANC
26. Mdaka, Falaza Philemon	ANC
27. Mochadi, Sekutu Monicca	ANC
28. Mokaba-Phukwana, Mapula Annah	ANC
29. Mokgonyana, Essob Mmanoko	ANC
30. Mokone, Thabo Andrew	ANC
31. Molapo, Reneiloe Rosemarry	ANC
32. Monama, Gannye Rodgers	ANC
33. Monyamane, Nkome Sarah	ANC
34. Moraka, Anna Tandi	ANC
35. Mphahlele Selaelo Regina	EFF
36. Ndalane, Nandi Annah	ANC
37. Ndou, Azwindini Jeremiah Dingaan	ANC
38. Phala, Katlego Suzan	DA
39. Phala, Kgolane Alfred	ANC
40. Radzilani, Fulufhelo Florence	ANC

41. Rakgoale, Chritian Nkakareng	ANC
42. Ramalobela, Mokwape Lectom	EFF
43. Ramathuba, Phophi Constance	ANC
44. Sekoati, Seaparo Charles	ANC
45. Selamolela Selelo Donald	ANC
46. Selane, Che Bonnie David	ANC
47. Seono, Mmaishibe Rebecca	ANC
48. Seshoka, Jetrick	EFF
49. Wilson, Evelyn Rayne	DA

PERMANENT DELEGATES TO NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

1. Mamaregane, Mmamora Lilliet	ANC
2. Mamorobela, Tebogo Portia	ANC
3. Mathevula, Brenda Tirhani	EFF
4. Nchabeleng, Mamagase Aleck	ANC
5. Shaikh, Shahidabibi	ANC
6. Smit, Christiaan Frederik Beyers	DA

COMMITTEES OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE

CATEGORY ONE – STANDING COMMITTEES

- a) Rules Committee
- b) Internal Arrangements Committee
- c) Programming Committee
- d) Whippers
- e) Disciplinary Committee
- f) Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests
- g) Committee of Presiding Officers
- h) Public Accounts Committee
- i) Public Participation and Petitions
- j) Quality of Life and Status of Women, Youth and Disability

CATEGORY TWO – PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

- a) Provincial Treasury
- b) Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs
- c) Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure
- d) Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
- e) Agriculture and Rural Development
- f) Transport and Community Safety
- g) Sport, Arts and Culture
- h) Education
- i) Health
- j) Social Development
- k) Public Administration
- l) Oversight Review Mechanism

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
JACK BOTES HALL, POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY
THURSDAY, 29 FEBRUARY 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

THE SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity for a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Honourable Members, you will recall that when the House rose in the last sessional year, it resolved that the Hon Speaker in consultation with the Hon Premier, will determine the date, time and venue for the State of the Province Address, 2024.

It is against this background that I inform this august House that both offices agreed on convening the first Sitting at Jack Botes Hall, Polokwane Municipality in the Capricorn District on this this day; Thursday, 29 February 2024. In terms of House Rule 24 read together with section 2(2) of the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, 2004 and section 110(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996, I hereby declare the Jack Botes Hall and its demarcated surroundings as the precinct of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature.

Honourable Members and guests, before we go to the business of the day, which is the delivery of the State of the Province Address, please allow me to acknowledge our guests of honour who have graced this occasion. I take this opportunity first of all to welcome the Premier of our province, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha and the Members of the Executive Council to this Sitting. [APPLAUSE]

I acknowledge all the guests of the Premier of the province. I acknowledge all the guests of the Speaker of the Legislature. I acknowledge all the guests of the Deputy Speaker of the Legislature. I acknowledge the presence of the Chief Whip and the Deputy Chief Whip of the House; the Chairperson of Committees and the Deputy Chairperson of Committees; honourable Members of the Limpopo Legislature and their guests; honourable Members of the National Council of Provinces and their guests; honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers who are present here. I am told Minister Ntshavheni and Hon Deputy Minister Mahlobo are also in our midst - you are most welcome.

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon Lechesa Tsenoli, I am told he is also in our midst, you are welcome, honourable Members of the National Assembly, former Members of the Legislature, Mayors and Speakers of district and local municipalities present, you are most welcome. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of the members of the Judiciary, the Judge President of

the Limpopo High Court and all other judges. Let me also acknowledge the presence of the provincial secretary of the ruling party, the African National Congress, Vhamusanda Reuben Madadzhe; [APPLAUSE] representatives of my organisation, the ANC, and the alliance partners, SACP, COSATU and SANCO, you are most welcome. The leadership of other political organisations represented here is welcome. I also acknowledge the presence of the chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, Hosi Ngove; the leadership of Contralesa; Kings and Queens present here, you are also welcome. [APPLAUSE]

I acknowledge the leadership of faith-based communities represented here. I acknowledge the presence of the Director General, Mr Nape Nchabeleng, and heads of department in Limpopo; the acting Secretary to the Legislature, Dr Isaac Nkuna; the provincial Commissioner of Police, you are also welcome. I also acknowledge the presence of and the heads of chapter 9 and chapter 10 institutions in Limpopo. CEOs and chairperson of state-owned entities; representatives of institutions of higher learning; medical practitioners and all health professionals; organisations for people with disability; business community; traditional healers associations; the mining community and the broader civil society; and the people of Limpopo and beyond who are watching the proceedings on DSTV, Channel 408, and those who are connected via social media and various communication platforms; the media houses; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, you are most welcome.[APPLAUSE]

I am told, Honourable Members and guests that, also in our midst, we have the former Premier of our province, Adv Ngoako Ramatlhodi. You are most welcome, sir. [APPLAUSE] I have covered all the categories of guests that were brought to my attention this morning, honourable Members, but, if I might have omitted other categories, please accept my sincere apology for the omission. You are all most welcome to the 2024 State of the Province Address.

I wish to bring the following procedural matters to the attention of the guests. These are the rules and orders of the House which must be observed throughout the proceedings. I will not mention all the rules, but I will read out the key ones that our guests should note and observe throughout our proceedings:

- This area, demarcated with red robes, is regarded as the legislative Chamber. The other area outside the chamber is regarded as the gallery for our guests;
- Those who are seated inside the legislative Chamber are the honourable Members of the Legislature and the NCOP permanent delegates;
- Those of you seated in the gallery are our guests of honour and patrons.
- All guests and patrons are not allowed to interfere or interrupt the proceedings in the legislative chamber;
- Only Members of the Legislature can participate in the proceeding of the House and must do so by observing the rules of the House at all times;
- Honourable Members, guests and patrons shall listen to the Premier's speech and remain silent throughout the proceedings; no interference, no howling and no distractions;
- When entering or leaving the legislative Chamber, honourable Members and guests are required to bow to the Speaker and they must do so quietly;
- Cell phones should be switched off or put on silent mode; and

- Taking photos or selfies by guests when the proceedings are on is not allowed. Those are, but some of the basic rules which must be observed today.

Honourable Members and guests, let me proceed. This Sitting is convened in terms of Rule 13(1) and (2) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Limpopo Legislature in order to afford the Premier of the Limpopo province the opportunity to deliver the 2024 State of the Province Address. Today is an extremely important and significant day for the people of Limpopo, and everyone is eagerly awaiting the Premier's address. I wish to take this opportunity to invite the Premier of our province, Hon Chupu 'Maremadipekwa' Mathabatha to deliver his last State of the Province Address. Mahlatji' a Hlabirwa, badudi ba Limpopo le dinaga mabapi ba nyorilwe, ba nyaka go nwa meetsi a sediba go tšwa polelong ya lena letšatšing la lehono. Sebaka ke sa lena Mahlatji. Before the Premier can start, honourable Members, shall we afford the praise singer the opportunity to render an item. [APPLAUSE]

[PRAISE SONG]

THE PREMIER

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

2024 STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS

(Address by Mr C S Mathabatha, Premier)

Speaker of the Legislature, Hon Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tshitereke Matibe... [INTERJECTION]

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Hon Speaker, on a point of privilege.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Premier, may you take a seat. Hon Maraga, you are recognised.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Hon Speaker, I am rising on a point of privilege. Hon Premier, with due respect, will you please, before you address this House, take 10 minutes of your time and apply the Batho Pele Principles. Principle no 04 is Courtesy, principle no 05, is Information and Principle, and no 07, is Redress. May you go out and address the people that are protesting outside. Thank you.

BACKGROUND

[NOISE]

THE SPEAKER

Order! honourable Members. Hon Premier, you may proceed.

THE PREMIER

Thank you, Hon Speaker. [INTERJECTION]

MR MAPOULO

Hon Speaker, on a point of privilege.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Premier, you may seat down. Hon Mapoulo, you are recognised.

MR MAPOULO

Homolang! Homolang!

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mapoulo, you are taking our time.

MR MAPOULO

Let them keep quiet, I need to speak. Thank you very much. I am not taking your time. It's colleagues that are taking time. I am not going to waste your time. I am going to tell this House that it is quite unfortunate that you don't want to prioritise our people out there. It should be recorded that the ANC-led government is failing to go and address the people. That must be recorded and placed in Hansard. Thank you.

BACKGROUND

[NOISE]

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Members please be quiet. Hon Mapoulo, I gave you an opportunity. Honourable Members, I have outlined the purpose of today's Sitting when we started and I said, today's Sitting is only to afford our Hon Premier the opportunity to talk to the people of Limpopo and nothing else. I tried to outline that, Hon Mapoulo. Not today. Hon Mapoulo you are fully aware of our rules. Not today. Today's Sitting is only for the Hon Premier to talk to our people. Thank you very much. Hon Seshoka, you are recognised.

MR SESHOKA

Hon Speaker, I think we need to be fair with the rules. As much as we agree with you on the rules that you have outlined, that does not take away the rules that are in the House, because a point of order is allowed at any given time. What we request of you, is to listen to the point of order, make a ruling so that we are able to proceed. What we

are not going to allow is a situation wherein you want to employ your own rules. Rule 92 of this book is clear in terms of points of order, it is allowed and there is no way that you can suspend that rule. As much as we agree on the rules, but on a point of order may you please, Hon Speaker, allow us to raise a point of order and make a ruling so that we are able to proceed. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Members I want to respond to Hon Seshoka on the same rule, Rule 92, it is clear Hon Seshoka. Can you open it? It says: "After the point of order, the presiding officer must give his or her ruling. It goes further and says: "The Presiding Officer's ruling on a point of order is final." Let's proceed honourable Members. That is Rule 92, you can read it.

MR SESHOKA

I am well aware of that, and I agree with you on that one.

THE SPEAKER

May you sit down, Hon Seshoka.

MR SESHOKA

Are you going to recognise me?

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Can you also tell your people not to make noise.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Seshoka, I was responding on the rules that you have raised. There is no need for you to make a follow-up on the very same issue. Hon Ramalobela, you are recognised.

MR RAMALOBELA

Can you protect me, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Members, allow Hon Ramalobela to raise his concern.

MR RAMOLOBELA

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am not here on a point of order. I am on section 93 and on a point of privilege. The time we came inside, according to the Batho Pele Principles, we heard people outside who are crying that they are hungry, and they are

unemployed. With due respect, before the Premier starts, may he go and address those people because the real Tintswalos are outside, not inside.

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Members, I have made my ruling. I am no longer going to take any hand. It is obvious that you are doing this deliberately and you don't want to see this Sitting moving. So, I am not going to take any more hands. I have afforded you an opportunity to raise what you wanted to raise. I have outlined the rules, and I have indicated that I am no longer going to take any point of orders.

THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION

There is another hand, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Managa, I am no longer going to take any hand. Hon Premier, may you please proceed. [APPLAUSE]

THE PREMIER

Thank you, Hon Speaker of our Legislature, Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tshitereke Matibe; honourable Members of our Legislature, our MPLs; the first Premier of our province, Adv Ngoako Ramatlhodi; Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon Lechesa Tsenoli; Minister Ntshavheni, Deputy Minister Mahlobo; Members of the Executive Council; Executive Mayors and Mayors present here; our provincial secretary of the African National Congress, Vhamusanda Reuben Madadzhe; the leadership of the ruling party, the African National Congress; leaders of opposition parties; chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, Hosi Ngove and your Deputy, Kgoši Rammupudu; all our esteemed traditional leaders present here; former MPs and MPLs; Baruti ba rena ka moka ba ba le go mo, ke bone ba South African Council of Churches ba gona mo, ke bone ba Zion Christian Church, St Engenas le bona ba gona mo; Director General and heads of department; stalwarts and veterans of our struggle; the Judge President of our province, Adv Phatudi; all members of the Judiciary present here; Provincial Commissioner of South African Police Services, Lieutenant General Thembi Hadebe; heads of our chapter 9 and chapter 10 institutions; leadership of our all community faith-based organisations present here; youth, women and other community leaders; members of the media; distinguished guests; and the people of Limpopo as a whole, which implies that I am addressing everybody in Limpopo, now. [APPLAUSE] Good morning. Avuxeni. Goeie more. Ndaa. Thobela. Lotjhani.

As I stand before you today, on this significant occasion of delivering my last annual State of the Province Address, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude and reflection. It has been an honour to serve as the Limpopo Premier since 2013, leading our fifth and Sixth Administrations through their journeys of transformation and renewal.

What is more profound is that our being here marks 30 years of democracy in South Africa. It has been an illustrious 30 years of responding to the needs and expectations

of the people of Limpopo; altering their economic conditions, upgrading them socially, affirming their belonging to this beautiful province and our country, South Africa. We are therefore reminded of the scenes that characterised the first nonracial, nonsexist, and democratic elections in April 1994.

The journey of stabilising and growing Limpopo over the years is the evidence of our commitment to good governance and sustainable development, including the provision of public goods and services. The amalgamation of three Bantustan governments and the Transvaal provincial administration marked a significant step towards unity and progress. It laid the foundation for a single, inclusive, and integrated province. Consolidating Limpopo was an important part of nation-building. It was a key strategy to dismantle the racial and ethnic divisions erected by the apartheid regime. We have gone a long way in fulfilling the constitutional mandate to do the following; heal the divisions of the past and build a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. The journey we have travelled covered transformation and development in critical areas such as the economy and the provision of public goods and services like; water, electricity, roads, education, health and homes. Not just houses but homes. Let us delve into some facts and figures that highlight the progress we have made since our hard-won April 1994 democratic breakthrough.

The first democratic elections in April 1994 resulted from our liberation struggle against colonial and apartheid forces and their beneficiaries. It is surprising that sections of these categories still want us to go back. Those who are still saying, it was better in Egypt. They spread the false notion that colonialism and apartheid brought about development and a better life. Meanwhile, life for the oppressed was synonymous with living in hell. Our democratic breakthrough ushered in our current Constitution. This was the first delivery following the first democratic elections in April 1994, ushering in this Constitution and taking our people out of the house of hell.

Through the Constitution we delivered fundamental human rights to all, regardless of race, gender, colour or creed. Please allow me to pay tribute to our heroes and heroines. I am going as far back as the kings and queens who led our wars of resistance against colonisation. I salute the stalwarts who carried on from 1912, January 08, by leading our liberation struggle. Our message of heartfelt condolences goes to all the families who lost their loved ones, going back to the beginning of our wars of resistance against the heartless systems of colonisation and apartheid.

When we achieved our April 1994 democratic breakthrough, less than 30 per cent of rural households had access to electricity. Today, honourable Members, we have electrified at least 94,6% of rural households in Limpopo, marking a significant improvement in access to electricity. [APPLAUSE] People in rural areas overwhelmingly depended on firewood to cook and using three-legged pots. There was deforestation, impacting trees and other plants making them an important source of energy, forgetting that we were also depriving ourselves a very important source of oxygen. Now that we have given our people electricity, forests have risen in various areas that were affected. Thanks to our massive household electrification programme.

In healthcare, it is pleasing that we currently have 476 clinics in Limpopo. Two hundred and sixteen of our healthcare centres, that is 45%, operate 24 hours a day.

[APPLAUSE] In 2010, we reached 80% of access to water, reaching more communities and improving public health outcomes. However, because of various countervailing factors, we have experienced a decline to 69,1%. We are worried about this, and we are hard at work with authorities in the water provision space to improve the situation.

Honourable Members, as I continue with this speech, you will understand the reason why we declined. It is not like we decreased the provision of water to our people. There were other underlying factors that came into play. It is important to note that we have improved access to sanitation to 63,1%, up from 26% in 2002, and up from a far lower baseline in 1994. Our tarred road network has significantly expanded since April 1994. It is now covering rural areas that were neglected before. Places where you never thought you will ever have a tarred road we tarred roads today. Through this progress, we have enhanced connectivity and improved transportation efficiency, facilitating economic development in our province. At present, our target is to surface 13,800 kilometres from gravel to tar.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have worked very hard in education. Our efforts are now visible in improved matric results. We have improved from a 38% matric pass rate in 1996. Now at 79,5% in 2024, our matric pass rate now approximates our 80% target. [APPLAUSE]

Madam Speaker, Limpopo's contribution to national economic output over the past three decades has improved. In 1996, Limpopo contributed 5.3% to the national GDP. Despite global economic and pandemic crises, our contribution to national GDP reached 7,3% by 2023. This reflects the strategic efforts undertaken by the province to harness its vast natural resources, develop critical sectors and attract investment.

The demographic landscape of Limpopo has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past 30 years. This is evidenced by the consistent increase in the number of our households. From just over 911 000 000 households in 1996, we have increased to over 1,8 million households in 2022. Which means our households have now doubled in number, hence, I was saying, it does not necessarily imply that we have reduced in the provision of water, it is just that the people and the households have increased. [APPLAUSE] This substantial growth in households highlights Limpopo's growing population. We have now reached over 6 million people, according to the latest census. Our population growth underscores our evolving socioeconomic dynamics and governance environment. Particularly, it underlines the expanding demand for public goods, government services and infrastructure development. The latest census report highlights Limpopo's economic growth, with various sectors contributing to employment creation and development. However, it underscores the importance of addressing the challenge of youth unemployment, as well as education and skills development.

The provincial nodal development strategy has identified Polokwane, Fetakgomo-Tubatse and Thulamela as amongst the most populated 17 municipalities in South Africa, highlighting the growth and potential of these regions. Limpopo has established a firm role in food security in our country. Twenty-nine per cent of our households grow food within their yards. This is testament to the fact that we have an active citizenry in food production. We remain determined to support our people in food production.

Together let us build on the progress we have made, harnessing the potential of our youth, investing in infrastructure, fostering industrialisation and promoting sustainable development.

Surely, Hon Speaker, ladies and gentlemen and Honourable Members you will agree with me that regardless of party-political affiliation, we have made progress in addressing the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. We also all acknowledge that there is still a lot of work to be done. I am sure we all agree that the road to success is a journey but not just a sprint.

Honourable Members, we reaffirm what His Excellency, President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, said during the State of the Nation Address earlier this month that ,the ANC strove for a nonracial and nonsexist democratic South Africa. This government has transformed the lives of millions of our people. The President further outlined the challenges our country faced. Various events countervailed our march to prosperity. These include state capture and other forms of corruption, gender-based violence, global economic crises and the Covid-19 pandemic. The President said: "While each of these events has left its mark, our country has weathered every storm. Yes, we have the scars to show, but in every case South Africans have been resolute. We have not only persevered, but we have come back stronger and more determined."

All these efforts have demonstrated how South Africans value the freedom that was won after decades of struggle. These words surely reflect the journey we have traversed since 2013 when we took office as the fifth administration. In 2013, Limpopo was at a critical juncture. Five departments were under national administration. Confidence in our provincial administration was waning from our people. I won't forget what former MEC Magadzi said in our first meeting in that Executive Council meeting in 2013, she said, Premier tše di nyaka dithapelo. She insisted that we must take a resolution that we must go to church, re yo kgopela dithapelo. We did exactly that, honourable Members. Our task was clear and yet daunting. It was to breathe life back into these departments and restore confidence in our governance. It was a journey akin to the mythical phoenix rising from the ashes. A symbol of renewal and resilience that resonates deeply with the spirit of Limpopo.

In this journey of transformation, I am reminded of the words of the renowned South African poet, Lebogang Mashile, who once said: "We are all broken vases trying to keep flowers alive." This metaphor beautifully encapsulates the state of Limpopo when we began our work. We were a province striving to nurture growth and prosperity, despite the cracks of past the challenges. Yet, like the resilient vase that holds the water nurturing the flowers, we too held onto hope and determination.

Over the past decade, we have worked tirelessly to bring stability and sound administration to our province. Through collective efforts and unwavering commitment, we have seen remarkable improvements in audit outcomes and overall provincial performance. The once prevalent disclaimer audit opinions are now a thing of the past in our departments, public entities and municipalities. No department is under administration today as we speak. [APPLAUSE] No municipality is under administration today as we speak. [APPLAUSE] No municipality has a disclaimer audit opinion today as we speak. [APPLAUSE] The story of Limpopo's renewal and development is far from over. It is a continuous journey, one that requires an active

citizenry, and the collective effort of every community and leader. Together, we can build on the foundation we have laid, striving for even greater achievements and a brighter future for all who call Limpopo home.

Our trajectory towards a Limpopo that we all yearn for is taking shape during an unfavourable, harsh global reality. The global economic outlook is severely affected by the NATO-Ukraine and Russia war, Western unilateral sanctions outside the United Nations legal and multilateral frameworks, and the genocidal Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian people. Our national government took a good decision to refer this matter to the International Court of Justice, to stop the genocide. To stop the killing in Palestine. Under the circumstances, we need to build greater self-reliance and increase our share of value addition in finished products. It is important to continue our efforts to achieve manufacturing localisation, to deepen and expand domestic beneficiation of our minerals and primary agricultural products, industrialise and drive large-scale employment in our province.

Ladies and gentlemen and honourable Members, the Limpopo population landscape has changed. Since 2022, we are now the fifth largest province in South Africa. Although we have moved from the fourth spot, we have become the largest contributor to Gauteng's population. Our economic and social development programmes should help us retain our youth, while protecting their freedom of movement. Democracy has brought about many shifts. More people stay where they want to. Over 60% of South Africans are staying in urban centres or peri-urban centres. This is linked to an increased movement of people from rural areas and urbanisation.

However, Limpopo remains youthful with a greater proportion of our population still between 18 and 34 years old. This calls on us to strengthen programmes that will address the challenge of youth in employment, education or training. The programmes include our youth development strategy, including skills development, placements in work, and youth empowerment. From the year 2000, mining became the largest contributor to our economic growth. Mining contribution to our GDP rose from below 20% in 1999, reaching a peak of 28,1% in 2008. The 2008 global economic meltdown affected our economy, resulting in a decline in many sectors. At 25,6%, mining reached a new peak of its contribution to our provincial economy in 2019.

The rise of mining in Limpopo has led to the positive economic developments that we are witnessing along the Dilokong Corridor in Fetakgomo-Tubatse, Sekhukhune and in Waterberg District. It is important to distribute economic development evenly, to do away with the legacy of uneven development. Honourable Members, it was not easy to untap this potential. We must thank those who came before us, Hon Premier Ramatlhodi, Hon Premier Moloto and Hon Premier Mathale. It was not very easy to untap the mining potential, but we did untap it. As a result, we have succeeded as a province of Limpopo to eliminate mud houses in the province.

If you travel from Musina throughout Limpopo up till Moutse and look for mud houses, that was a common feature prior to 1994, you will really search for them. Prior to 1994 batho ba be ba ikgantšha ka go re, ka gešo re na le ntlo ya samente. Today we have got houses in this province which are an equivalent of houses that you find in big cities. Thanks to this ANC-led government. [APPLAUSE] Because of that, honourable Members, every district in Limpopo, we are aware that it has something to offer. By

developing their potential advantages, the government shall lift up the economies of all districts and improve the quality of life of our people.

We are products of hope that see in the budding spring-leaf upcoming summer harvest. We see in the dry beds of our rivers simmering springs as rains begin to fall, regenerating the wetlands that had temporarily gone to sleep. The hope is borne out of the significant contribution that the mining sector is making to our provincial economy. General government services are the second largest contributor to our provincial economy, after mining. The government is followed by finance; real estate; trade; catering and accommodation, reflecting the importance of the tourism sector in Limpopo.

I am pleased to report that Limpopo has seen a growth in investments. Our annual investment conferences, beginning with the first in 2021, have contributed over R280 billion in investment pledges. The difference that these pledges brought about is reflected in their immediate implementation. These investments include mining, agriculture, agroprocessing, green energy, property development, as well as trade, catering and accommodation. Rising investment is a sign of confidence and is important for us to address unemployment and poverty. We experienced an increase in employment from 2019 to 2023. Limpopo is in the top three provinces that have shown a rise in employment. Although we lost 40,000 jobs in the last quarter, we have created 182,000 jobs in 2023, making us the second largest province in job creation. [APPLAUSE]

The provincial government has implemented enterprise development and support programmes. These programmes support local enterprises, including small, micro and medium enterprises, as well as cooperatives. We achieved this through access to finance, markets, training, and essential business equipment. We have established partnerships with organisations such as Impact Catalyst, Coca Cola Business South Africa, and the South African Breweries Foundation to implement enterprise development programmes targeting; youth, women, people with disability and graduates interested in new venture creation.

In August 2023, the provincial government of Limpopo took a significant step towards regulating the liquor industry by enacting the Limpopo Liquor Act 9 of 2009. This legislation was put into effect in alignment with the requirements set forth by the National Liquor Act of 2003 and the National Liquor Norms and Standards. The implementation of the Limpopo Liquor Act commenced on 01 August 2023, marking a pivotal moment in the province's efforts to ensure responsible and regulated liquor consumption. I must report here that we met with the South African Council of Churches, and they are worried a lot about the mushrooming of liquor outlets in our communities. I can assure them that this government is a listening government, we will attend to that.

One of the key aspects emphasised by the Limpopo Liquor Act is the protection of the rights of individuals to a peaceful environment. This includes regulations on operational times, noise pollution, and adherence to trading hours all aimed at promoting responsible alcohol consumption and minimising negative impacts on communities. By enacting and operationalising the Limpopo Liquor Act, the provincial

government is taking proactive steps to ensure a well-regulated and harmonious liquor industry that prioritises the wellbeing of residents and communities.

Honourable Members, the Limpopo provincial government is taking steps to ensure the sustainability of entities under the Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA). These include establishing a Provincial Public Finance Management Act 3D entity monitoring and evaluation task team. The purpose of this Task Team is to monitor the implementation of the LEDA Group and GAAL sustainability and financial recovery plans. Here we are strengthening institutional governance and performance management.

Limpopo is known as a province where agriculture plays a pivotal role. In the first quarter of 2020, up to the third quarter of 2021, agriculture was the third largest contributor to employment in our province, after community and social services, as well as trade. It was overtaken by construction in the last quarter of 2021. In the first quarter of 2022, agriculture returned to the third spot in the province's sectoral employment contribution.

We have made significant progress in agriculture. We implemented agricultural support programmes, such as the Land-Care Programme, the Revitalisation of Agriculture and Agro-Value Chain Plan, and the market access certification programme. Efforts in climate-smart agriculture, skills development, research, and infrastructure development have contributed to agricultural production.

Our commitment to agricultural education and livestock disease control, in addition to other policy interventions, further demonstrates our resolve to build a prosperous and inclusive agricultural sector.

Today, I stand before you filled with a profound sense of pride and accomplishment, as we reflect on the strides we have made in the realm of public works and infrastructure development. Over the past four years, under the Sixth Administration, our collective efforts have borne fruit, contributing to the transformation of our province's landscape and the quality of life of our people.

We embarked on a journey in 2019, with a clear vision of delivering socioeconomic infrastructure to serve as the backbone for service provision across our province. I am thrilled to report that we have successfully delivered 50 socioeconomic infrastructure projects, showing our dedication to the people of Limpopo. Many of us, seated here today, are beneficiaries of the expansion of our road infrastructure network by over 6 000 tarred km since 1994. [APPLAUSE] We sometimes just have to step out of this hall to witness the transformation that the 15 km N1 Bypass ring road has brought to the outlook of Polokwane, or the improved flow of traffic in Fetakgomo-Tubatse, after the expansion of the R37 road. Go to Musina and many other villages in our province, we have made them more attractive and accessible. People in these villages are no longer afraid of buying luxury cars.

During the State of the Province Address last year, we mentioned our road infrastructure projects. I am pleased to report on the progress we have made thus far. The upgrade of road D4180 from Atok Mine to GaSelepe is in the final stages of design. Work will commence on this crucial road shortly after the design is completed.

and the contractor appointed. Road D4260 from Malope to Phokwane, already has a contractor appointed and construction has already started. This upgrade will significantly upgrade transportation in that area. Regarding roads D4090, D4093, D4094, and D4096, known as Malemate roads, the contractor has already been appointed. The scope of work and preliminary design reports for roads D4199 from Apel to GaNkoana and D4190 have been approved. The consulting engineer is currently working on the detailed design report for these roads. We have already made significant progress on priority roads in the province. Among others, the construction of road D3278 from Blouberg Hospital to Buffelshoek in the Capricorn District is well underway. Road D3561 in Segole 1 and Segole 2, from N11 to Masebe Nature Reserve in the Waterberg District, is progressing. We have also commenced work on road D3669, known as Mavhunga access road, in the Vhembe District. Road D3734, also known as Tshatshama, in the Mopani District, is currently under construction.

The construction of roads D3436, D3428, and D5007 in GaRamoshwane, GaRammetlwane, and GaRamotlokwana in the Capricorn District is progressing well. Similarly, the construction of road D3248 from Thapane access to N'wamitwa in the Mopani District is underway. Work has also begun on road D4283 from Glencowie to Malaka in the Sekhukhune District. The construction of road D3671 from Musekwa to Maranikwe in the Vhembe District is progressing. Similarly, the construction of road D4109 from Mamatonya to road D885 in the Capricorn District is underway.

We have created employment in all road infrastructure projects where construction has begun. I think this answers that journalist who once asked me about the performance of RAL — Is RAL still having money? Is RAL still building roads? All these roads have been built by the Roads Agency Limpopo.

The GaMalekane Steelpoort bridge, situated on road D2219 connecting to the R555 in the Sekhukhune District, is a joint effort between RAL and mining companies in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Municipality. [APPLAUSE] I am pleased to announce that this project has achieved a 35% progress and is on track for completion in November 2024.

In the Waterberg District, RAL has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with Northam Platinum, securing R41 million in funding, entirely provided by Northam Platinum. This initiative aims to enhance a bridge and upgrade a 3 km stretch of road D2357 connecting to road R511. Having commenced in November 2023, the project is presently at 32% completion stage. The project is to be completed in August 2024.

In the Mopani District, RAL has signed a memorandum of agreement with Phalaborwa Mining Company to rehabilitate and upgrade road D3786 in Mashishimale and road D4424 in Lulekani, with a combined value of R205 million. [APPLAUSE] RAL and the mining company have agreed to contribute R105 million and R100 million, respectively. The project will commence in March 2024, aimed to be completed in September 2025.

Additionally, we have allocated resources for road maintenance and rehabilitation to improve the overall quality of our infrastructure and contribute to the longevity of our road network.

We have also assigned 19 roads to be maintained by the South African National Roads Agency Limited to leverage its capacity - thanks to Minister Chikunga. Education saw a remarkable progress with the completion of 12 schools that had been devastated by severe storms. Schools like Nwaridi Secondary in Vhembe and Khetho Nxumalo in Mopani, among others, stand today as symbols of resilience and hope for our children and communities. [APPLAUSE] Our cultural heritage and governance structures were strengthened with the delivery of traditional council offices, including the recently completed offices of GaRaphahlelo, Bakone ba Matlala, Davhana and Bakwena ba Matsepe traditional councils. In our quest to promote culture and knowledge, we have completed new library facilities in Seleteng - gagešo GaMphahlele, Mavalani, and Runnymede. We have also embarked on the construction of four new libraries in Tshaulu, Sekhukhune, Botshabelo, and Vleifontein. Our commitment to public safety and agriculture saw the implementation of the Limpopo Traffic College projects and the construction of agricultural service centre offices.

Healthcare infrastructure received a significant boost with upgrades to laundries at various hospitals and the construction of new medical facilities, ensuring that our communities have access to quality healthcare services. We have refurbished the Schoemansdal Museum and the Thohoyandou Government Complex. Through these projects, we have created over 21,800 work opportunities, empowering women, youth, and people with disability.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to our infrastructure development agenda. Just last week, we conducted the sod turning ceremony for the Limpopo Provincial Theatre. [APPLAUSE] This construction project aims to unearth new talent and position our province as a key player in the creative arts economy. I am sure that our artists will truly appreciate this. I must also announce that we have a number of them present in this hall today, including Master KG- Mr Mpe, Pleasure, and Penny Penny. [APPLAUSE] Ahee, Papa Penny, Ahee! I can't mention all of them, our artists have honoured the invitation we sent to them.

Census 2022 shows that 69,1% of our households have access to water. However, amid the growth in the number of households, 20,5% of our households have not yet been connected to piped water. In addition, the lack of adequate bulk infrastructure and reticulation capacity remains a significant challenge in ensuring universal access to water. This is despite the fact that our dams have recorded an average storage capacity of 81,8% as at January 2024.

As I said earlier, to tackle these challenges head-on, we have strengthened our engagements with water service authorities. Since the 2013/14 financial year, the province has spent R26,6 billion on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), with the majority of this spending going towards water.

Recent figures show that, during the 2023/24 financial year, the provincial MIG allocation is approximately R3,52 billion. Nine out of 25 municipalities, that is 36%, with an allocation above R100 million have a combined total of approximately R2,7 billion, which is 96% of the provincial allocation. Sixty-eight percent of the provincial Municipal Infrastructure Grant is allocated to nine water service authority municipalities.

In the main, this allocation is meant for provisioning of basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal. Therefore, a failure to spend these allocated budgets implies we are depriving our people of the much-needed public goods and services.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to take this opportunity to correct misleading information desperately spread by some minority sections of this august House about Limpopo's spending. Spreading misleading information from this House negatively impacts on its integrity and standing in society.

The fact is that we have fought against underspending, as we did against disclaimer audit outcomes. Finally, in the past two years, we have made progress in curbing underspending. Our efforts have brought underspending within the national norm of 2% of the total budget. In the 2022/23 financial year, Limpopo's underexpenditure was only 1,9% of its budget, which exceeded R70 billion. We have only surrendered 0,15% to the national treasury. Figures don't lie. Figures don't lie.

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Members, you are not allowed to engage the speech of the Premier today. Hon Mapoulo, not today please.

THE PREMIER

Thank you, Hon Speaker. The province has improved spending, resulting in receiving an additional R250 million this year for the Human Settlements Grant. [APPLAUSE] We received this money from then National Treasury, after the Western Cape could not spend it. The Western Cape, being the jewel of British colonialism. Our emphasis on spending has nothing to do with expenditure for its own sake. It is essentially a means to deliver public goods and services. That is our ultimate mandate.

Through our social cluster programme, we have made significant strides in the areas of cooperative governance, human settlements, and traditional affairs over the past five years. This journey has been marked by achievements such as municipalities attaining clean audits, improved disaster management coordination, and the introduction, as well as the implementation, of the District Development Model. Our focus includes transforming informal settlements through formalisation, infrastructure connection, and servicing of sites. Approximately 31,000 households have benefited from housing programmes.

The institution of traditional leadership has received substantial support. Since 2014, we have been allocating vehicles to deserving senior traditional leaders to enable them to perform their work. We are honoured that in 2023, we have allocated a further 102 vehicles to deserving senior traditional leaders. Our target is to complete the allocation by the end of March 2024.

I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to our traditional leaders for running initiation schools in ways that make us the best in the country. We wish the 2024 initiation season great success, characterised by zero deaths. Working together

with traditional leaders, as the custodians of our culture and heritage, the provincial government will clamp down on illegal initiation schools.

I still urge traditional authorities to find a lasting solution to matters of succession and dispute resolution on their own. As the government, we would like to stay clear from being entangled in disputes arising from traditional leadership succession. The government does not identify senior traditional leaders for recognition. Our role is limited to fulfilling legislative recognition after the royal families and royal councils have themselves determined who their senior traditional leader is. Ga re kgethe magoši, ga re beye magoši bjale ka mmušo. Kgoši e bewa ke bamošate. Kgoši e bewa ke lapa la mošate, ga e bewe ke mmušo. Rena ba mmušo re no latela sepehetho sa ba mošate. [APPLAUSE]

The journey towards a better future for all residents continues, with a strong emphasis on governance, development, and community wellbeing. Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed educators, hardworking school governing bodies, dedicated learners, and the resilient people of Limpopo, we are now left with 80 schools to complete the elimination of pit latrines, out of the 380 schools identified in 2017 as having inappropriate sanitation. This to us, is a notable progress. Our Sixth Administration takes pride in achieving the best results in the 30-year history of Limpopo. In addition to the commendable improvement in the matric pass rate of 2023, we have seen an increase in bachelor passes. We don't just pride ourselves on quantity but also on the quality of results. [APPLAUSE]

To move with the times, especially the digital technological revolution, we have provided 35,000 tablets to Grade 1 and Grade 6 learners. This initiative goes far beyond the gadgets; it equips learners with digital skills and prepares them for the evolving demands of the modern economy. By implementing digital technology in education, we are ensuring that our learners are well prepared for the skills of the future.

Currently, Limpopo boasts 23 focus schools, comprising 15 technical high schools and eight agricultural schools. Our approach ensures that each district in our province benefits from hosting a focus school. We have graciously received a donation from China earmarked for the construction of an engineering and technical high school. A dedicated task team is now identifying a suitable site for this pivotal project. [APPLAUSE] Our focus schools play a crucial role in nurturing talent and providing specialised education in areas such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Our aim is to develop these schools to serve as centres of excellence, empowering our learners to excel in their chosen fields and contribute meaningfully to society.

Special thanks to Statistics South Africa, under the stewardship of our own son, Mr Risenga Maluleke, as the Statistician-General. Stats SA has donated tablets to Limpopo from the census 2022. [APPLAUSE] We have established partnerships to guide Limpopo's skills development initiatives, ensuring alignment among all Sector Education and Training Authorities, key stakeholders such as TVET colleges, community education training colleges, universities, trade unions, and government departments to uplift the youth through skills development. From 2021 to February 2024, over R1,2 billion has been invested in skills development in the province,

benefiting more than 26,000 learners and students, primarily the youth. This substantial investment underscores our commitment to empowering our young people.

Looking forward to the 2024/25 financial year, we are excited to launch our flagship skills development programmes with merSETA funding amounting to approximately R137 million. It's crucial to note that this is substantial funding, provided as free money and not from our equitable grants. These programmes, thanks to Minister Nzimande, target 960 learners across various critical sectors, including apprenticeships in motor mechanics, diesel mechanics, mechanical fitting, welding, and electrician trades.

The merSETA supported programme also target artisan recognition of prior learning for 70 workers, and learnership for 250 learners in new venture creation and support for 10 small, micro and medium enterprises, as well as cooperatives on product standardisation and technical capacity building. It includes short skills development programmes for 130 workers in solar installation. This initiative is crucial for skills development, youth empowerment, and employment.

Honourable Members, our journey has been marked by significant milestones that have shaped healthcare in our province. We have made remarkable strides, particularly, in reducing the HIV positivity rate among the 15 to 24 years age group from 1,9% to 1,3%, surpassing our target. Our Antiretroviral Therapy has expanded, ensuring broader access to HIV treatment. Our efforts in TB treatment and maternal healthcare have positioned Limpopo as a provincial leader in these areas.

Our infrastructure development efforts have also been robust. We have commenced the construction of the Limpopo Central Academic Hospital. [APPLAUSE] The construction of this hospital reflects our dedication to expanding and modernising our healthcare infrastructure and training healthcare professionals, including much-needed specialists. The impact of this hospital will be profound, offering state-of-the-art healthcare services and serving as a hub for healthcare training and research. The upgrading of Siloam Hospital, as well as other healthcare facilities, will improve the provision of healthcare in our province.

The acquisition of 566 ambulances in the current financial year will enhance our Emergency Medical Services, underscoring our commitment to provide timely and efficient emergency care to our people. Remember, honourable Members, when we said in the State of the Nation Address of 2016 — I am speaking under correction — we stated that we would buy 50 ambulances every year, and we have been doing so without failure. This year alone, we bought 566 ambulances. [APPLAUSE]

Our Rural Health Matters Programme has contributed significantly to reducing the backlog of surgery, taking quality healthcare to the people. The journey ahead is filled with challenges, but our resolve is stronger than ever. Together, we will continue to build a healthcare system that is resilient, inclusive, and capable of meeting the needs of our people. Nnete e a hlaba. E a ba kokonela. [LAUGHTER] Our commitment to the healthcare and wellbeing of our people is unwavering, and through the National Health Insurance, we shall ensure that no one is left behind. Our journey is far from over, but with the continued support of our dedicated healthcare workers, partners, and the

community, I am confident that we will achieve even greater milestones in the years to come. Together, let us continue to work towards a healthier Limpopo.

Our journey towards creating a safer, more efficient transport system has achieved significant milestones in the 2023/24 financial year. We have embarked on a transformative journey to bolster our fight against road fatalities. The recruitment of 150 young workers for our traffic learnership programme marks a pivotal step in this direction. These learners, currently receiving a stipend, are being equipped with the skills necessary to enhance our traffic management capabilities by 2025. This initiative addresses the urgent need for capacity and opens opportunities for our youth.

We have reinforced our commitment to road safety through the appointment of 274 road safety ambassadors. Deployed across all five of our districts, these ambassadors play a crucial role. They safeguard pedestrians and improve the flow of traffic during peak hours. The refurbishment of the Limpopo Traffic College, including the construction of new residential and catering facilities, underscores our dedication to maintaining high standards of training. This investment not only ensures compliance with health and safety standards, but also positions the college as a premier traffic training institution in the region.

The Shova Kalula bicycle project distributed 2 197 bicycles to learners in rural areas over five years to promote non-motorised transport. This has the added spinoff of promoting a healthy lifestyle. Our journey towards a safer, more efficient transport system remains a priority. Ladies and gentlemen, our commitment to the well-being and care of older persons has been unwavering. Through our efforts, 533 older persons now have access to residential facilities, and 13 500 benefit from community-based care and support services. We have championed the rights and wellbeing of persons with disability, providing care for 294 people in residential facilities. Additionally, we have ensured that 3 514 individuals have access to services in protective workshops.

In our fight against HIV and Aids through social development programmes, we have trained 750 implementors on social behavioural change and provided psychosocial support services to over 10 000 beneficiaries. Our family preservation initiatives have engaged approximately 74 000 family members in services, reunited 219 members with their families, and facilitated the participation of over 29 000 in parenting programmes. Through the Expanded Public Works Programme, we have created over 1 500 work opportunities. We have empowered vulnerable individuals and communities, with 7 200 households gaining access to food through our food security programmes. Together, let us continue to build a brighter future for the people of Limpopo through social development.

Since 2013, the provincial government has made significant progress towards building a capable, ethical, and developmental state. As part of this crucial imperative, we have committed ourselves to fight against corruption in government, wastage, and mismanagement of public funds.

During the State of the Province Address last year, we gave a report to this august House on the progress we have made, working collaboratively with the Special Investigating Unit. In addition, we are pleased to report that we are also collaborating

with chapter 9 institutions, such as the Public Protector and the Human Rights Commission.

For those who do not know, these institutions were established by the democratic government since the 1994 democratic breakthrough. They were never there during the colonial and apartheid regimes; hence, corruption was deeply concealed under apartheid. This ANC-led government introduced the Hawks, the SIU, and all these chapter 9 institutions so that we can expose corruption within our own organisations. [APPLAUSE] The decision of this progressive government to establish these institutions was fundamental to ensure adherence to the rule of law.

Progress to date is that, working together with the Special Investigation Unit, the provincial government has implemented its recommendations regarding the COVID-19 funds, and appropriate sanctions are being meted against all those found guilty of wrongdoing. Notably, some government officials are facing criminal investigations. Similarly, we are currently implementing the Public Protector's recommendations regarding irregularities at the Department of Social Development, in the main, and other departments, in general. In the same spirit, we call upon all our municipalities and other water services authorities implicated in the water provisioning report by the commission last year, to fully cooperate with the commission and implement the recommendations. In the same vein, I want to send a strong message to all those in the public service, particularly those prone to committing corruption, fraud and maladministration, to desist from engaging in those activities.

Honourable Members, during the State of Province Address last year, we reiterated our commitment to embracing and acknowledging the pivotal role played by our military war veterans in the struggle for freedom and democracy. This programme of action has been under implementation since 1994. We know and we equally acknowledge that the plight of the military war veterans is the collective responsibility of our government. I am honoured to report that the Provincial Inter-Ministerial Task Team, established by the Hon Deputy President, is progressing without hinderance. Similarly, we are pleased to report that our decision to mandate all MECs to develop specific plans to support our military war veterans is being implemented. Furthermore, our government continues to provide educational and skills development interventions, housing, and grants for all deserving military war veterans. We want to call on all municipalities and honourable Mayors to do the same.

Our resolve is guided by the imperative to implement focused interventions aimed at improving the living conditions of our military war veterans. We are precisely doing that. Once again, we dip our revolutionary banners in honour of all the heroes and heroines of our liberation struggle who laid down their lives for the democracy that we are all enjoying today.

Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Bafana Bafana on restoring our pride in the football fraternity by achieving a bronze medal in the 2024 Africa Cup of Nations. [APPLAUSE] We are proud of the significant number of players in Bafana Bafana hailing from Limpopo. I also wish to thank other stars who make Limpopo proud in other sporting codes, arts and culture, both nationally and internationally.

As part of the duties of the Premier, I have concluded several special projects, which are in the main, humanitarian in nature. I am pleased to report that since 2017, working with good Samaritans, some of whom are within our midst today, we have recorded enormous achievements. My special word of gratitude goes to everybody who contributed immensely towards initiating this robust programme, aimed at eliminating the imbalance of the past by uplifting the socioeconomic conditions of Limpopo residents.

The Premier's Special Projects are commitments and pledges made by the Premier and have been implemented accordingly. I am pleased to announce the following special projects as duly completed:

- The Premier has built and handed over a house to the family of Vusi Ramusi on 22 April 2022. This was an intervention after the stalwart of our struggle for democracy untimely passed away.
- Similarly, the Premier built a house in honour of another hero of our struggle for democracy, Ephraim Phorogohlo Mogale, in Botha Village, Ephraim Mogale Municipality. The house was handed over to the family on 25 September 2022.
- The Premier donated an amount of R300,000 to the St Mathews Anglican Church in January 2023.
- In 2021, during President Ramaphosa's visit to Precious Ramabulana's family in Tshikuwi Village, Makhado Municipality, the President expressed a wish for a house to be built for the Ramabulana family. The Premier fulfilled the President's wish, and the house has since been built and handed over to the family. [APPLAUSE] Precious Ramabulana was a student at Capricorn TVET College. She was brutally murdered in gender-based violence.
- In 2023, the Premier donated a house to the family of Inah Mabasa in Matolokwane Village, Makhuduthamaga Municipality, to improve the living conditions of the family.
- The Premier also donated a Braille Laptop to a learner at Rivoni School for the Blind. While this is a single laptop; we mention it here because the cost is prohibitive.
- On 25 July 2017, the Premier donated air conditioners to Thobela Secondary School.
- The Premier donated a complete set of school uniform to Kefiloe Moukangoe at Kgaladi Primary School, Mamone Village, in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, on 06 April 2022.
- At Rivoni School for the Blind, twelve state-of-the-art classrooms, girls' and boys' hostels, and a house for the facility manager facility have been successfully completed. In addition, the science laboratory and the

administration block were completed in December 2023. As we speak now, the dining hall facility is nearing completion.

- The Premier donated 34 laptops, a solar system, and other facilities to Mafato Primary School in Motetema.

The following are outstanding Premier Special projects, which are currently under implementation:

- Eight Southern Limb mining houses contributed over R127 million to the Malekana bridge. The sod-turning ceremony occurred on 21 February 2023. Currently, the bridge is under construction, and upon completion, the long wait to pass through the much-used steel bridge will be a thing of the past.
- A memorandum of understating has been signed by SANRAL and RAL to build the Moria Interchange Bridge for the St Engenas Zion Christian Church. SANRAL is completing detailed designs for the project. As soon as that is completed, we will add another modern road infrastructure in Limpopo.

From 2018 to 2023, the Premier's Bursary Fund has awarded bursaries to 48 learners to continue their studies in higher education and training. Remember, this is not budgeted for in the fiscus. This money comes from good Samaritans out there.

Madam Speaker and honourable Members, I am reminded of the words of another great South African artist, Johnny Clegg, who sang about the spirit of the great heart. It is this spirit of the great heart of Limpopo, that has guided us through our challenges and triumphs. As I prepare to pass the baton to the next Premier, along with the current Executive Council to the next Executive Council, - obviously they will be coming from my right-hand side-, I am confident that this spirit will continue to guide our province towards greater heights.

I would also like to send words of my special appreciation to the governing African National Congress for the responsibility entrusted to me as the Premier for the past 11 years. [APPLAUSE] The ANC did not bring me on board as a messiah, but my glorious movement brought me in as a servant of our people. [APPLAUSE]

I wish to acknowledge the former Premiers, Advocate Ngoako Ramatlhodi, Ambassador Sello Moloto, and Mr Cassel Mathale for laying the foundation and steering the ship called the Limpopo Provincial Government. [APPLAUSE]

I also wish to thank the Hon Speaker, Hon Deputy Speaker, and all the honourable Members of this august House. To all political parties that were represented in this august House before and now, I thank you for our relationship, which was both complementary and contradictory.

I thank the Director-General of the provincial government, Mr Nape Nchabeleng, all heads of department, and the entire complement of public servants for their support throughout our journey of transformation and development. Allow me, Hon Speaker,

to also thank all staff members in the Office of the Premier. You really made me feel very comfortable amongst you.

Hon Speaker, I must single out this special person in my life within the administration for the past 11 years, Mr Mogale Nchabeleng. Ke be ke tla ba kae tau, ngwana Gobetse ge nkabe e se ka wena. Le wena Mma Mphahlele, my personal assistant Judy Mphahlele. Le wena ditheto di a go swanela. [APPLAUSE]

These are the people who welcomed me in 2013 when I joined government, and some were saying eupša batho ba ba be ba šoma le Mathale. O ka se tsome ka mpša tša motho yo mongwe, ka gore o tšile gore ge o re sa!, tša loma wena. I have proven them wrong. Ke šomile le bona batho ba...since day one to date...ga se nke ge ke re sa!, tša loma nna

I also want to thank my protectors, most of whom I started this journey with, from 2011, Mr Rerani, Mr Masiagwala, Mr Sethosa, Mr Molokomme, and Mr Phaahla. I have never changed them. Ke thomile le bona go tloga mathomong go fihla mafelelong, and they have been so loyal to me. [APPLAUSE] All of them, I have inherited them from Premier Mathale. Ga se nke di loma nna. Ke a le leboga. I will miss the humour of Mr Sethosa. There is a road between Marapjane College and Tuinplaas. About 3,5 km of that road belong to Mpumalanga, and about 4km belong to Limpopo. The part belonging to Mpumalanga was always very clean and well taken care of. Yela ya rena, there was always a lot of problems, ge re theoga ya Mpumalanga, so Mr Sethosa would say “Chief, bjale re tsena ka gae”, [LAUGHTER] until such time I went to RAL and said you are going to pave that tar road. That tar road is now paved.

Hon Speaker, I also wish to thank civil society organisations for their contribution in building the much-needed social compacts in our province. To the people of Limpopo, I want to express a big thank you for the support, cooperation, and encouragement. It was worth it. [APPLAUSE]

Finally, I wish to pay special tribute to my late wife, the First Lady of Limpopo, Mme Margret Mathabatha. [APPLAUSE] She was my pillar of strength from the first day I took over the responsibility as Limpopo Premier. Your support was not limited to my responsibility as the Premier, you were also a dependable ally, a beautiful wife, my comrade, a caring mother to our children, a pillar of strength to the impoverished, a gender-based violence activist, and a darling to my family, relatives, and the people of Limpopo.

Madam Speaker, with your due indulgence, I wish to dedicate this speech to Mme Maggie Mathabatha. May her beautiful soul rest in peace! [APPLAUSE]

With these words, I say thank you to you all, Limpopo, for your trust and your unwavering spirit. It has been my greatest honour to serve you. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

[APPLAUSE AND SLOGAN]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Premier, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, for delivering the 2024 State of the Province Address, to the people of Limpopo. We shall now call upon the Deputy Speaker to pass a vote of thanks and to make some announcements.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I am standing on the protocol already established by yourself and the Premier. Hon Premier, on behalf of the Legislature we want to thank you for the address that brings smiles to the faces of ordinary people of this province. We also want to thank you, Hon Speaker, for steering this ship until now. It started with some waves, but you steered it up until the end.

We also want to thank the honourable members of the Judiciary for being present. Judge President, together with the judges of our province. Your presence is a clear demonstration that the SOPA brings all the arms of the state together. We have the Judiciary, the Legislature and the Executive.

We also want to thank the chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, Hosi Ngove, Ndabezitha! Ri khou livhuwa. Khakhamela, tsha u fuka na tsha u adza. Thindi ndi a midza, ndi kundwa nga shambo.

Hon Premier, when you honour our traditional leaders in Tshivenda, you just say something which is impossible, because it is done only by our senior and royal traditional leaders. When you say: "Tshiulu tsha maḡini", you mean an anthill inside the water. An anthill cannot be inside the water. Some will say: "Lutiitii lu na dzhasi" which means, a very small bird which is wearing a jacket, which is impossible.

Our senior traditional leaders, the deputy chairperson and all royal leaders who are present here today, thank you for being here with us. We also want to thank the hosting Mayor, the Executive Mayor of Polokwane, Cllr John Mpe. Hon Premier, he is a very good host for us as the Legislature. We can put our hands together for him. [APPLAUSE] He is not a good host because he is my friend, but he is a good host because he is, indeed, one.

We also want to take this opportunity to send our appreciation to the provincial secretary of the ruling African National Congress, and all other alliance partners; SACP, Cosatu, and all our leagues, political parties who are also part of the Legislature and their leadership. We want to thank you very much. We also want to take this opportunity to send our appreciation to the provincial secretary of the ruling African National Congress, and all other alliance partners; SACP, Cosatu, and all our leagues, political parties who are also part of the Legislature and their leadership. We want to thank you very much.

We also wish to thank the heads of chapter 9 and 10 institutions in Limpopo, CEOs and chairpersons of state-owned entities, representatives of institutions of higher learning, organisations of people with disability, our business community, traditional healers, and the mining community that are present here.

We also want to thank our religious leaders present here. You have acknowledged them Mahlatji. You started with a prayer, and I hope that those who will receive the

baton will continue with prayer, because prayer is the only thing that can assist all of us.

As you were outlining, Hon Premier, the journey from 1994 to date, you reminded me of the famous words of an eminent revolutionist, Karl Marx, in his book, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. He said: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered; given and transmitted from the past..."

Whatever you were outlining, made me think about this famous quote, to say that you are showing us the dialectical relationship between the past and the present, the old and the new. We want to thank you very much, Hon Premier. [APPALUSE]

We also want to thank all the guests, the Members of the National Assembly as led by the Deputy Speaker. I saw all of them are here, we want to thank you, Deputy Speaker, for being with us here. We really want to thank you. If you are here, the Hon Speaker and I feel honoured that you graced our State of the Province Address. We want to thank all your predecessors, Hon Premier, as we see Adv Ramahlodi present here. Thank you very much for the work that you have done from 1994 until now.

We also want to thank the administration of the Legislature and all administrators. The commissioner of our province and your team, we want to thank you for your all the work you have done to make this event a success.

All the guests of the Hon Premier and Hon Speaker, we want to say thank you very much. We might not be able to mention all of you. All our Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips, the leadership of Salga, we also want to thank you for being part of us here.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

After the adjournment of the proceedings, the Speaker's procession and the Premier will leave the Chamber, followed by the MPLs, and then the NCOP permanent delegates. All of us will remain standing until they have left. We request your cooperation in this regard, especially our guests. When we move out after the procession has left the Chamber, there is a place for honourable Members for the photo session. Members of the media will only interview the Premier and other Members after the photo session is completed.

Honourable Members and guests are invited for luncheon at Bolivia Lodge, after the adjournment of the Sitting. Arrangements have been made with traffic officers to escort honourable Members and guests. The Hon Speaker also has some tokens of appreciation for people who attended this gathering. Those tokens will be distributed at Bolivia Lodge. We have made provision, and we request everyone invited to go to Bolivia Lodge.

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker.

9. ADJOURNMENT

This House is adjourned to Tuesday, 05 March 2024, at 10:00 at the Polokwane Council Chamber. It is extremely important to emphasise that on that day, the MEC for Provincial Treasury will be afforded the opportunity to deliver his Budget Speech. The debates for the Premier's address speech will be on Thursday, 07 March 2024. Thank you.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
POLOKWANE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHAMBER
TUESDAY, 05 MARCH 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you. You may all be seated. Hon Premier, Members of the Legislature, honourable Members of this august House, Chief Whip of the majority party, Chair of Chairs, Deputy Chief Whip, members of the SAPS, members of the opposition and all members in the gallery, good morning.

Honourable Members, please allow me to acknowledge the guests present here today. I acknowledge the presence of the provincial secretary of the ruling party, the African National Congress, Vhamusanda Reuben Madadzhe; the chairperson of the ANC Youth League in Limpopo, Cde Tonny Ernest Rachoene; and the representatives of other political organisations present here. [APPLAUSE]

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of the Director-General, Mr Nape Nchabeleng; heads of departments in Limpopo, Acting Secretary of the Legislature, Dr Isaac Nkuna; Mayors and Speakers of district and local municipalities present; CEOs and chairpersons of state-owned entities.

I would also like to recognise the presence of representatives of both churches of the Zion Christian Church, the business community, the media houses and also the people of Limpopo who are following the proceedings on *Thobela FM*, *Munghana Lonene FM*, *Phalaphala FM* and other radio stations as well as social media platforms. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning and welcome to the tabling of the 2024 Annual Provincial Budget.

Honourable Members, I'm going to skip items 2,3,4 and 5. We are not going to deal with the motions today. We will defer them to the next Sitting.

[ITEMS 2–5 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

6.1 Tabling of the Auditor-General's 2022/23 PFMA Consolidated General Report on National and Provincial Audit Outcomes

We shall now call upon the MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon S C Sekoati to the podium.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me take this opportunity to present the consolidated financial statement.

Hon Speaker, section 19(3) of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No 1 of 1999), as amended, provides that the MEC for Finance in a province must submit the consolidated financial statements and the audit report, within one month of receiving the report from the AG to the provincial legislature for tabling in the legislature.

To fulfil the requirements of the above-mentioned legislation, I, therefore, table the consolidated financial statements and audit report for the 2022/23 financial year for consideration by this House.

I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. The report is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration and to report back to the House. Let's proceed to the next item.

6.2 Tabling of Section 71 Report: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003

Honourable MEC, you may proceed.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Section 71(7) of the Municipal Finance Management Act provides that the Provincial Treasury must, within 30 days after the end of each quarter, make public as may be prescribed, a consolidated statement in the prescribed format on the state of the municipalities' budgets per municipality and per municipal entity.

Hon Speaker, I hereby table the above-mentioned report for consideration by this honourable House.

I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. The report is also referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration and to report back to the House. Thank you very much. Honourable Members, we are now proceeding to the next item.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY:

7.1 First Reading of the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Bill, [B01-2024] by the MEC for Provincial Treasury

Honourable MEC, you may proceed.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hon Premier, I am here to request the House to consider a proposal to amend the 2023/24 Adjustments Appropriation Budget.

The Minister for Finance has published Gazette No 50137 of 2024 in compliance with section 18 of the Division of Revenue Act, 2023 (Act No 5 of 2023), as amended, which gives effect to the following:

- In compliance with section 19 of the Division of Revenue Act, 2023, as amended, the national Department of Human Settlements reallocates funds to Limpopo amounting to R250 million following revised allocation by the national Department of Human Settlements.

Honourable Members, this money comes from provinces that could not spend, in particular the Western Cape. Therefore, the money was redirected to Limpopo province. We are, therefore, accepting. [APPLAUSE]

The National Treasury has further approved the request of transferring national officers, based on the 2022/23 audit outcomes, a rollover of conditional grant allocations to the 2023/24 financial year in compliance with section 21(2) of the 2022/23 Division of Revenue Act, 2022 (Act No 5 of 2022), as follows:

- The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development receives additional rollover of R6,768 million for Comprehensive Agricultural Support programme.
- The Department of Health receives additional rollover of R20,712 million for National Health Insurance Grant which is specifically meant for the oncology services components.

In compliance with section 31 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999, as amended, I herewith table the 2023/24 Adjustment Appropriation Amended Budget to provide for the following:

- Appropriation of funds that have become available to the province;
- Unforeseeable and unavoidable expenditure;
- The shifting of funds between and within Votes or to follow the transfer functions in terms of section 42;
- Money to be appropriated for expenditure already announced by the MEC for

- Finance during the tabling of the annual budget;
- The utilisation of savings under a main division within a Vote for defrayment of access expenditure under the main division within the same Vote in terms of section 43; and
- The rollover of unspent funds from the previous financial year.

The Budget Adjustment allocations per department are amended as follows:

- Vote 01: The Office of the Premier's allocation has been adjusted downwards by R5,564 million from R465,654 million to R460,090 million.
- Vote 02: The Legislature. The adjusted allocation of this institution in 2023 was not affected and will remain the same at R536,212 million.
- Vote 03: The Department of Education's allocation has been adjusted upwards by R100 million as funded from the savings of R93,038 million within other departments and R6,963 million from the provincial revenue services. The department's Budget is amended from R39,037 billion to R39,137 billion mainly to fund the spending pressures on infrastructure projects.
- Vote 04: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's conditional grant allocation has been increased by R6,768 million as approved by the National Treasury and the equitable share allocation has been reduced by R31,450 million as net reduction of R24,682 million from R1,806 billion to R1,781 billion.
- Vote 05: The Provincial Treasury. The department's allocation has been adjusted downwards by R3,948 million from R414,806 million to R410,858 million.
- Vote 06: The Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism. The department's allocation has been adjusted downwards by R8,3 million from R1,710 billion to R1,702 billion. The R8,3 million is made up for the reduction in the allocation of the Limpopo Tourism Agency of R1,4 million and R6,9 million in LEDET.
- Vote 07: The Department of Health's conditional grant allocation has been increased by R20,712 million as approved by the National Treasury and the equitable share has been reduced by R14,840 million – a net increase of R5,872 million from R24,602 billion to R24,608 billion.
- Vote 08: The Department of Transport and Community Safety's 2023/24 adjusted allocation was not affected and will remain the same at R2,513 billion.
- Vote 09: The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure's allocation increases from R5,081 to R5,098 – an increase of R16,8 million funded from the provincial revenue in order to fund budget pressures in Roads Agency Limpopo. The department has reprioritised identified savings of R166,974 million to increase transfer payments to RAL.

- Vote 10: The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture's allocation has been adjusted downwards by R3,151 million from R644,7 million to R641,549 million.
- Vote 11: The Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs' allocation has been increased by the additional conditional grant allocation from National Treasury of R250 million and the equitable share reduced by R25,785 million – a net increase of R224,215 million from R2,797 billion to R3,021 billion.
- Vote 12: The Department of Social Development's 2023/24 adjusted allocation was not affected and will remain the same at R2,036 billion.

Hon Speaker, having received the above amendments, the Provincial Treasury, in terms of section 31 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No 1 of 1999), as amended, herewith tables the 2023/24 Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Bill, 2024 (No 1 of 2024) to effect these adjustments and increase the provincial Budget by R301,245 million from R81,643 billion to R81,9 billion.

I thank you, Madam Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. The Bill is also referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration and to report back to the House. Let's proceed to the next item.

7.2 First Reading of the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B02-2024], by the MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Sekoati

Over to you, honourable MEC.

TABLING OF THE 2024/25 PROVINCIAL BUDGET (Address by Mr S C Sekoati, MEC for Provincial Treasury)

Speaker of our provincial Legislature, Hon Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker of the Legislature, Hon Tshitereke Matibe; Hon Premier of our province, Hon Chupu Mathabatha, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa; honourable Members of the Executive Council; Members of the Provincial Legislature; leaders of various opposition parties present; chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, Hosi Ngove, le magoši ka moka a a le go gona; former Members of the Provincial Legislature present here; Director-General of the province; all heads of departments and other senior managers; chairpersons and members of the boards; chief executive officers of our various entities; Executive Mayors; Mayors and all Councillors present; leadership of the ruling party, the African National Congress as represented by Vhamusanda Vho Madadzhe; provincial chairperson of the ANC Youth League as represented by Tonny Ernest Rachoene; leaders of representatives of our Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 institutions present; leaders of organised labour and faith-based organisations – I have also learnt that the bishops of our two big churches, Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane and Bishop Engenas Joseph Lekganyane are also present this morning – civil society

organisations present; captains and leaders of various industries; all leaders of our youth, women, and people living with disability; distinguished guests; people of Limpopo, good morning. Thobela. Ndi matsheloni. Inhlukanhi.

Hon Speaker, in the symphony of democracy, we stand here today as custodians of a vision crafted over three decades of resilience, progress, and unity. The melody of our province's journey echoes through the corridors of time, shaped by the diversity of the people of this province and the rhythmic beats of democracy.

President Cyril Ramaphosa, in his State of the Nation Address, reminded us, "We are not passive observers of our history. We are its authors. We are the builders of this country we call home. As we look towards the next 30 years of freedom, we must choose the kind of country, and indeed the kind of world, we want to create for ourselves and for our children."

You would even go further and say, whether we like it or not, we have to be part of that history.

As we unveil the Budget for Limpopo, let us keep in mind that this is not merely a fiscal exercise, but a moment to sculpt the very contours of our shared destiny. It is a pivotal juncture where fiscal allocations transcend numerical values, transforming into instruments that shape the lives of every citizen, paving the way for a future that reflects the aspirations of a resilient and united province.

Ladies and gentlemen, South Africa and Limpopo economies continue to be affected by the global economic performance, where the world economies are recovering from the ongoing wars in critical economic regions.

The world trade growth is projected at 3,3% in 2024 and 3,6% in 2025, below its historical average growth rate of 4,9%. Rising trade distortions and geo-economic fragmentation are expected to continue to weigh on the level of global trade.

In this regard, our country, as Africa's most industrialised economy, will likely grow a meagre 1% in 2024, significantly slower than the IMF's forecast in October, when it saw South Africa's gross domestic product expanding by 1,8%.

Despite these predicaments, it is worth noting that South Africa, notwithstanding its many operational challenges, is becoming a more attractive location for private business compared to some countries in the emerging market regions.

This improvement reflects positively on South Africa's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) which, as part of structural reforms, aimed at helping the economy recover from COVID-19, pledged in 2020 to make it easier for private businesses to operate in the country, including the regulatory reforms and incentives implemented that allow businesses to invest in renewable energy installation.

In the main, the major sector contributors to our provincial economy are the mining sector at 28,1%, followed by community service at 25,1%, finance at 17,3% and trade at 13,9%. Construction sector remains the lowest at 1,9%. This sector has been failing to bounce back from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The manufacturing sector at 2,6% contribution is continuously very low and, if thoroughly explored, fundamentally, it has a potential of increasing the province's GDP growth. It is also imperative that the provincial government continues to develop value addition strategies across these sectors, with greater growth potential.

Such strategies and policies should complement the developed sector master plans such as agriculture and agroprocessing master plan, and tourism master plans, amongst others.

Hon Premier, in the past years and over the 2024 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period, the provincial resources have been negatively impacted by fiscal consolidation implemented by the National Treasury as part of fiscal strategy, aimed at stabilising the economy and reducing public debt.

This has since limited resources available for allocation to provinces through equitable share and reduced the budget available in the province to allocate for provincial priorities, projects and programmes that will contribute towards job creation, development, and socioeconomic growth in the province.

Therefore, over the 2024 MTEF period, the Provincial Treasury will implement various strategies to mitigate the impact of fiscal consolidation on service delivery. This includes collaboration between the Provincial Treasury and provincial institutions in an effort to assist the latter to leverage on budget reforms such as spending reviews, zero-based budgeting, and Budget Facility for Infrastructure, known as a (BFI).

Hon Speaker, the financial outlook of the provincial administration has significantly improved, as in the 2011/12 financial year, the province had 19 disclaimer audit opinions which to date have all been eliminated.

It is also notable that we received a number of clean audits over the last couple of years; however, they are not yet sustainable. We need to do more to ensure that we can retain that.

Therefore, through enhancing financial governance, strengthening of audit remedial action and oversight, we endeavour to improve the sustainability of clean audits and elimination of remaining unqualified audits in the foreseeable future.

In terms of our work in the municipal support and governance, Provincial Treasury continues to collaborate with the Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPACs) to strengthen the governance and oversight. We have also established the municipal and Members of the Executive Council forums in which the MEC for Treasury and the MEC for CoGHSTA meet with all the Mayors and municipal managers to access financial and governance progress.

We are thus happy to announce that all municipalities in the province are effectively implementing Municipal Standard Chart of Accounts (mSCOA). Currently we are working on strengthening municipality's assets management module of the mSCOA.

Hon Speaker, given the current economic challenges and fiscal constraints facing the province, since the 2019/20 Budget cycle, the provincial government has invested resources to enhance the planning, delivery and governance of infrastructure to improve the delivery mechanism, the expenditure of infrastructure budgets, to promote value for money and efficacy of our investments.

Therefore, our resolve is to continue addressing challenging factors hampering infrastructure implementation by supporting and strengthening capacity at the Limpopo Department of Public Works Roads and Infrastructure to perform its role as the custodian of immovable assets, and the implementing agent of infrastructure through alternative funding models remains resolute.

Hon Speaker, in preparing and finalising the 2024/25 MTEF, all departmental infrastructure plans were used to inform the final allocation. Over the 2024 MTEF period, a total Budget of R21,691 billion has been allocated for the delivery of infrastructure within the province. This allocation will fund infrastructure projects of various categories in line with the overall strategic objectives of the province, and the project details are captured in the project list of each department.

Hon Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, the provincial infrastructure budget for the 2024/25 financial year will be R7,851 billion, representing an increase of 6,1% compared to the 2023/24 financial year. The R7,851 billion is allocated to various departments as follows:

- The Department of Education will receive R1,623 billion through the Education Infrastructure Grant which includes maintenance of Early Childhood Development centres and priority project for storm-damaged schools.
- The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will receive R206,260 million.
- The Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism will receive R25 million for refurbishment of state resorts as part of the provincial priorities.
- The Department of Health will receive R848,228 million.
- The Department of Transport and Community Safety will receive R62,6 million also as part of the provincial priority projects.
- The Department of Public works, Roads, and Infrastructure will receive R3,714 billion.
- The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture will receive R243,585 million. Included in the departmental allocation is the R200 million for construction of the provincial theatre, in case there are still those who are saying, it will never happen. We hope construction will start soon. APPLAUSE]
- The Department of CoGHSTA will receive R1,1 billion, representing a negative growth of 17,4% from the 2023/24 financial year.
- The Department of Social Development will receive R20,333 million.

The procurement plans for each department have been finalised, and we are at an advanced stage to have projects at preplanning stages concluded. We are also expediting implementation through acceleration and catch-up plans that the Provincial Treasury monitors on a monthly basis, including implementing controls to prevent

unwanted expenditures such as irregular, unauthorised, fruitless, and wasteful expenditure as mandated by the PFMA.

Honourable Members, the national transfers, which include the provincial equitable share and the conditional grants, are the primary revenue sources for the provincial expenditure. These two sources of funding, on average, constitute 97,8% of the total revenue of the province, while the balance of 2,2% is provincial own generated revenue over the MTEF.

That tells us that we still need to do more to make sure that we are able to generate our own revenue so that we are able to, at all times, be in a better position to augment these allocations from national government.

In 2024, transfer receipts from national government amounted to R79,718 billion in 2023/24 and is set to increase over the 2024/25 MTEF to R81,404 billion in 2024/25, R84,328 billion in 2025/26 and R87,998 billion in 2026/27 financial years, respectively. Including the provincial own revenue, the total provincial receipts will be R83,255 billion in 2024/25, R86,264 billion in 2025/26, and R90 billion in 2026/27 financial years, respectively.

The provincial equitable share, which is the largest source of provincial revenue, accounts for 84,4% of the total provincial revenue over the 2024 MTEF period. The equitable share allocation allocated to the province will be R69,625 billion in 2024/25, R72,925 billion in 2025/26 and R76,482 billion in 2026/27 financial years, respectively.

In the 2024 MTEF period, the province's equitable share has been adjusted upwards as follows:

- R145,763 million in 2024/25, and R153,199 million in 2025/26 for new data updates in the equitable share formula;
- Pre-MTBPS additions of R2,506 billion in 2024/25; R2,642 billion in 2025/26 and R2,781 billion in 2026/27 for wage carry-through cost, mainly for Education and Health; and
- Post-MTBPS additions of R1,415 billion in 2024/25; R1,440 billion in 2025/26; and R1,486 billion in 2026/27 for wage carry-through cost, mainly for the social sector.

The province's equitable share is also adjusted downwards as follows:

- The total reduction of R109,219 million only in 2025/26 for new data updates in the equitable share formula;
- Pre-MTBPS fiscal consolidation of R2,272 billion in 2024/25; R2,398 billion in 2025/26 and R2,489 billion in 2026/27; and
- Post-MTBPS reduction on Education and Health wage carry-through cost of R144,331 million in 2024/25; R152,006 million in 2025/26 and R159,854 million in 2026/27 which was National Treasury clawback of part of the additional funding made available for these departments pre-MTBPS.

The funds have been redirected to these departments' compensation of employees under the conditional grant portfolio. The adjustments outlined above resulted in a net

increase of R1,651 billion in 2024/25; R1,423 billion in 2025/26; and R1,771 billion 2026/27 financial years, respectively. These net increases mainly cushioned the social sector departments, which is Health and Education, against the impact of reductions to ensure the protection of core services delivered by these departments. It will ensure that we continue to fully compensate doctors, nurses, educators and fill critical vacancies in education and health sector. [APPLAUSE]

Madam Speaker, the provincial conditional grants allocation amount to R34,698 billion over the 2024 MTEF period with R11,779 billion allocated in 2024/25; R11,403 billion in 2025/26; and R11,516 billion in 2026/27 financial years.

The conditional grant allocations increase by 4% in 2024/25 and decline by 3,2% in 2025/26 and slightly rebound by 1% in the 2026/27 financial year as part of fiscal consolidation and repurposing of this portfolio by the national government. The provincial own revenue target for 2024/25 is R1,851 billion, which further increases to R1,937 billion and R2,029 billion in 2025/26 and 2026/27, respectively. The increase in provincial own revenue is proving to be instrumental in closing the gap in provincial revenue caused by decreasing equitable share, whereas the province's envelope is increasing at a low rate. This demands that together with the departments, we develop strategies to mitigate the impact on service delivery imperatives. This means that those who know that they are supposed to pay for services in the province and can afford it must make it a point that as a province, we are not only able to sustain ourselves but we are also able to augment this equitable share and to, from time to time, fund our priorities.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the words of Premier Chupu Mathabatha, "It has been an illustrious 30 years of responding to the needs and expectations of the people of Limpopo – altering their economic conditions, upgrading them socially and affirming their belonging to this beautiful province and country."

With this sentiment in our hearts, we continue to embark on this budgetary journey with determination and purpose, guided by the principles of equity, inclusivity and prosperity for all. Together, let us forge a path towards a Limpopo that not only fulfils the dreams of its citizens, but also serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration for the current Tintswalos of Limpopo and the Tintswalos yet to come.

Honourable Premier, as I now turn to allocations per department, let me begin by highlighting that these allocations were informed by robust assessment of each department's readiness, capacity to absorb, and effective and efficient spending of resources.

So, we don't just give everyone allocations; we have to make sure that those departments that are the receiving departments have the capacity and are, therefore, ready to implement. The Provincial Treasury assessed the business plans and implementation plans of all projects that will be implemented by the departments over the 2024 medium term to ascertain their shovel readiness; hence, only projects that were found ready to commence received funding. Those allocations are as follows:

Vote 1: Office of the Premier. The Office of the Premier is allocated R506,194 million in 2024/25; R515,450 million in 2025/26; and R533,515 million in 2026/27 financial

years. The 2024/25 allocation is inclusive of R83,144 million earmarked funding for, amongst others, ICT-related projects in the province, provincial energy strategy, review of the LDP for the seventh term of the administration and Limpopo SMS Development Programme.

Vote 2: Provincial Legislature. The provincial Legislature is allocated a total Budget of R549,516 million in 2024/25; R542,085 million in 2025/26; and R626,182 million in 2026/27 financial years. This allocation is mainly for the operational expenditure of the provincial Legislature. I thought Members are happy that they will have enough allocations. [APPLAUSE]

Vote 3: Education. There is hope for Tintswalo. Education receives the bulk of the provincial Budget at 48,2% as part of the province's commitment to continue providing social protection and fund programmes that are essential in the improvement of learners' performance across all grades. The department is allocated R40,029 billion, R41,808 billion and R44,163 billion in 2024/25; 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years, respectively. [APPLAUSE] The first financial year's allocation is inclusive of R1,596 billion for wage carry-through cost, R100 million for e-Education, R100 million for storm-damaged schools, and R70 million for improvement of matric results project. [APPLAUSE]

So, the improvement that we have just seen was not accidental. It was as a result of a conscious decision and efforts made by this government. These programmes and projects are funded by the combination of equitable share, conditional grants and own revenue.

Vote 4: Agriculture and Rural Development. Agriculture and Rural Development is allocated a Budget of R1,783 billion in 2024/25, R1,887 billion in 2025/26 and R1,962 billion in 2026/27 financial years, respectively. The allocation in the first financial year of the MTEF includes R320,960 million received by the province in the form of conditional grants. The allocation for 2024/25 includes an amount of R31,350 million for the revitalisation of agriculture and agroprocessing value chain known as RAAVC projects.

Vote 5: Provincial Treasury. The Provincial Treasury is allocated a total Budget of R478,063 million in 2024/25, R500,122 million in 2025/26 and R519,577 million in 2026/27 financial years. In 2024/25, the budget is inclusive of the R17,514 million made available for national priority funding pertaining to municipal intervention capacity building that we have spoken about in terms of assisting municipalities (R11,803 million) and infrastructure capacity building programmes (R5,711 million).

Vote 6: Economic Development, Environment and Tourism. The Department of Economic Development Environment and Tourism is allocated a Budget of R1,866 billion in 2024/25, R1,674 billion in 2025/26 and R1,429 billion in 2026/27 financial years. The 2024/25 allocation is inclusive of R986,113 million set aside for transfer to the department's public entities, as follows:

- Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA) : R834,656 million;
- Limpopo Tourism Agency : R82,864 million; and
- Limpopo Gambling Board : R68,592 million.

The transfer to LEDA includes an amount of R561,323 million for the implementation of catalytic projects such as Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone at R417,475 million and Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park at R143,848 million. [APPLAUSE]

So, we are basically funding those programmes that are related to industrialisation of the province. The function of economic development in the province is within the ambit of this department; hence, the 2024/25 allocation also includes an amount of R25 million for state resort refurbishment; R8,500 million for reserve commercialisation; R5 million for the purchase of resort equipment, furniture, bedding, including the white sheets that you will find in those resorts, and cutlery; and R1,9 million for the implementation of a resort central reservation system so that, Hon Seshoka, when you go there you are able to make a reservation; you don't just walk there and you are told that it's full.

So, we are putting money aside to make sure that we can do that. The department is also allocated R28 million for waste management and air quality control projects to make sure that we are able to prevent disease outbreaks in the province and ensure that we are able to have a healthy life and prolonged longevity.

Vote 7: Health. As part of providing social protection, the Department of Health receives the second largest allocations of the provincial budget after the Department of Education at 29,7%. The total allocation to the department is R24,639 billion in 2024/25, R25,769 billion in 2025/26 and R27,443 billion in 2026/27 financial years. The allocation consists of a combination of equitable share, conditional grant and provincial own revenue. The 2024/25 Budget is inclusive of R52,250 million for purchase of new ambulances and all the necessary ambulance equipment.

Furthermore, a total amount of R150 million has been made available for the appointment of 143 permanent doctors in various health facilities across the province. [APPLAUSE] The department will also continue funding the Cuban Doctor Programme in 2024/25 and a total budget of R20,900 million has been set aside for this purpose.

Vote 8: Transport and Community Safety. The Budget for the Department of Transport and Community Safety is R2,611 billion in 2024/25, increasing to R2,684 billion in 2025/26 and R2,791 billion in 2026/27. Through this Budget, the department will implement a number of key projects in the 2024/25 financial year, including for revitalisation of Traffic Training College at R13 million, the construction of K53 projects in Thohoyandou and Seshego at R25 million, the refurbishment of traffic facilities in the province at R8,688 million and the remedial work at Thohoyandou Intermodal Facility at R16 million.

The allocations of the department is also inclusive of R127,015 million set aside for transfer to Gateway Airports Authority Limited known as GAAL in 2024/25 with more than half of this allocations at R74,011 million being dedicated towards the implementation of service delivery improvement plan projects at the airport.

Vote 9: Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure. The allocation for the Department of Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure is R5,272 billion in 2024/25, R4,770 billion in 2025/26 and R4,529 billion in 2026/27 financial years. In 2024/25, the allocation will be utilised to implement various infrastructure projects in the province, including the

ZCC R71 interchange road project at R125 million, the purchasing of new yellow fleet at R100 million, the refurbishment of LEDET Suid Street building at R20 million and MMSEZ road infrastructure project at R15 million.

A total of R150 million has also been set aside for the settlement of municipal rates and taxes so that as the provincial government, we do not continue to owe municipalities and create a burden for them. So, we are setting aside money so that we are able to fulfil our responsibilities and make sure that our municipalities are viable. As per EXCO resolution, the province remains committed to purchasing and owning office building to reduce rental costs and a total budget of R100 million in 2024/25 has been allocated within this department for this purpose.

Vote 10: Sport, Arts and Culture. The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture receives a total Budget of R827,099 million in 2024/25, R763,447 million in 2025/26 and R734,301 million in 2026/27 financial years. The allocation for 2024/25 includes conditional grants allocations amounting to R231,074 million. In 2024/25, a total budget of R200 million has been allocated to commence the construction of the provincial theatre. Provincial Treasury assessed the business and implementation plans for this project, and the indication is that construction work will be commencing in April 2024.

Vote 11: Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs. The Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs receives a total Budget of R2,473 billion in 2024/25, R2,557 billion in 2025/26 and R2,521 billion in 2026/27 financial years. The Budget for 2024/25 includes conditional grant allocations of R1,108 billion, which includes R892,884 million for Human Settlement Development Grant, R212,572 for Informal Settlement Upgrading Partnership Grant and R2,128 million for EPWP Grant.

Furthermore, the allocation for the 2024/25 financial year also includes R37 million for the construction of traditional council offices and R5 million for the furnishing of traditional council offices.

Vote 12: Social Development. The Budget for Department of Social Development amounts to R2,077 billion in 2024/25, R2,256 billion in 2025/26 and R2,344 billion in 2026/27 financial years. The 2024/25 allocation includes a conditional grant allocation of R7,203 million for the Expanded Public Works Programme. Within the 2024/25 budget, is an allocation of R13,317 million to fund the fight against GBVF at R15,939 million for social workers programme as well as R17,106 million for HIV prevention programmes.

Madam Speaker, each Vote will, in the next couple of weeks, present further details of their respective budgets to this honourable House. Honourable Members, ladies, and gentlemen, it is my conviction that the Budget delivered today reconfirms the African National Congress government's commitment to prudent fiscal allocations and better public finance management.

As we look forward to yet another 30 years of a better life for all, I join my voice to echo the sentiments of our Premier that we need to prioritise industrialisation, recognising it is the symphony of progress, transforming dreams into reality and propelling nations towards a future where innovation and prosperity harmonise on the

grand stage of economic evolution. Honourable Premier, allow me to take this privileged moment and express my heartfelt appreciation for the opportunity to serve in your administrations.

Supporting each financial cycle, your tenacity to develop solid plans and guide them through your visionary leadership has seen our province emerging from a state of obliterations to a socioeconomic investment destination of choice. [APPLAUSE]

Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, it is with a profound sense of reflection that I am reminded of the words of Isaac Newton: "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." You have just provided shoulders of giants. To my colleagues in the Executive Council, I am also indebted to you for sharing with me the collective responsibility for the overall integrity and coherence of the provincial Budget. If any of you were doing things the way you wanted to, you wouldn't be here as a province. Ours was indeed a fulfilment of our revolutionary commitments to change the lives of people of Limpopo for the better.

To Hon "Rudolph" Phala, the capable chairperson, and Members of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury, your continued oversight and support has delivered us to where we are – a shining example of a functional government. I sincerely thank you from the bottom of my heart. [APPLAUSE] To Gavin Charles Pratt and the Treasury team, I appreciate your diligent work and steadfast commitment. Your devotion goes beyond the call of duty, showcasing a deep sense of patriotism.

Keep up the hard work even in the next administration for the enhancement of quality of life for all the people in Limpopo. Now, to Hunadi'a Hlabirwa, my wife, and our children, thank you for your patience with me being away from you for many hours of the day. Your unwavering support, love and prayers have made it easy for me to execute my responsibilities. [APPLAUSE]

Finally, to all residents of our beautiful province, you have jealously guarded the future of our province through your constructive criticisms, support, hard work, and persistence through all adversities that we went through. I, therefore, table before this august House:

- The Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024;
- Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure 2024;
- Overview of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure 2024;
- Socio-Economic Review and Outlook 2024; and
- Supporting gazettes.

Ke a leboga. Ndo livhuwa. Ndza khensa. Baie dankie. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. Honourable Members, thank you very much. Honourable Members...

MR SESHOKA

No, it's not honourable Members, it's "Doso" and those sitting next to him; they are making noise.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Selamolela and honourable Members, may we be orderly please, so that we may proceed with our Order Paper. Honourable MEC, thank you very much. The Bill together with its supporting documents is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration and to report back to this august House. Thank you very much, honourable MEC, once more. Let's proceed to item 8.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

It's over to you, Hon Matibe.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Speaker. We have the following announcement: The honourable MEC for Provincial Treasury is inviting us for lunch at Meropa Casino, and all Members are invited together with our guests. Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The House is adjourned to Thursday, 07 March 2024 at 10:00 in this Polokwane Municipal Council Chamber. Thank you very much.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
POLOKWANE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHAMBER
THURSDAY, 07 MARCH 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/ MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity for silent prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Honourable Members of this august House, Members of the Executive Council, staff members, good morning and welcome to our Sitting. Let's proceed to item 2 on our Order Paper.

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Are there any motions without notice in terms of House Rule 145? Hon Wilson, you are recognised.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

**DA'S SYMPATHY WITH LIMPOPO RESIDENTS WHO WILL HAVE NO WATER
DURING THE HOTTEST WEEK IN THE PROVINCE
(Motion without Notice)**

On behalf of the Democratic Alliance, I stand in sympathy with the thousands of our residents in Limpopo, who in one of the hottest weeks in this province, will have no access to water.

Temperatures of well over 35 degrees will be experienced this week, and there will be little or no relief for many, even as there are warnings about heat stroke and dehydration.

We motion and request that this House ensures that every municipality ensures that all its residents are protected from the risks the coming week will bring and that all get a regular water supply.

I so move.

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Wilson. Is there any seconder? Hon Phala, you are recognised.

MS PHALA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the motion as presented by Hon Wilson.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any other motion without notice? Hon Ramalobela, you are recognised.

MR RAMALOBELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Greetings to the EFF caucus led by Hon Maraga, greetings to the Premier, honourable MECs, honourable Members and our guests.

**EFF'S COMMENDATION OF THE HAWKS IN LIMPOPO FOR ARRESTING
SENIOR OFFICIALS IN GREATER GIYANI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**
(Motion without Notice)

I rise on behalf of the EFF to move without notice that the House notes that:

- The EFF commends the Hawks in Limpopo for arresting two senior officials from Greater Giyani Local Municipality as well as a businessman for alleged fraud and violation of the Municipal Finance Management Act. The arrest relates to the 2017 fraudulent VBS Mutual Bank investment.
- The Hawks arrested the suspects aged 33,42 and 64 during the raid on Tuesday morning. The 64-year-old arrested in Lulekani is the former chief financial officer and acting Municipal Manager for the Greater Giyani Local Municipality.
- The 42-year-old is the chief financial officer and former manager of budget in the municipality.
- The EFF is happy that the Hawks in this case have proven not to have eyes when it comes to criminal activities. All people are equal before the law.
- We also call upon the Hawks to arrest Premier Mathabatha for committing a crime against humanity, which relates to returning R1 billion meant for service delivery to the National Treasury. All criminals must be arrested and rot in prison.

I so move.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Ramalobela. Is there any seconder? Hon Seshoka, you are recognised.

MR SESHOKA

I rise to second the motion as presented by Hon Ramalobela.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Greetings to all honourable Members of this House. I rise to object to the motion as presented by Hon Ramalobela because he lacks an understanding in terms of the definition of ... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mathe, please take your seat. Hon Ramalobela what are you rising on?

MR RAMALOBELA

Hon Speaker, I rise on a point of order to let you know that Hon Mathe is calling me "Mayibabo", and I'm not "Mayibabo"; can he please withdraw what he said.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mathe, please withdraw what you have said.

MR MATHE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. With all due respect, I withdraw.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you; please proceed.

MR MATHE

I wanted to object to that motion on the basis that Hon Ramalobela is misleading this House. Returning money to the National Treasury cannot be defined or explained as a crime against humanity. Therefore, what he said is misleading in terms of a clear description and definition of a crime against humanity. On that basis, Hon Speaker, I'm objecting to the motion.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mathe. Honourable Members, the motion presented by Hon Ramalobela is objected to. [APPLAUSE] Is there any other motion without notice? There is none.

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Are there any notices of motions in terms of House Rule 146? There are none.

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Are there any Members' Statements in terms of House Rule 200? Hon Wilson, you are recognised.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

LAYING OF CHARGES BY THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE AND THE MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION AGAINST THE SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

(Members Statement)

Despite both the Democratic Alliance and the Minister of Water and Sanitation laying charges against the Sekhukhune District Municipality for nonadherence to the Act concerning sewerage and wastewater, the situation concerning the sewerage plants in Ephraim Mogale and Elias Motsoaledi remains unchanged. The condition of the plants has deteriorated.

A recent visit to both plants revealed that sewerage runs into the plants and directly out again, into rivers and ponds without any treatment. There was no one aerator working, not one pump working and even the chlorinators were not functional. The stench from both farms was appalling.

This has resulted in the contamination of rivers that thousands of residents are reliant on for water, as the water systems in most areas are also collapsing. Farmers who export their produce are also facing a crisis, as E. coli-contaminated crops will be rejected, and this will put thousands of jobs at risk.

An independent test at the Tzaneen Dam, after weeks of sewerage leaks in the area, has shown that the E. coli levels in the dam are dangerously high, and in Mogalakwena this week, we saw raw sewerage and blood from the local abattoir pouring into storm water drains and water sources. Limpopo is at risk of cholera outbreaks and severe health risks as a result. This will be costly.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Wilson. Hon Mapoulo, I did not receive any written statement from your party for you to raise a Members' Statement in terms of House Rule 199. Thank you very much. Let us proceed, honourable Members. Is there a Member of the Executive Council who would like to respond to the Members' Statement? Hon Makamu, you are recognised.

THE MEC FOR COGHSTA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. We want to acknowledge the Members' Statement presented by Hon Wilson. I would also like to indicate that the issue of sewage challenges in both Elias Motsoaledi and Ephraim Mogale is known to us. I must give a background to Hon Wilson that the apartheid government concentrated only on Groblersdal as a town. Currently, we are busy upgrading the sewage plants so that we can accommodate everybody who lives around Elias Motsoaledi and Ephraim Mogale.

It was not necessarily that nothing was being done, it was the capacity of the sewage plant that was done by the apartheid government just for specific people in the area, and that is what we are replacing. I can be able to show the budget for Masakaneng where we are trying to increase the capacity of the sewage plant. I thank you, Hon Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. Let's proceed, honourable Members.

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

Are there any Executive Statements in terms of Rule 201? There are none.

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

Are there any tablings of committee reports, other reports, and papers? There are none.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1 Debate on the Premier's State of the Province Address

We shall now refer to the Speakers' List, and our first speaker is our Chief Whip, Hon Essob Mokgonyana. [APPLAUSE]

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker, Hon Matibe Tshitereke; Premier, Hon Stanley Chupu Mathabatha; Members of the Executive Council; Members of this august House; and members in the public gallery, I'm greeting you all this morning.

Hon Speaker allow me to respond to Premier Mathabatha's State of the Province Address by addressing him directly. Words cannot begin to express collective gratitude to you, Hon Premier, for the many years that you have dedicated yourself to be of service to the people of this province and the country at large. However, words are all we have, to tell you how much we appreciate you and how grateful we are for having such a visionary leader like yourself, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa.

I'm certain that I'm speaking on behalf of the people of Limpopo province when I say, you have been a good shepherd to the flock and today we are steadily heading

towards greener pastures because of your pivotal leadership. The Bible, in Psalms 78: 71–72, says that David was chosen from tending the ewes and lambs and was made to be the shepherd of Jacob's people, who were God's people.

Just like the biblical David, you discharged this task with aplomb, Hon Premier. You count amongst the luminaries who have immensely contributed towards the growth and development of this country's democracy.

Over the years, you have engraved your name in the hearts and minds of the people of Limpopo; and it has become synonymous with good governance and accountability. Under your tutelage, the provincial administration has not only stabilised but also amplified its service delivery muscle.

Those who have worked with you, during the dark days of the liberation struggle and after the democratic dispensation, in the numerous roles that you have assumed, have forewarned us that you are an impeccable and visionary leader. Your acute leadership style was on display on numerous occasions, as you steered the provincial administration from the brink of collapse during a tumultuous period.

In your closing remarks, during your address, you mentioned that you were not deployed as a messiah to help us solve our governance shortcomings, but you were a servant of the people.

That is too humble and modest from a leader of your calibre who has done so much for the people of this province. You have been a marvel to work with, and you have left an indelible mark in the memories of the people of this province and her government.

You have represented the revolution well, and you have epitomised servanthood to the people of Limpopo during the 11 years that you were at the helm of their government.

Your diligent servitude has surely brought a smile to the founders and pioneers of the Motetema Youth Congress, both the dead and the living.

We are certain that the late Peter Mokaba, Ephraim Mogale, Norman Mashabane and many of your contemporaries are beaming with pride when they reflect on your contribution, both in government and the congress movement.

It is for this reason that as we bid you farewell, as the Premier of this province, it remains our wish that the ANC should continue to deploy you because you are a great part of its intellectual property. In you, the ANC had deployed its best arsenal to lead its people.

As a direct product of the struggles of our people, you have inspired us to believe in ourselves, more than we did, because you saw a potential in everyone who was part of your collective. Yours was a flawless government, espoused by the dreams and aspirations of the people of Limpopo.

You presided over a government that has rolled out a colossal infrastructural programme and has delivered unmatched services to its people. Your leadership was second to none, Hon Premier, because under your captaincy, the ANC-led government has built schools, roads and health facilities, and provided water and electricity services to our communities at an unprecedented pace.

Hon Premier, it is, therefore, befitting that as I debate your State of the Province Address, I should heap praises on your unimpeachable leadership style and thank you for your unwavering determination to improve the lives of our people.

This is a chapter of your life that you must conclude with pride because you have exceeded any set expectations as the Premier of this province. You have been an intrinsic part of our DNA and a glue that held us together when the ANC and its government faced daunting challenges.

As you presented what was your last State of the Province Address, it dawned on all of us that finally the inevitable is about to happen, and this provincial administration will have to forge ahead with its mission of developing the lives of its people without an illustrious leader of your calibre. We have traversed this journey together and have become an extension of each other's households in the process.

When you lost your family members, in the form of your beloved father and your beautiful wife, your pain became our pain because over the years, we have grown to become one big family with yourself. Under your leadership, we have improved on many fronts as the Limpopo Provincial Government.

Today, anyone who speaks of a disclaimer as an audit opinion outcome, would not be referring to the Limpopo Provincial Government. You have been unflinching in your resolve that under your leadership, Limpopo would not have any adverse audit opinion, because at the crux of your leadership, lay a deep desire to spend public funds in an accountable manner.

For the few years that we were languishing at the bottom of the radar with matric results, you have always encouraged us that our results were of superior quality in the fields that are critical towards the building of this country's economy. The improvement of the 2023 matric results was somehow our way of bidding you farewell for your fervent servitude to the people of this province. We are optimistic that this year's matric results will be a lot better because you have laid a solid foundation.

Your term of office has witnessed an unprecedented programme of building roads, with long distances being tarred, into areas whose people never dreamt of a tar road in their lifetime. Anyone who refutes this undisputable truth about your colourful tenure as the Premier of this province, should be referred to a mental institution.

I am saying this, casting my eyes across the room because I am certain that for political expediency and grandstanding reasons, the likes of Hon Makgabo Mapoulo together with his rowdy mob in the EFF, and Members of the DA will choose to ignore this blatant truth. As always, their behaviour is predictable – as to them, anything that the ANC-led government does should be opposed.

Hon Premier, the EFF made a half-hearted attempt to disrupt your address, but they somehow got ashamed of their cowardice gimmicks because they have also witnessed the service delivery inroads that the ANC-led government has made under your leadership.

It was laughable to watch Hon Mapoulo marching against an astute leader of your calibre. Maybe we must remind this House about who Hon Mapoulo is. He counts amongst the first beneficiaries of this democracy and was deployed by this very same ANC on more than one occasion. Just like the biblical Jonah, he went to Tarshish, instead of Nineveh, and the ANC was left with no option but to recall him.

He is notorious for firing all municipal employees within the Polokwane Municipality at the dawn of this democracy. During his tenure as the Executive Mayor of the Polokwane Municipality, thousands of municipal employees were fired for participating in a legal labour demonstration, fighting for their rights.

He is a powermonger who should be kept at arm's length because he is not only a danger to workers, but he is also a threat to their rights. The EFF, a chance-taking vigilante formation ...

BACKGROUND

[CROSS TALK]

THE SPEAKER

May I say something, honourable Members. To be an opposition does not mean we have to lose our morals and values. I now want to address Hon Maraga. Hon Maraga can you stand up I want to repeat myself. I said being an opposition does not mean we must forget about our morals and values, and I think you heard me. You may sit down.

MR MAPOULO

Hon Speaker, firstly, I would like to say we are human beings apart from being an opposition; we are activists; we are representatives of the people; please treat us well. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mapoulo, can you raise your point of order.

MR MAPOULO

Hon Speaker, you have allowed the Chief Whip to lie about me to say I fired workers where I was deployed ... [Inaudible]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mapoulo, you are out of order. Hon Mapoulo, you are now out of order. Sit down, Hon Mapoulo, because that was not a point of order. Let me respond to what you are raising. I allowed you to say what you wanted to say, and I kept quiet because of the rules.

The Hon Chief Whip is on the podium, and he is saying what he wants to say. You will be given an opportunity yourself to counter what the Hon Chief Whip has said. That is why I was allowing him to proceed with his debate. This is a debate and not a motion, Hon Seshoka. Hon Chief Whip, please do not address Hon Mapoulo. Thank you.

MR SESHOKA

I think it is out of order for the Chief Whip of this House to come here and lie about Hon Mapoulo in this honourable House that he has fired workers. He must come up with a substantive motion to give evidence to prove that indeed such a thing happened. Until such time, this honourable Member must withdraw that statement because it is a lie.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Seshoka, this is a debate; if you are not satisfied, you know what to do. If Hon Mapoulo is not satisfied, he knows the procedure. Hon Seshoka, it is not the responsibility of the Speaker to determine whether what the Chief Whip is saying is the truth or not.

THE CHIEF WHIP

As we debate this State of the Province Address, we also expect the same amount of hot air to be blown from the direction of the DA, a party that uses black people as voting cattle but deploys baases and madams in strategic positions, both in government and private sector.

This is a party that sees colour in everything, before the potential and capacity of its black leaders. It is saddening to witness how a leader of Hon Katlego Phala's acumen continues to be sidelined by the DA because she is a black African woman. When Hon Smalle left this Legislature, one Hon Van der Walt was brought when Hon Phala was here. Again, when Hon Van der Walt left, Hon Wilson was brought when the same Hon Phala was here. That says, the DA only sees colour, not any potential or capacity. [APPLAUSE]

In their media statement, responding to the State of the Province Address, the DA acknowledged the improvements of the 2023 matric results, but because of their evil narcissistic nature, they decided to fault us that we could not attain an 80% pass rate.

For heaven's sake, we have achieved a 79,5% pass rate, a quantum leap, from last year's 74%. However, through their opposing eyes and outlook, which see everything negative in what the ANC does, this is a small feat. We have all seen what seemed to be a march by racist Afrikaners, who sang apartheid songs and hoisted the Transvaal flag in the Elias Motsoaledi Municipality earlier this year. With this antic, Hon Maritz

has reaffirmed our long-held suspicions about her – that she belongs to a section of Afrikaner minorities, who are nostalgic for the old apartheid days.

Hon Premier, we were all thrilled when we saw you turning the sod, at a site which has been earmarked for the development of the Limpopo provincial theatre. In addition to creating a platform for artistic excellence, this facility will also serve as an events venue, which will be catalytic to the nightlife of the city, and its economy.

This is one of the projects that must be ticked as one of the many accomplished missions under your leadership of this province. It was under your leadership, Hon Premier, that the people of Limpopo heard, for the first time, about 24-hour health facilities in the province, a service that was previously exclusive to hospitals.

This is not a small feat, and is a commendable endeavour, as it has extended the operating hours of our primary healthcare facilities to benefit our poor communities.

The accomplishments are too many to count, and they have greatly transformed the imaginary skyline of the Limpopo province, from the colourful Blouberg mountains to the Leboweng escarpments, to the great hills of the Magoebaskloof, the sunny Ba-Phalaborwa and the platinum belt in the Waterberg.

Just like Thomas Sankara, you will always be remembered as someone whose life has been helpful to humanity.

I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Chief Whip. Hon Sekoati you are our next speaker.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Thank you, Madam Speaker, Deputy Speaker of this august House, Hon Premier and Members of this august House. Hon Speaker, let me thank you for the opportunity to participate in the debate of the State of the Province Address, where the Premier was able to focus on the previous 30 years and also take us into the future.

Hon Speaker, it is crucial to bring clarity and truth to the forefront, especially in the light of misleading information circulating in the mainstream media and social media by the Members of this august House. I would call such people charlatans, Hon Premier, because people who are supposed to be doing their work, are not doing their work. Members are expected to be sitting in various portfolio committees so they can understand what is happening in the financials of this province.

Hon Speaker, it has proven me wrong that Members of this august House are adhering to statements that they were supposed to have dealt with in this august House within their portfolio committees. Suddenly, we are told that this province has returned R1billion to the national coffers, whereas they were supposed to monitor the money.

I think it is also important to understand that the moneys that they are talking about, Hon Premier, are not in the 2022/23 financial year but in the 2021/22 financial year. As Members, you are given an opportunity to represent your constituencies, and Members cannot respond to pedestrian information that is found in the social media. Members should deal with facts that are in the documents that are provided to them. The portfolio committee has been there, and if we had taken the R1 billion back to National Treasury, I'm sure the Portfolio Committee on Treasury would have raised that with the department.

Now it is important, Hon Premier, to clarify honourable Members of this august House, particularly the opposition parties which go to the extent of saying that the Premier of this province must be arrested because he had returned R1 billion to the National Treasury.

I think you must go to prison because you are not doing your work, and you are earning a salary. So, you must go to prison because that is fraudulent.

Honourable Members of this august House, let me clarify and give basic information in terms of Treasury allocations and where they come from. The allocations that we are giving to various departments are coming from three sources, the first one is the equitable share. How the equitable share works is that the National Treasury allocates us funds which become part of the provincial revenue, and those fiscals are ours. If there is an underspending, those funds do not go back to the National Treasury; it is money that remains in the coffers of the province, and we decide on how we utilise it. We could return it to that particular department if they had commitments, or we can reallocate it to other departments for whatever pressures they have.

So, that money does not go back to the National Treasury; it comes back to the provincial revenue and gets to be reallocated. The second source is conditional grants. Conditional grants are called conditional grants because they come with conditions. That is why if you have not spent according to the plan, you will have to take it back to the National Treasury, but we are allowed to apply for rollovers. I can make an example with the Department of Health. If the Department of Health had machinery that they had ordered and did not come in that financial year, we would roll over those funds to the National Treasury. However, because we have committed those funds, those funds will come back to the province to pay what we call accruals, and that is what we do.

The last source of our budget is our revenue. Our revenue is the money that we collect ourselves and allocate to departments as an augmentation to both conditional grants and equitable share. It comes back again to the provincial revenue, and we can reallocate it for any other pressure or new developments or programmes in the province.

Now, I will go back to the figures that you have raised, and I hope Hon Wilson is listening. I hope she will go back to the Western Cape and ask why they have sent money back to the Limpopo Legislature, an amount of R250 million, and you must understand why it came here. Now, the figures quoted in the media relate to the 2021 financial year and not the 2022/23 financial year. In the 2021/22 financial year,

Limpopo underspent by 2,8% of its appropriated Budget, while the National Treasury's acceptable norm is 2%, which was over by 0,8%.

The Hon Premier was not pleased with that. He called a meeting where individual MECs, their HODs and their accounting officers had to account for that underspending. He wanted to understand exactly what had happened. Hon Wilson, it is important to listen; otherwise, you will be talking about things that you don't understand. Please, listen because you will go out and mislead people that Limpopo has returned money to the National Treasury.

An amount of R827 million of the underspending in the 2021/22 financial year was approved as a conditional grant rollover to pay for all conditional grant accruals and commitments made in the 2021/22 financial year.

There was also an amount of R981 million, which was equitable share underspending, which was brought back to the provincial fiscus and was reappropriated to the departments; so there is no cent lost there.

In the 2022/23 financial year, the province underspent by 1,9% of the appropriated Budget, which is within the National Treasury norm of 2% and which was an improvement from 2021/22. Now, I don't even think the Western Cape does that. An amount of R281,9 million of the underspending in the 2022/23 financial year was approved as a conditional grant rollover to pay for all those accruals. The province did surrender an amount of R163 million, which is 0,2% of the Budget, to the National Treasury in the 2023/24 financial year for the conditional grant underspending in 2022/23, of which R81 million of that money was due to a disagreement with the national Department of Transport on the process to be used to construct the bridges using the defence force.

Now we had a conditional grant that we were supposed to use for these low-level bridges, but we don't have a responsibility to implement it with the budget that is within the province. We are told that the condition thereof is that the defence force is the one that will be constructing those bridges. Now, you can't hold us responsible for a department that is supposed to be coming to construct those bridges, and that is taking its time; you can't say it is the province that delays.

We had a disagreement with the national Department of Transport in terms of utilising that conditional grant; it is the defence force that constructs those low-level bridges. That was the biggest amount that we had to surrender as a conditional grant in the 2022/23 financial year. Now, Hon Wilson and your other charlatans...
[INTERJECTION]

MS WILSON

On a point of order, Hon Speaker!

THE SPEAKER

Hon Wilson, you are recognised.

MS WILSON

It is very unparliamentary to refer to people as charlatans. It is not an acceptable way to refer to people. [CROSS TALK]

THE SPEAKER

Take your seat, Hon Wilson. Continue honourable MEC.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Thank you. You know it is very painful to have charlatans among ourselves in this House because we believe Members who come to this House are very knowledgeable and understand the processes and their responsibilities. I rest my case, Madam Speaker. I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. Hon Maraga it is your time to debate.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Ndo livhuwa, Mulangadzulo. Ndi khou lumelisa Mirado vha ino Ndu khathihi na vhaeni vhashu ngei ntha kha galari. Hon Speaker, the Premier lost an opportunity to redeem himself on his last SOPA by not honestly reflecting on the government affairs of the province. Typical of him, the Premier lost a clear-cut opportunity by praising his administration on what he would want us to believe as achievements. The fact of the matter is that the reality on the ground is the opposite of what the Premier was bragging about during SOPA.

The Premier unashamedly painted a rosy picture to the people of Limpopo, implying that all is well in the province when in fact that is not the case. He deliberately chose to say only the things that people wanted to hear and not be honest about the service delivery challenges our people are confronted with daily. Maybe the Premier lives in another abstract world different from ours where there is no fiction.

We would have thought that he would have reflected on his past SOPAs and tried to improve or refrain from deliberately misleading our people for cheap and political grandstanding. Hon Speaker, the Premier is not improving but instead getting worse with his distorted worldview. He failed a test on a simple thing, like going out to address protesting medical practitioners, including unemployed doctors and nurses before presenting SOPA. Mulangadzulo, ndi khou humbela uri vha ntsireledze kha tshifhinga tshanga na kha mushumo wanga.

Instead of going out to address the unemployed medical practitioners, the Tinswalos, the Premier chose to laugh about their situation – the heartless Premier and government making fun of the unemployed people of our province. The majority of these practitioners are the beneficiaries of government bursaries, yet they are not placed in public hospitals and clinics. Does this suggest that all health facilities are

fully staffed with health practitioners? The answer is a big no, yet our children are sitting at home, idling with no income, while our people continue to suffer.

The situation in our health facilities is dire. Of the 476 clinics in the province, only 45 of them open 24 hours around the clock. Does this mean that people only get sick during the day? The Premier said nothing about the Musina-Makhado SEZ and Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ. Where he knows he has failed to do his work, he chooses to say little or sweep things under the carpet. These projects have not recorded any progress from the first day.

Such is the type of character we are dealing with in this House. Accountability is not his language. The Premier simply told the people of Limpopo during SOPA that projects are underway. What is underway? Is this how politicians account to the masses of our people? Hon Speaker, the Premier should have clear timelines; we need to know when they started and when they will be finished. The Premier should attend project management for his benefit and the benefit of the people.

He has no clue at all. The Limpopo theatre which has been spoken about for the past seven years, was only launched just a few days before SOPA. Such is the level of desperation we have come to witness today. There is no clear explanation as to why this project was not executed as planned according to the set timeline. That is why we say, le a itoma-toma. Le swara mo, la lesa ka mo.

The relocation of the Limpopo Legislature will never come to pass. It will never happen in our lifetime. Only the EFF has the political will to make things happen. During the period of 01 July 2023 to 30 September 2023, there were 25 305 17 community-reported serious crimes dockets opened in Limpopo.

Every day, 281 victims reported murder, assault, sexual offences, theft, and robbery incidents. This is what our people bargained for; what did they do to deserve this? Is there anything rosy about this? Furthermore, the administration of Premier Mathabatha returned unspent money amounting to R1 billion to the National Treasury, and the Premier came to SOPA and radically failed to spin-doctor the matter. He was in pain to explain that it was more than R1 billion that was returned to the National Treasury. [INTERJECTION] Whether it was R1 billion or R1 million, not a single cent was meant for service delivery.

Returning money to the National Treasury is a crime against humanity, and it is a spank on the face of the poor. Their quality of life is always low; furthermore, the confidence level of the people of Limpopo has gone down. We believe that things will change. People depend more on social grants than salaries because there are no jobs. So they are forced to survive on government handouts. Under Premier Mathabatha's administration, ECD practitioners continue to be subjected to poor working conditions with no benefits.

Hon Speaker, protect me.

BACKGROUND

[CROSS TALK]

MR RAMALOBELA

On a point of order, Hon Speaker!

THE SPEAKER

Hon Maraga, please take your seat. You are recognised, Hon Ramalobela.

MR RAMALOBELA

Hon Speaker, please run this House properly. The howlers must keep quiet on that side of the ruling party.

THE SPEAKER

Sit down, Hon Ramalobela.

BACKGROUND

[CROSS TALK]

THE SPEAKER

Continue, Hon Maraga.

MS MARAGA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. [NO AUDIO]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Members of the ruling party, if you continue making noise, you are making my work very difficult because I keep on calling you to order; you continue making noise. Hon Makamu, it is now your time to debate.

THE MEC FOR COGHSTA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier; honourable colleagues in the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the Legislature; honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature; Director-General and heads of all departments; members of the media fraternity; ladies and gentlemen.

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed colleagues, and distinguished guests, as we gather here today to engage in a debate on the 2024 State of the Province Address delivered by Premier Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, it is imperative to acknowledge the significance of this moment in our nation's history. We are not only commemorating Human Rights Month, but we are also marking 30 years of freedom and democracy in our beloved country, a journey that has been full of challenges, yet rich in wins, as we

continue to strive for a society where the rights and dignity of every individual are respected and celebrated.

In reflecting on our path to freedom and the values that guide us, we draw inspiration from the words of Nelson Mandela, a beacon of hope and a symbol of our struggle for liberation. He once said, "... our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians." As we stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine, let us remember that our pursuit of justice and human rights extends beyond our borders. It is a universal quest that connects us all in the shared dream of peace, equality, and dignity of every person, irrespective of where they are in the world. Today, as we deliberate on the State of our province, let us carry forward the spirit of unity and solidarity that has been the cornerstone of our democracy for the past 30 years.

The local government election held on 05 December 2000 were the first fully democratic local elections in South Africa. New municipal boundaries, Hon Speaker, were drawn that included every part of the country and broke the old apartheid divisions.

Apartheid spatial planning left us with cities and towns that had racially divided business and residential areas. That is why, Hon Speaker, we have towns like Duiwelskloof, Louis Trichardt, Tzaneen, Ellisras without incorporating our neighbouring states or communities within our own areas that were badly planned to cater for the poor – with long travelling distances to work and poor access to business and other services; and that have great differences in level of services.

Hon Speaker, I stay in Giyani, and there is a town called Kremetart which has never experienced water shortage under the apartheid government. Water was only meant for Whites staying in Kremetart. Water supply to Blacks was cut off because only Whites were allowed to stay there.

With the pronouncement of the District Development Model by the Presidency in 2019, the Limpopo Provincial Government reviewed its previous planning framework and adopted the provincial IGR and Integrated Planning and M&E Framework in August 2021. The framework argues that the DDM should be infused into existing provincial and district IGR structures and not be seen as an extra or parallel process. Since the launch of the Waterberg pilot project, the Limpopo province fully embraced the model and launched it in the other four districts of our province.

The implementation of the District Development Model continues to be a priority for the government. Therefore, all government spheres should continue to participate in the DDM implementation, outreach programmes, district IDP/DDM engagement sessions, IDP representative forums and other IGR forums, including other engagements with the whole of society for improved integrated planning, delivery of services, monitoring, and evaluation.

There are accolades that we have received as this government under Premier Mathabatha namely:

- There is an improvement in the role of oversight structures in the accountability ecosystem. As the Chief Whip said, there is no audit opinion in all our municipalities in our province. [APPLAUSE].
- Audit action plans development by municipalities are addressing issues raised by the AG.
- Municipalities have supported and developed the UIF&W reduction strategies, and the Premier has called on all municipalities to account and urged the MEC for Treasury and the MEC for CoGHSTA to make sure that every municipality has a strategy to reduce the UIF&W expenditures. That is accountability from Premier Mathabatha.
- The department also partnered with the DBSA to provide support to municipalities on revenue enhancement, infrastructure planning and spatial planning.
- Access to electricity increased by 8,2% between 2011 and 2022 (from 87,3% to 95,5%) in this province. That is why Hon Maraga was talking about it. It is simple because all the villages that we speak of in this province have electricity, unlike during the time of apartheid where only the selective few had access to electricity. That is why the ANC-led government is ready to resolve the issue of loadshedding.
- Refuse removal increased by 10% between 2011 and 2022 (from 21% to 32%).
- Access to sanitation increased by 19,7% between 2011-2022

We do contend that despite a huge portion of the conditional grant which is meant for water services, access to water has declined by 6,5% between 2011 and 2022. The decline is mainly caused by ageing infrastructure affecting sustainable and reliable water supply. We are going ahead in supporting municipalities to allocate adequate resources for maintenance and refurbishment. Since the dawn of democracy, about R42 billion has been allocated to MIG to make sure that we deliver services in the most vulnerable poor and remote villages.

In South Africa, we are witnessing a transformative shift from merely churning out low-cost housing to creating integrated sustainable human settlements. Gone are the days of apartheid spatial planning, where segregated communities into pockets of affluence surrounded by vast expanses of poverty. We now embrace the era where every individual, regardless of background or circumstance, is entitled to a decent and sustainable living environment. This ethos echoes the fundamental principle of the Freedom Charter which says: "South Africa belongs to all who live in it..."

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994 up to January 2024, we have made significant strides in this endeavour, delivering a total of 385,552 houses and sites in this province. These integrated settlements serve as beacons of progress, fostering inclusivity and cohesion within our society. We remain steadfast in our commitment to providing dignified housing for all, recognising that decent shelter is a cornerstone of human dignity.

Our dedication extends beyond the general populace to those who have served our nation with valour: the military veterans. We honour their sacrifices by ensuring they have access to quality housing, acknowledging that their contributions should not be overshadowed by the injustices of the past. It is imperative that we alleviate their burdens, allowing them to thrive in the democratic South Africa they fought to uphold.

As we forge ahead, we remain cognisant of the importance of restoring dignity of our people. President Ramaphosa aptly captures this sentiment as we distribute title deeds, empowering individuals to take ownership of their homes and their future. By affording them this fundamental right, we not only fulfil a promise but also reaffirm our commitment to building a more equitable and inclusive society.

The construction and refurbishment efforts of traditional council offices have seen significant progress. A total of 25 offices have been successfully constructed, with an additional 13 offices undergoing refurbishment to enhance functionality.

Furthermore, provision has been made for office furniture, with 108 pieces delivered in our communities. As I pay tribute to our Hon Premier, in the annals of leadership, there arise figures whose vision elevate them to the status of legends. Premier Mathabatha stands as a beacon of hope and resilience in the tumultuous landscape of Limpopo province. When heeding the call of “Thuma Mina”, he embarked on a journey full of challenges, yet his steadfast leadership has steered the ship of Limpopo from the brink of collapse to the shores of prosperity.

As Premier Mathabatha assumed leadership, he faced a difficult task: an administration in disarray, unable to fulfil its obligations. It was a time of crisis, where the very fabric of governance seemed to unravel. However, with unwavering determination and a commitment to service, Premier Mathabatha embraced the challenge, guided by the words of William Ernest Henley:

“In the heavy hold of circumstance,
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the beatings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.”

Premier Mathabatha's resilience mirrored the strength of the human spirit, refusing to yield in the face of adversity. His leadership exemplified the wisdom of Proverbs 29:18, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Through his vision and strategic foresight, he charted a course towards a brighter future for the people of the province.

In the pursuit of progress, Premier Mathabatha drew inspiration from the timeless wisdom of Martin Luther King Jr., who declared, “The time is always right to do what is right.” With each decision and action, he demonstrated a commitment to righteousness and integrity, laying a foundation of trust and accountability within the province. Premier Mathabatha's term of office was marked by bold initiatives and transformative policies.

As Premier Mathabatha prepares to step down, the legacy of his leadership will endure as a testament to his dedication and service. The people of Limpopo owe him for his able stewardship because he has saved their province from the brink of collapse. That

is the difference that we have made to others. Premier Mathabatha has made a profound difference, and though they may be sad to see him go, the people of Limpopo will forever honour his legacy of sterling leadership.

I thank you, Hon Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Makamu. Hon Wilson, you are recognised.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Speaker. Hon Premier and Members of the House.

From the outset, let me clarify the situation with regard to press coverage received by the DA with regard to the provincial underspending and return of millions of rands to the Treasury. Hon Premier, what you did not clarify to this House was that information was received from a member of these benches of this House, who posted the information on the Legislature WhatsApp group. We all know. The question is the culprit, Hon Premier? It comes from your own benches. It was from the 2022/23 financial year. Hon Premier, it was under your watch.

Furthermore, considering the regression and conditions in Limpopo over the last couple of years, particularly with regard to service delivery, you must expect us to believe such information when it is received because clearly in the last couple of years, the province has gone backwards. Back to your SOPA, Hon Premier, SOPA is supposed to be an honest appraisal of the state of the province and to advise us what to expect from the budgets and how they will address current shortcomings currently experienced. Instead Premier, what we got was a legacy report and nothing that dealt with the current state of the province.

Let us deal with the real state of the province, and I would like to refer you to the Human Rights Commission on the report on the accessibility to water in Limpopo.

It was damning, and stated that:

- Shortage of access to clean drinking water has a severe impact on vulnerable groups such as women, children and persons with disabilities.
- There are grant management challenges ranging from failure to apply and spend allocated grants such as WSIG (Water Services Improvement Grant) as well as spending grants for other purposes. Who is a charlatan?
- There is lack of consequence management and weak role of oversight departments to meet out consequences for failure to do their work.
- Several municipalities are under investigation for maladministration. For instance, in Mogalakwena Local Municipality, the Auditor-General could not obtain evidence that payments to water tanker service providers were for water delivered to communities, resulting in a likely financial loss of R11,36 million. A

material irregularity has been noted by the AG on this matter, and we ask him for a certificate of debt.

- There is noncompliance with the prescripts of the Water Services Act and the standards contained in the compulsory standards records.
- Some communities have surpassed the 7-day rule that is acceptable for water not to be available. In some cases, the nonavailability of water has lasted for years.
- Communities still fetch water from sources that were used by domestic and wild animals, and thereby expose communities to cross contamination.
- Water services administrators were grappling with aging water infrastructure and inadequate attention being paid to maintenance of water infrastructure.
- There is water supply deficit: as demand outstrips supply, there are no clear plans from Water Services Authorities to address this challenge.

Mopani District Municipality acknowledged that:

- It has challenges and is not providing water to communities within its jurisdiction.
- Alternative measures are in place such as water tankers; however, communities under its jurisdiction are still without water.
- Maruleng Local Municipality has three villages without any access to water. The commission found that the municipality does not comply with the Water Services Act and compulsory standards regarding norms and standards on the provision of clean drinking water.

The commission, therefore, finds that the municipality is in violation of section 27 of the Constitution, which provides for the right to have access to sufficient water. Who is a charlatan?

The Human Rights Commission recommends the following:

- The municipality must forthwith comply with regulation 3 of the compulsory standards by installing a sufficient number of water user connections to supply a minimum quantity of potable water of 25 L per person per day or 6 kL per household per month to the residents of the municipality; at a minimum flow rate of not less than 10 L per minute; within 200 m of each of the residents' households; and effectively such that the residents are not without a water supply for more than seven full days in any year, in a year. Some have been without water for years.
- The municipality must provide the commission with a detailed plan with timeframes within three months after the receipt of this report. We want to see

that as well since it has been three months since we reported. We have not seen any report since we reported, from any of these municipalities, on how the municipality will provide water to every resident within its jurisdiction in line with the Water Services Act and Compulsory Standards.

The Vhembe Municipality was also found to be in violation of section 27 of the Constitution. In fact, Premier, every single municipality in the province that you oversee, is in violation of the Water Services Act and compulsory standards or in violation of section 27 of the Constitution. [INTERJECTION]

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER

You are a liar.

MS WILSON

Do not call me a liar; that is the Human Rights Commission's report.

Furthermore, Premier, the commission finds that the Limpopo Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs is not effectively playing its role as an oversight body in terms of ensuring that access to water is a reality within the Limpopo province. Who is a charlatan?

Premier, the report discusses your office. The Commission has found that it is not clear as to how the Office of the Premier of the Limpopo province plays its oversight role over municipalities that are failing to provide water. It states that the Office of the Premier of the Limpopo province is, therefore, failing to monitor the provision of water and must conduct an assessment and evaluation of the provision of water in the Limpopo province, develop and submit measures to effectively support the municipalities to ensure adherence to the Water Services Act and compulsory standards. This information must be submitted to the commission within three months of the receipt of this report. We are daring and holding our breath awaiting your response and the report that you have submitted to them.

Premier, that is the real state of the province under your watch. Who is a charlatan?

BACKGROUND

It is you.

MS WILSON

You cannot blame the growth in the population as your excuse for nondelivery of services, that has been going on for years. What has been happening is cadre deployment, corruption and very bad planning and monitoring of the situation in Limpopo. Added to this, I have been doing oversight of sewerage plants in Sekhukhune and other districts. I have yet to find one sewerage and wastewater plant that is functional. In fact, every single one I have visited is not working at all. After 30 years under the ANC rule, you have done nothing, nothing. While you gave us a legacy

report, sewerage runs through homes, villages and into water resources, and health risks mount daily.

Let's talk education, Premier. Premier, you strutted your feathers when you announced that Limpopo got a 79% matric pass rate, but it did not. If I may tell you, 54 000 students who started in Grade 10 in 2021 never got to write matric; they fell out. You did not mention this in your address, nor did you advise what your administration was going to do to rectify this horrible situation or assess why. You were excited to announce that 35 000 Grade 1 learners were provided with tablets as learning tools in Limpopo. That is fabulous, but you must know, Premier, that tablets require electricity to be charged and data to access learning materials. Neither of these are available regularly in the rural areas, and when they are, most rural communities cannot afford.

Yes, we are pleased to note that there are only 80 schools left to complete the elimination of pit latrines; however, there are schools that have had their pit latrines replaced with portable toilets, only 3, for 420 learners. Many of our schools have no water, and without water, no number of toilets, whether old or new is conducive to a healthy environment, and without proper classrooms or the upgrading of infrastructure, we will still witness overcrowding in classrooms, collapsing infrastructure and children being taught without desks under trees. We are still dealing with children dying or being made seriously ill by meals served to them in the feeding schemes. It is just unacceptable. You see, Premier, this is the real state of the province, but you mentioned none of this in your address. Who is a charlatan?

Now, let's talk health, Premier, of the 476 clinics in Limpopo. Less than half are open and operate 24 hours a day. You did not mention that there are many that are now only open from Monday to Friday, in daylight hours only, due to understaffing and the inability of staff to cope with the workloads. You failed to mention how many do not have ambulances and have to wait several hours for an ambulance to be dispatched and travel from hospitals up to 50 km away, while people suffer without proper care.

You made no mention of the hospitals where we found up to seven mothers and their newborn babies just last week on mattresses on floors and where woman suffer on benches through their labour in the hospitals aisle. You made no mention of the severe shortages of both nurses and doctors in our health facilities, who cannot appropriately care for patients due to lack of infrastructure or exhaustion.

You failed to mention, Premier, that some of our hospitals have the highest medical negligence claims in the country because of poor medical care. These claims cost the Department of Health dearly and seriously affects the delivery of proper healthcare, the lack of proper healthcare for which the poor and vulnerable must suffer. It is wonderful to see that 566 ambulances were provided in the last financial year, but you omitted to say that some of these are not sufficiently equipped and that we have ambulances standing idling at hospitals because there are no qualified crews to man them. That is not helpful to anybody.

While the new budget does make provision for moneys to appoint more doctors, it is woefully inadequate and insufficient, yet we continue to support the Cuban doctors programme but do not make provision for more local doctors to be placed. This is the

real state of the province, and the poor and vulnerable pay the highest price, often with their lives.

Now let's open the unemployment statistics can of worms. Just a few years ago, you bragged that this province had one of the lowest unemployment statistics, just over 16%. However, under your watch, Premier, it has shot up to 36%, and this does not include those who have given up hope of finding work. In the last quarter, this province lost another 40 000 jobs. Forty thousand more people are without work and an income, and all of these in critical sectors.

Why Premier? Well simply put, without power, without water and without proper infrastructure, no business can remain properly viable, so it cuts back and the hardest hit are the poor and vulnerable. Your administration ploughed millions into the Zebediela Citrus Farm, which has totally collapsed, been liquidated, and stripped entirely of its assets. The same applies to Sapekoe Tea Estate and others. You reminded this House, a couple of years ago, about the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone that was about to progress and said it would create 45 000 new jobs. How is it going, Premier? ... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Conclude, honourable Member.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Speaker. What you failed to say in your address is that the United Nations, a major United Nations backer of this scheme has pulled out, and it is not going to get off the ground. What we are talking about, Hon Premier, is your legacy. Let us not forget that the VBS Bank, PPE and COVID corruption happened under your watch. I pray that the voters in Limpopo may be bold enough to tell the truth, and see the truth that none of the promises that you had made have come to fruition and can now say enough is enough and vote the DA. We have a far better track record of governance, delivering to the poor and vulnerable and putting the people first, not the party. I thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER

Hon Speaker, you seem to have given Hon Wilson more time to debate.

THE SPEAKER

I gave Hon Wilson 17 minutes because she had requested to be the only one to debate from her party. She was the only one who debated. That is why she got so much time. Hon MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya, the floor is yours.

THE MEC FOR EDUCATION

Thank you, Hon Speaker. These are difficult times where we all look at the MEC for Health to save us and the budget in her institution so that we do not waste money when we can prevent the diseases.

Hon Speaker; Hon Deputy Speaker; Chief Whip of the majority party; Hon Premier, Stanley Chupu Mathabatha; honourable MECs; honourable Members of this august House; chairpersons of portfolio committees; members of the media; and people following us on social media, good morning.

Hon Speaker, allow me to debate peacefully and respectfully so that I could give dignity to my political party that has deployed me here in this august House because we come from a home of nondiscrimination, nonsexism and nonracialism.

Hon Speaker, you have just formally announced that Hon Wilson Evelyn had requested this House that she should be the only one to debate here today so that she can utilise all the minutes. The question that we need to ask as honourable Members is, why she alone when the party has more members. I think it is against that that the honourable Member can clarify this House in future as she is very close to reading without maybe doing plagiarism to the Human Rights Commission's work. You need to confess your sins to the Human Rights Commission, which is not for me to judge.

Hon Speaker, let me start by congratulating our Premier, Hon Stanley Chupu Mathabatha, for joining a political party that has introduced a lot of basic services to the people. Today, you and other leaders before you, Hon Mathabatha, have made sure that the policies are friendly, and you have introduced subsidies for professionals to get decent housing where they stay and a sewage system in black towns, unlike other people who led before 1994 whose vocabulary even stretched to the last part of it. They stopped at a bucket toilet.

Let me take this opportunity to thank and appreciate the Hon Premier for the diligence and 11 years of selfless dedication to changing the lives of our people in the province.

We will forever be indebted to you for steering the ship out of the mud when you took over in 2013. You came at a time when the province needed a visionary and a committed leader with proper administration skills to lead us. Equipped with the strategy and tactics of the national democratic revolution, Hon Premier, your story is similar to that of Moses who had a mammoth task of rescuing the Israelites out of the stubborn Pharaoh regime. We are told that after the rescue, some of the people who were enslaved in Egypt turned against him and demanded to be taken back to slavery. It is in the case with some of our colleagues in this House, Hon Speaker. They are never appreciative of or satisfied with the milestone that we have achieved in the past 30 years.

Hon Speaker, as the Premier also quoted the President in his State of the Nation Address, His Excellency Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa narrated a good story of Tintswalo, a young girl who was born at the dawn of democracy and grew up under the caring hand of the ANC-led government. A story that many of us, including my colleagues in this august House, can attest to. Each one of us in this House has a good story to tell about a friend, a relative or colleague whose life changed due to the support system that the ANC-led government has put in place in the past 30 years. The government understands pillar four of its manifesto that says, "Invest in people, by meeting the basic needs of all...".

You are today like those who along the way decided to turn against their liberator Moses and deliberately turn a blind eye to all the good deeds delivered by the democratic government. If we were to conduct a research, some of you would be like the Jonah who was quoted this morning in this august House – that you were empowered to run businesses in our industrial parks, like you have quoted, and you decided to destroy the vision of the ANC-led government, of investing in and empowering you to become business people in those industrial parks. You destroyed the hope, you destroyed the vision so that today you can form your own story to tell and you can look like a victim, whereas most of you are perpetrators.

We want to say today, Hon Premier, that we are aware of the formation of cooperatives in all different spheres, whether in health or agriculture, to regulate the prices of the commodities that are supposed to be accessible to the people in our communities. When the landowners are given their land back through restitution, Whites cry foul that the people who have claimed their land back cannot toil it because they cannot afford the regulated prices through their own cooperatives. We are watching you; we can see you.

Nonetheless, Hon Premier, your years in serving the people of Limpopo did not go in vain; the lives of our people changed for the better. We know it is only the ANC-led government that has tangible plans to continue serving multitudes of our people. Hon Speaker, the Premier was spot on when he gave a breakdown of the strides made in the education sector since 1994. We are still beaming with pride following a massive matric pass percentage. We are today counted among the top performers in our country. We want to confirm in this august House today that you can never put a black child down. We will continue with our programmes to make sure that there are equal opportunities for a child who is born in a village, equal opportunities for a child who is born in a township, equal opportunities for a child who is born on a farm and equal opportunities for a child who is born in town.

Hon Premier, because of your persistence and leadership through key programmes and interventions, we will continue to support the ANC-led government on the business transformation because it is only through the business transformation that we can be able to identify the supplier to our food programmes. Today, somebody can stand up and be in jubilation about a learner dying because they ate poisonous items. Who is this farmer who is producing food that kills our own children in our schools? We will continue to support transformation in business because we need to identify where all these vegetables that are being fed to our learners are produced. Our learners continue to die in schools. It is through transformation, Hon Premier and Hon Speaker, that a black child can never be put down.

Today, Limpopo can confess that we have always been consistent on quality pass rate against all odds. We are a province on the rise, and the accolades must go to the Premier and team Education who are working tirelessly to change their own lives and those of their communities. Hon Speaker, 2023 was declared a year of school infrastructure, and just like the Hon Premier said, we have lived up to all our promises made. We are moving our children out of mud schools and horrible pit latrines.

We have also made strides in the provision of proper sanitation for our learners, especially the happy little feet in the Foundation Phase. The safety and dignity of our

learners is a priority, and we have made significant progress in the reduction of pit latrines. We will turn our focus to schools where we still need to improve and where there is a combination of old and new sanitation facilities.

I must indicate, Hon Speaker, that despite the glaring hard work and strides made in the past 30 years, there are people who go all out to tarnish our record. There are political parties represented in this august House that, since the past two years, have never appreciated the infrastructure projects that had been handed over to our communities. They are directing their energy to one only isolated incident and beam the negative side of the coin only because it is in their communities. They cannot claim to represent the people when they only see what is on their doorstep.

We have eyes through our government of seeing the good profits. They are giving a wrong narrative about the infrastructure in the province. I am challenging them to visit our best schools such as Malamulele High School, Ngwanalaka Secondary School, John Xikundu Primary School and Rivoni School for the Blind, just to name a few. Just like the people we read about in the Bible, you want to take our children back to mud schools. You want to see them walking long distances to school, staying at school for more than 6 hours without food and learning under trees. The narrative that you are giving is of a backward province; it is not the one that is led by Stanley Chupu Mathabatha.

We want to level the narration by siding with the Premier on the bright side of our achievements in the past three decades. As the Department of Education, we are vested with the responsibility to groom our children from the ECD level to matric. Just like what democracy produced in Tintswalo. Tintswalo is our first-born daughter. The siblings behind her, as we might not see them now, but I guess some of their names are Willem, Petrus, Tebogo and Tshedza.

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, we are always told that a good dancer knows when to leave the stage. Some dancers are so good that you would wish that they could occupy the stage for a little longer to reap the fruits of their hard work. Hon Premier, you have led us well; you are exemplary to many of us. I wish, we wish, and the opposition also wishes that you could occupy the stage for a little longer because they know that under your leadership the province is stable, and the lives of our people have changed for the better. President Xi Jinping in his book The Governance of China [sic] says: "We will not be able to achieve greater success unless we have a clear understanding of our history and the roads that we have travelled." Let us all join hands as we defend democracy and advance freedom. Let us not leave anyone behind. I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, MEC, Lerule-Ramakhanya. Hon Maritz, the floor is yours.

MS MARITZ

Hon Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity. Hon Premier; esteemed Members of the House and guests, I greet you all.

The Hon Premier's address during SOPA undeniably showcases the unmistakable signs of an elevation year. In 2010, 80% of the communities enjoyed access to clean water, but unfortunately this number has dropped to a concerning 69,1%. Despite the allocation of funds, areas like Vhembe District have been deprived of this basic necessity for years. Shockingly, the initial Budget of R90 million has skyrocketed to a staggering R4,1 billion, yet there has been no tangible outcome or improvement in the situation. It is imperative that immediate action is taken to rectify this dire situation and ensure that all communities have access to clean water as a fundamental human right.

The government has indeed constructed RDP houses, but it is concerning that residents of these houses are now incurring debt to relocate the flushing toilets outdoors due to the lack of water for flushing, posing a significant health hazard. The elimination of pit toilets remains unattainable as long as the government fails to supply water to communities. The Human Rights Commission confirmed legal action is underway after the Freedom Front Plus lodged a complaint.

Hon Speaker, I will revisit my debate on the 2023 SOPA concerning the topic of the infrastructure of roads within our province. Despite being the leading producers of potatoes and a variety of other vegetables, it is unfortunate that the burden of the road maintenance falls on the shoulders of the farmers themselves. There are a lot of roads that still need urgent repair.

Hon Speaker, we have received numerous complaints, one of which involves a hospital using a cell phone flashlight during a medical procedure and failing to administer any anaesthetic medication to the patient, which is a clear example of inhuman treatment. We are busy with the Human Rights Commission, honourable MEC. As a result, the patient's family had to urgently transport her to Gauteng in order to save her life due to severe bleeding. The incident highlights the need for improved healthcare standards in our province.

Hon Speaker, I want to ask the Premier, Hon Mathabatha, after 30 years, is it justifiable that pensioners in our province must use Sassa grants to buy drinkable water? The province is facing a critical situation that requires immediate attention. Every aspect under the ANC-led government seems to be failing. It is crucial for the future of this province that the ANC is removed from power in the upcoming election. The time is ticking for the ANC, and I believe in the people of Limpopo to make the right choice and to bring back positive change. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Maritz. MEC , Hon Rakgoale, the floor is yours.

THE MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon Speaker and Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier; Chief Whip of the ruling party; esteemed Members of the Executive Council; MPLs from the opposition benches; honourable Members of the Legislature, I greet you all. Good morning.

As I stand on this podium, allow me to salute the Hon Premier for a job well done during the Sixth Administration and for providing leadership during trying times. Many

will choose to pull you down, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, for they selectively choose to ignore the leadership you are providing.

Often critics ask, what is his legacy? What has he done? What can we remember about his leadership? These are some of the questions laced with cynicism mainly from the opposition benches. In you, Hon Premier Mathabatha, the ANC deployed a seasoned cadre, a servant leader and a visionary. In your leadership we trust. The ANC collective leadership in this Sixth Administration is undeterred and remain unfazed. We are on a revolutionary mission and on course.

Hon Premier and the collective, you came in at a difficult time, at the time key government departments were placed under administration. Hon Premier, you led from the front and pulled the Limpopo province from the brink of bankruptcy and financial ruin. Being the economist, your skills were put to a test when you mobilised men and women to stabilise the provincial administration both in terms of public and financial management. We must not be selective in truth-seeking when we all know that it was becoming difficult to pay salaries. Medicine supply and projects had stalled due to lack of funds. Thanks to the leadership of Premier Mathabatha and the collective he led; we are walking tall. We shall not forget this, Premier.

Hon Maritz, you promised to engage the farmers' association to come on board on the roads of the province. Why are you wasting time? The trucks that are travelling on a daily basis on our roads are the ones that are also contributing to the generation of potholes on our roads. I hope you will still consider this, only if you come back.

The apartheid years saw infrastructure development limited to geographical areas of the old South Africa; there was deliberate neglect in townships, rural areas. It is now common the heinous apartheid policy concentrated on the needs of industry and white areas to the almost total exclusion of the black majority. Since 1994, the year when Tintswalo was born, the ANC has led the way to provide an integrated and holistic approach to major socioeconomic questions, including the provision of infrastructure. As the ANC-led administration, we know the needs of our people on social and economic infrastructure provision, including the state of maintenance as well as future needs.

Hon Premier, you zoomed on infrastructure provision during SOPA, focusing particularly on road construction and maintenance. You made this the centrepiece of service delivery. We have rolled up our sleeves and boots as RAL, we have been engaged to collaboratively make use of their road and asset management systems, competence and technologies to assist municipalities with road maintenance and planning activities.

As the ANC-led provincial administration, we are very clear that Infrastructure is critical to creating favourable conditions for production and consumption; facilitating economic diversification; and to providing much-needed access for our people to services, facilities and opportunities. We are redoubling our efforts. Nkgankga e tla ja nkgawane. Le tla bona ka mebala.

From 1994, government has concentrated on infrastructure development in a range of areas that have picked up speed as programme management and other elements

have improved and developed. These are areas such as mobile telephones and internet, housing, electricity; provincial and rural roads, etc. We are reshaping the face of Limpopo in many facets. Hon Maritz knows that they were the only ones who had phones in their houses at that time.

As the ANC-led administration, we are unashamedly saying a critical element of the provision of infrastructure is to ensure that these projects and programmes translate into social and economic transformation. It appears that we have proceeded quite far in our efforts to address the backlogs, but it is clear that more still needs to be done.

Let me educate some of you, especially from the other side, I mean the opposition benches. We are seized here with undoing the apartheid legacy of two economies in our country, particularly in Limpopo. We know the developed economy suffers from a lack of cost competitiveness in relation to the global economy, whilst the underdeveloped part of the economy, which represents the experiences of a high proportion of our people, especially the poor and marginalised in our province, is an area where economic potential is not being enabled and harnessed due to backlogs and underinvestment in social and productive capital. We are sharpening our focus and will not change our trajectory.

We are clear that we must accelerate infrastructure provision to ensure that we meet basic needs of our people. The programme of national democratic transformation challenges us to focus infrastructure development towards achieving the integration of our communities through spatial development and deracialising our province. We are bridging the technology; production and infrastructure divide between rural and urban areas. It also requires greater coordination and planning for infrastructure to support the growth and development strategy implemented through all spheres of government. The District Development Model has also come in handy in this regard.

To further strengthen our collaborative efforts, we are working in a structured way with several municipalities and mining houses. We are deliberate in that we are targeting the infrastructure provision to support the movement of goods, supporting especially mining, agriculture and tourism. There is also specific focus on special economic zones and our fastest growing towns and municipalities. Your tendency of being busy on your phone when people are talking will make you not to hear the progress that we have made with regard to SEZ. You know very well that we did that.

Often people ask, what is different now in 2024? Until you know the difference between ECD and CDE, we will not be able to find each other. The difference is that now there is an explicit recognition by the provincial administration that it cannot do it alone and it involves the private sector, both on technical and financial matters. This new partnership requires legal contracts, financing agreements as well as project coordination. We are on top of the game in this regard. We are eliminating unnecessary red tape in this regard to enable smooth and speedy implementation of projects.

From long term lease to government ownership of buildings, being the visionary you are, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa together with your collective, you have taken a decision to save the fiscus from high rental costs on buildings which are housing our departments. Cost benefit analysis done shows clearly that it is no longer beneficial to lease some

of the buildings. In the long term, when government buys the buildings, it is going to derive huge benefits and savings. Step by step, we are implementing this decision, and already, we have taken ownership of the Limpopo Gambling Board building. This shows that we are forward-looking and caring about the interests of our people. We know talk is cheap. With us the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Judge us on the work we do. Criticise us because we are changing people's lives. Don't be personal, be factual, and in that way, we can engage. Le se ke la kwa bohloko ge le bona mediro ya rena ya go kgahliša, gobane mo, re šomela setšhaba, Hon Maritz.

Through your leadership, Hon Premier, we are on course to providing energy efficiency solutions to most of our government buildings. We want to balance all aspects of energy use in our buildings by providing an optimised mix of passive solar energy, efficient equipment and renewable sources of energy. We are very clear that we want uninterrupted power supply and service delivery as Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, and we are on course. Job creation is part of the transformation programmes. We are relentless in pursuing BEE initiatives: supporting emerging contractors and EPWP; and empowering women and the youth.

Thousands of jobs have been created through our projects of building schools, clinics, traditional authority houses, libraries as well as maintenance programmes, including through the now famous "Operation Thiba Mekoti Ditseleng". Our programmes are strategically targeted and directed at eradicating poverty. The basics are sound, Hon Premier, but the mechanisms of delivery and the visible impact on poverty are not as clear-cut as they could be, but surely, we are impacting on poverty alleviation. Re fenyha tlala ka nnete, Tonakgolo. Mešomo e tšhaba diatla. The measures we are implementing are well coordinated to integrate relevant programmes and create linkages for operational efficiency. We do so to tackle and deal decisively with poverty and unemployment.

Just a few weeks ago, the Hon Premier led a sod-turning ceremony, marking the start of the first provincial state theatre to be built adjacent to Bakone Malapa Open-Air Museum right here in Polokwane. They will say they did not see, and they don't know about it. This is a multimillion-rand project and our people have been waiting to see its commencement. We will forever remember that you led this initiative, Hon Premier. This milestone is preserved for posterity, Hon Premier.

Comrades and colleagues, honourable Members, as I descend from this podium, be reminded that we are solely focused on creating job opportunities, sustainable livelihoods and skills development, particularly for the poor and unemployed people. We drive our programmes through labour absorptive methods in construction.

The racial tensions in Groblersdal are a sore point. We cannot during this democratic dispensation be reminded of racial symbols such as the old Transvaal flag. We are over a stage of a racially polarised society. We are building roads to facilitate mobility, and our bridges are connecting communities; that is our mission, not the shenanigans of a small-minded minority clique that wants to reverse the gains of our hard-won democracy. Ga re ba tšhabe, re fentše mmušo wa bona!

As the ANC, we have a date with our people on 29 May 2024 to renew our vows to be in selfless service to serve the people of Limpopo. Maybe the Hon Premier cannot say

farewell to some of our colleagues, because ba bangwe ga ba bowe, re a bowa.
[APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. Hon Seshoka, the floor is yours.

MR SESHOKA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Greetings to the EFF caucus led by Hon Maraga; our Premier, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha; Members of the Executive Council present here; and members in the gallery. Please receive our revolutionary greetings.

Hon Speaker, we debate today the last State of the Province Address of the Sixth Legislature in the province. The short and the long story of the ANC-led government in the past 30 years is that the ANC gave the people of South Africa bad government.

We say this because the ANC-led government solutions to the three challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment turned out to be bad as the problems themselves. The bad government is a product of poor cadre deployment because only corrupt and incapable cadres are deployed to government strategic positions. The typical examples that corruption and laziness pays in the ANC-led government is the deployment of the collective leaders who presided over the province and led to some of departments put under administration in 2011. It is the same Premier who speaks evil about the so-called Mathale's administration as corrupt, and yet the same people are deployed to national government to preside over our departments.

Hon Speaker, the EFF calls upon the people of Limpopo to see the ANC for what it is, bluffing, backwards and bad government. Solution to this crisis resides in the EFF cardinal pillars 3 that talks to building state and government capacity, which will lead to the abolishment of a tender system. This pillar says, for a successful state that seeks to deliver the real economic and industrial development and provide better services, an inspired, skilled, and well-compensated public service is required.

Furthermore, that bad government in Limpopo attributed by both poor cadre deployment and wrong policy choices has led to the economy that has created more poverty, high unemployment and widened inequality.

Hon Speaker, our people live in abject poverty because they are given pipes without water, electricity lines without electricity, potholed tarred roads, and are subjected to match-box houses that have no flushing toilets. Water crisis used to be a problem in the rural areas. Today, under Premier Mathabatha, there's a new concept of watershedding in Polokwane, other cities and many other townships in the province.

Hon Speaker, the Premier was in pain during the SOPA when accounting for the unemployment rate in the province. The picture of the unemployment rate is worse than before, at 49,99%. Limpopo has the third highest expanded unemployment rate after Eastern Cape at 53% and Northern Cape at 53,3%.

Hon Speaker, the Premier in his first address of the Sixth Legislature in this august House in 2019 promised the people of Limpopo that part of his economic growth strategies is the implementation catalytic projects such as special economic zones in both Vhembe and Sekhukhune Districts, provincial theatre, agroprocessing facilities like Lebowaqomo Abattoir, Norjax and many RAAVC projects, Tshivhase and Makgoba Tea Estates, the industrial parks, Corridor Mining Resources and many other projects that were aimed at creating jobs and growing the economy of Limpopo.

The question we are asking today, Hon Premier, is, amongst the catalysis projects which ones are complete and fully operational to give us the jobs you promised our people in the province? Truth be told, Premier, the people of Limpopo were sold false dreams because none of the so-called catalytic projects are operational today, hence we have the third highest expanded unemployment rate in the country. The people of Limpopo must stop mourning about poor service delivery and use the 2024 national and provincial election to vote out bad government, that is democracy.

Hon Speaker, the EFF is worried about the role of the state-owned entity, Corridor Mining Resources. This CMR owns the lion's share of Sefateng Mine, yet no dividends were paid to the three communities of Jibeng, GaMampa and GaPhasha, and yet the mine continues to export coal to the international market.

Hon Speaker, agriculture in the province forms part of our livelihood and the cornerstone of our economy. This sector collapsed in the province, especially amongst the Africans. The ANC-led government disconnected what used to be successful tea estates that provided jobs to many people of our province. The government caused Tshivhase and Makgoba Tea Estates to collapse and made the beneficiaries to fight amongst themselves.

The model of strategic planning in all land reform projects proved to be a flop by ANC-led government. In the whole province, the EFF challenges you, Premier, to give one such success that comes from this model. In your last SOPA, you promised the people of Limpopo, particularly the beneficiaries of the tea estates, that your government would replace the tea production because it is not profitable with high value commodities such as macadamia and avocados, how far is the plan, Premier, or were you doing what you are good at, bluffing?

Hon Premier, may you please give one catalytic project in agriculture that you ever promised farmers that is successfully operational and meets its target of job creation. Since 2019, you have been promising broiler farmers that Lebowaqomo Abattoir and Mashashane Hatchery would be operational and create markets for them. Millions of rands were used to revamp the abattoir; till today the project remains a white elephant. The other project that you promised the farmers is Norjax Tomato Processing Plant, under Tzaneen Municipality, which remains a white elephant too. The portfolio committee, through the influence of the EFF, pushed for forensic investigation on R100 million unauthorised expenditure in this project. Typical of ANC leaders who are allergic to consequence management, the MEC is sitting on the report because it implicates his friends and favourites.

Hon Speaker, the EFF calls on the MEC for Agriculture to fully implement the forensic report on Norjax Tomato Processing Plant and ensure that those who are implicated in the misuse of public funds are brought to book.

Hon Speaker, our farmers, especially subsistence farmers, are unable to produce maize on dryland to the potential of this province. This is because the Department of Agriculture failed to eradicate the presence of what we call fall armyworm. Hon Mokone seems to be surprised, maybe he doesn't even know what fall armyworm is. [APPLAUSE] Maize meal is a staple food in the province and the entire country. The province now depends on farmers who have capacity to control this point. This has killed small maize processing plants that used to operate in the villages.

Hon Premier, may you please tell the people of this province why your government has killed small businesses that used to operate in the villages that processed maize to maize meal. Now our people have to depend on white man for staple food. It looks like this fall armyworm is a man-made to destroy black-owned businesses, while the white-owned businesses thrive. This is brought to you by the ANC-led government.

The EFF calls on the people of Limpopo to see the ANC-led government as nothing but liars who use rhetoric to protect the white-owned businesses at the expense of our people. The people of Limpopo province must use the upcoming national and provincial election to vote out the bad government and usher in the socialist government of the EFF. I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

MEC, Hon Radzilani, the floor is yours.

THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Thank you so much, Hon Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker of the Legislature, Baldwin Matibe Tshitereke; Premier, Hon Mathabatha; MEC for Treasury, Charles Sekoati, and all other MECs; Members of this august House; Chief Whip; Deputy Chief Whip; Chair of Chairs and Deputy Chair of Chairs, receive our hearty salutations from the ANC and its alliance partners as we join this House in debating the 2024 State of the Province Address presented by our Premier, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha. It is worth mentioning that the Premier address takes place exactly 30 years since our country first tasted the fruits of freedom and democracy in 1994.

Hon Premier, I want to thank God for making sure that when I joined the Legislature, I formed part of those who are in the majority because it was going to be difficult for me to always refuse to accept the truthful information. It was going to be too painful in my life; hence, I am saying I thank God because I belong to this glorious movement. [APPLAUSE] As we know, this freedom did not come free and cheap as many had paid with their lives to see its realisation. This year's State of the Province Address takes us through memory lane to reminisce about the good and bad that we experienced and endured during the 30 years of our freedom and democracy as free people.

I believe that we are all in agreement that this year's SOPA did tick all the right boxes in demonstrating how our province evolved from the state in which it was before 1994 to a trendsetting, resilient and thriving province that continues to successfully make a difference in the lives of many. For our province, Limpopo, the aftereffects of 1994 is not difficult to see.

Those who have eyes to see will notice the everchanging faces of our villages and townships from what they used to be. Truth be told, the picture of our villages and townships has fundamentally changed for the better. This is Limpopo where one would hardly see mud houses as compared to brick-and-mortar houses.

This is Limpopo where more opportunities have opened up for our people to do things for themselves in their own spaces, to better their lives and the lives of their communities through music, culture, art, education, science and technology. Through opportunities created by our government, people have become their own liberators as it has become easier for black people to venture into business than ever before.

As a matter of fact, Hon Premier, one would hardly find more than 50% of households in Limpopo without access to electricity, running water, education and healthcare. This is the true state of Limpopo province which the Premier, Hon Stanley Mathabatha gave us on 29 February 2024.

Before 1994, all the achievements which the Premier mentioned were just a pipe dream with no hope inside. Thanks to the ANC-led government for the breakthroughs and successes that have been achieved in the socioeconomic development of Limpopo residents throughout the 30 years of our freedom and democracy.

Only those who are politically dumb and blind will not notice the difference that we have brought about in the lives of our people during this past 30 years – from road construction in villages that no one knew, to human settlements, to healthcare, to education, to social welfare and to gender transformation in the public sector, in partnership with its people.

Hon Speaker, every revolution has a leader and a councillor, and Cde Chupu Mathabatha, our Premier, is such a leader because of the sterling contribution and efforts for the past 11 years in changing the landscape of our province for the better. It would be a hearsay, Hon Speaker, not to report on the successes of the ANC-led government in this province and omit the name of Premier Chupu Mathabatha and those he led with.

Premier Mathabatha was to this province what President Frankly Roosevelt was to the economy of the United States in the aftermath of the Great Depression of 1993. Like Roosevelt, he pulled out of the doldrums and has set us on the pedestal of stability and economic growth.

This year's State of the Province Address was a well-presented and unrivalled account of how we delivered services to the people of Limpopo, and this has been attested by many reputable institutes and entities, including Statistics South Africa. According to a report by Statistics South Africa, Limpopo residents are feeling the safest of all South

Africans while walking alone in the streets of their neighbourhoods during the day and night.

This is further confirmed by the latest study of the Victims of Crime Survey. The report showed Limpopo had the highest proportion of households that trusted their neighbours enough to let them look after their children for more than an hour, followed by North West and Free State provinces.

Hon Speaker, over the past few years, we have built a capable state which prioritises the safety and security of its citizens, have built more schools than any provincial government, and continue to provide world-class health services to our people. The past 30 years has seen the ANC-led government transforming the lives of the people of this province on many fronts. We took over from the government whose services were tilted in favour of the minorities and widened the service delivery net to all the citizens of this country.

It was by design, Hon Speaker, that during apartheid under 50% of households in this country didn't have access to adequate sanitation services, were not connected to the power grid and did not have access to portable water.

The apartheid government was meticulous in how it designed its services towards the minorities. Because in its eyes, black people were secondary citizens who didn't matter. Today when the social grant system benefits the rest of South Africans, the enemies of democracy are the first ones to complain that ours is a social grant state. This was never the case some 30 years ago when social grants were commodified for white minorities.

We are not surprised when we see them today being the first to complain about every attempt made by the ANC-led government to develop the lives of the poor of this country. Their biggest gripe and complaint is that this government is trying its best to create an equal society, in which Blacks and Whites are treated alike.

We are all aware, Hon Speaker, that our opponents are going to use this golden opportunity of debating this State of the Province Address to score cheap political points. A typical example of this is the recent hypocritical stunt taken by one of the opposition parties which went to court to coerce the ANC to make public its minutes of classified meetings, but the same opposition party is clutching at straws to make public its own records.

Hon Speaker, last year when you presented the State of the Province Address, you issued a directive that we should convene a provincial day of prayer to seek divine intervention to mitigate against road fatalities in this province. I am happy to report that since the provincial day of prayer, we have experienced a dramatic decline in the number of road fatalities, and we have also recorded a notable decrease during the 2023/24 festive season. [APPLAUSE]

We are, however, worried about the new trend of pedestrian fatalities. Hon Sekoati, we are not talking about pedestrian information; we won't venture there; we are talking about pedestrian facilities with motorists failing to stop after hitting the victims. We will

double our efforts, Hon Premier, to conduct heightened awareness campaigns to educate road users about road safety.

Hon Premier, under your leadership, we also have enrolled 150 candidates for the Traffic Officers Learnership Programme, who upon graduation from this programme, will compound our road safety promotion efforts. With your support and visionary leadership, we have also championed gender-related issues and also heightened the fight against gender-based violence and femicide.

Our crime statistics are demonstrating a sharp decline in the number of women who are being killed and abused in the hands of their partners. This can only be attributable to this Premier's tireless efforts of being a shining light in the midst of adversities.

We are in the process of repositioning the Gateway Airports Authority Limited as a force to reckon with within the aviation industry. With your assistance and support, Premier, we have set GAAL and other 3D entities of the province on the same self-sustainable trajectory that is poised to offload them from the public fiscus. GAAL is currently being transformed into an economic enabler within the aviation space in the province.

Hon Premier, you have also done the same as the leader of the African National Congress in this province, and it is our duty to give you your flowers while you are still with us. Those of us who will be part of this government in its forthcoming term of office will emulate you on many fronts. Like a good leader, you knew the way, went the way and even showed the way. You have restored relations between this ANC-led government and the institution of traditional leadership in this province, and it has helped to narrow the gap between this government and the people under tribal authorities.

For those who want to challenge the ANC-led government, you must know that you have a very big mountain to climb because we have done our work as the African National Congress. We have also seen increased relations between traditional leaders and government in the running and managing of initiation schools. This is no small feat, as we emerge from a culture and tradition where some initiations were conducted without being registered.

Hon Speaker, when this Premier came into office, like others have already alluded thereto, our government was under section 100(1)(b). I am not going to repeat that, but today the Limpopo Provincial Administration counts amongst the best well-managed governments in the republic.

The 40 000 jobs that were lost in the last quarter should be gauged against the 182 000 jobs that were created in 2023. Though we are worried about these job losses, we are also comforted that this province was able to create around 200 000 jobs in a single year. The several provincial investment summits that were held under your leadership are starting to yield results, and we can only hope that more jobs will be injected into our provincial economy.

Hon Speaker, our political enemies and foes, dubbed as enemies of progress, have been laughing at us, saying that the Limpopo provincial state theatre is a pipe dream

that is not attainable. We have now turned the sod at the iconic Bakone Malapa Open-Air Museum, and soon construction will commence, with several economic spinoffs associated with the project.

Hon Speaker the building of R37 towards Tubatse, the N1 around Polokwane and many other tarred roads are testament of our unwavering determination to bring our people closer to the economic activities.

In their desperate attempt to garner support for the May elections, opposition elements, true to their rumourmongering nature, have started to peddle lies in the public domain that the ANC-led government has surrendered over R500 million back to that National Treasury. Thank you, Hon Sekoati, our leader; don't get tired; continue to educate them; continue to assist them. This is far from the truth and can only be seen as a desperate ploy by opposition forces to get support for the elections.

Hon Speaker, on this rare occasion of the debate on the State of the Province Address, allow me to pay homage to the leadership of our Premier and congratulate him on his good stewardship of this province during the most difficult times. Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, you have been such a diligent leader who espoused humanity, clarity and courage throughout your term. For that, we want to thank you; being the bright morning star, you have been a good leader during the entire 11 years of your service to our people, and may the good Lord protect you and continue to restore your health for the benefit of his own people. Hon Speaker, I thank you so much. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, MEC Radzilani. MEC, Hon Phophi Ramathuba, the floor is yours.

THE MEC FOR HEALTH

Hon Speaker, Hunadi; Hon Deputy Speaker, Vho-Tshitereke Matibe Murhangaphanda; Hon Premier, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa' a ngwasu; esteemed Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the ruling party; Members of this august House; Director-General and heads of the departments, ndi matsheloni.

Hon Speaker, the 2024 State of the Province Address by our Hon Premier, Stanely Chupu Mathabatha, correctly coincided with the commemoration and celebration of a remarkable milestone of 30 years of freedom and democracy in South Africa and in our province of Limpopo. As pointed out by our Hon Premier, this anniversary serves as a poignant reminder of the progress we have made as a nation and a province, and the challenges we have overcome together.

Just yesterday, Hon Premier, we noted the latest release of a report by Stats SA, which indicates that the economy grew in real terms by 0,6% in 2023. The fact that gross-fixed capital formation increased by 4,2% in 2023 is testament to the ANC leadership's ongoing emphasis on the need to promote investments in South Africa.

Therefore, as we reflect on the achievements of the past three decades, we will notice that indeed it is evident that we have made a milestone. However, our journey towards a more just, equitable and prosperous society is also far from over.

Hon Speaker, it is also essential to acknowledge and celebrate the successes we have achieved thus far because since the dawn of democracy in 1994, the ANC-led government has made significant strides in various sectors, including education, health, infrastructure development, and economic empowerment for the betterment of the lives of our people. Those were made possible despite Limpopo being a province of a special type – a province that had to firstly deal with the merging of the three bantustan administrators with the then so-called national administration. Today we proudly speak of Vhavenda, Bapedi, Vatsonga, amaNdebele, Balobedu and Afrikaners living in peace and harmony under one administration brought to you proudly by the African National Congress. [APPLAUSE]

You would not be sitting next to Hon Wilson. She is lucky to sit next to me because of the ANC.

Under your administration, Mahlatji, we have seen this work of social cohesion continuing, and we have seen Hon Marumo continuing with the work of spearheading social cohesion. The recent sod-turning ceremony of a theatre, which most of my colleagues have spoken about is a confirmation of your commitment towards preserving our culture while nurturing the existent talents and different creative industries while at the same time developing the raw ones.

Hon Speaker, we have seen under the capable leadership of Hon Mathabatha infrastructure development projects transforming the landscape of Limpopo, connecting remote areas with urban centres and fostering economic growth and development.

Moreover, during the past three decades, we have seen the empowerment of previously marginalised communities through various socioeconomic initiatives. The ANC-led government's commitment to land reform, job creation and skills development has empowered citizens to participate fully in the economy and contribute to the social fabric of our nation.

In Limpopo, we have seen the emergence of thriving small and medium enterprises, the revitalisation of agricultural communities, and the promotion of tourism as a key driver of economic growth. As we celebrate these achievements, we must also acknowledge that we do have challenges that persist and that we will continue to ensure that we address them.

We are mindful of the fact that the legacy of apartheid continues to cast a long shadow over our society, manifesting in persistent inequality, poverty and social divisions. Addressing these deep-rooted challenges requires a renewed commitment to social justice, economic transformation and inclusive governance. We must work together to build a more equitable and united society, where all citizens have equal opportunities to thrive and prosper.

Hon Lindy Wilson, Hon Kanyane will give you details on our special economic zones because in our endeavour to transform the socioeconomic landscape of our province, the province embarked on this catalytic projects like the Musina-Makhado Special

Economic Zone and the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park for the industrialisation of the province and to stimulate the economy to the highest trajectory.

You can't expect the Premier to be speaking about the details; you should be able to allow the process to unfold because he has deployed capable men and women who will unpack all this. Currently, we are busy with the revitalisation of Seshego and Nkowankowa Industrial Parks as the administration led by Hon Mathabatha.

Hon Speaker, we need to remind everyone in this House that the progressive policies of the ANC-led government are the ones that ensured that our province continues to make significant progress in the provision of social grants, food parcels, free houses and the National School Nutrition Programme. We are very proud of them because they have brought relief to thousands of vulnerable families.

Hon Premier, we dare not forget or take it for granted that these are the majority of our people who, even if the electricity line used to cross through their homesteads, would not have electricity as this was seen as a privileged service to a certain section of society.

Yes, indeed, it was a privilege because my grandmother, my mother and myself, who grew up in Mashamba village, never had access to electricity despite the fact that there was an electricity line passing towards Louis Trichardt. Therefore, apartheid made sure that we were permanently loadshedded with regard to both water and electricity.

Today we complain of loadshedding, and we are working on fixing it. Hon Deputy Speaker, you will remember that there was a place in Sibasa behind Mbilwi School which was called "white area". It was never loadshedded, but the other areas were permanently loadshedded.

So our journey, Hon Speaker, towards a long and healthy life in Limpopo will soon be realised, and it is under the leadership of Hon Chupu Mathabatha. From 2016, men used to live to an average age of 59,2 years; today according to the latest statistics, men live to an average age of 62,4 years here in Limpopo. Females used to live to an average age of 65,8 years, and today they live to an average age of 67,7 years. What is better between then and now?

This is an indication that under this leadership, our healthcare system, especially the public healthcare system which caters for more than 90% of our population, has improved. This was made possible by the intervention that you continuously deliver during the State of the Province Address. Those who are asking what you have been doing all these 11 years must know that you gave a directive that the total number of clinics that we have must be increased. Since the dawn of democracy, our clinics are now at 476, correctly so. Of these clinics, those who don't know Mathematics – our Premier is a Maths teacher, 177 are operating fixed 24 hours, 128 provide after-hours service through standby, 25 health centres are operating 24 hours. This year, 40 more clinics will be joining these ones so that all our 345 clinics could operate 24 hours. [APPLAUSE]

However, our priority is the rural areas. Hon Premier, you must pride yourself because when we started, two days would not go by without calling me to explain why a woman

delivered at the clinic gate. When last did you question me for that? It is under your administration, Premier, where we saw an increasing number of patients on anti-retroviral therapy, resulting in viral load suppressed; hence, many people are living longer and healthier together. This was made possible by improving our medicine and stock availability.

When last, Premier, were you called or deployed Hon Sekoati to receive a memorandum from the Treatment Action Campaign because clinics don't have ARVs? Let truth be told, and ba ri tell no lies. Hon Premier, with regard to maternal mortality in 2016, we were leading in being the last. Our hospitals were called "Re boile fela, Maotong a gago". At some stage, Capricorn District was the top district in terms of maternal deaths in this country. Today a member who sits on the ministerial advisory committee on maternal has indicated to me that we have been rated amongst the top 3 performing provinces. Bomme ba rena ga ba sa hlokofala ge ba tlile go belega dipetlele tsa rena. [APPLAUSE]

The people of Limpopo, Hon Premier, will always remember you by the long-awaited state-of-the-art robotic and paperless academic and central hospital for which you did a sod-turning ceremony last year, whose functions will not only be reduced to providing quaternary healthcare, but it will serve as a teaching hospital. Hon Premier, this particular facility was made possible because of your leadership, and we must also remember that the first ever post-1994 medical school in the country was established in 2016 because of your insistence and commitment to the people of Limpopo.

You would remember eight years ago when one of your guests who was sitting in this august House was a 15-year-old Junior Mkhombo, the youngest medical student in the country to enrol as a first-year medical student. Today at the age of 23, his title is Dr Junior Mkhombo. He has completed his six years of training here at the University of Limpopo, two years of internship, and currently he is doing community services at Pietersburg Hospital. You also invited Dr Dzivhani, the first in-house radiology oncologist to be produced by the province, as your guest here. Since then, they have all been motivated and many specialists are being produced in the province. Just today, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, a child from Bokwidi is not forced to travel to the University of Cape Town to study medicine. They can just register here, complete their study and specialise.

Today as a province, not only are we producing our own medical doctors, but we are also producing our own medical specialists. Just this afternoon, on your behalf, I'll be leading a team from the University of Limpopo in the meeting with the Health Professions Council for regular assessment to make sure that we are doing well. For those who do not know, 60% of the training of medical doctors is dependent on this provincial government and only 40% on higher education. Therefore, the success of that medical school is your legacy. Those who say Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa ha na legacy, ba botse sekolo sa go ruta dingaka sa mathomo ka 1994.

This evening, our acting HOD will on our behalf be joining the academics from all other medical schools where there will be graduations of specialists from Limpopo Specialist write common exams in the whole country. However, 40 of those will be coming from Limpopo, and those include 23 medical specialists, 17 diplomats, 7 dermatologists, dieticians, radiologists and many others; I can go on and on. However, I must mention,

Hon Premier, that in our midst, we have Dr Mavhuso Maile, a junior doctor, whom you got impressed with after your interaction with her somewhere in Vhembe and referred to us. You indicated that we must monitor and mentor her so that she could grow because you had identified this talent.

I have indeed noted a skill of identifying leaders in you because she is one of the 17 who will be graduating a postgraduate diploma in Psychiatry and joining other diplomats – a positive step towards her dreams of becoming a psychiatrist. If you did not identify her, she wouldn't have been known by us. You did that as part of your continuous guidance to those of us that you are leading so that we could live up to the true words of John Maxwell, "A leader is great not because of his or her power, but because of his or her ability to empower others."

We are producing these doctors, these diplomats and these specialists, Hon Speaker, under difficult conditions, without a central hospital. We are training them in our rural hospitals because through the leadership of our Premier, we were taught to be innovative and to understand that Limpopo will never be like other rich provinces. Therefore, we need to find a way of doing that.

In response to what Hon Maraga said, unfortunately she is gone, she needs to understand that there was no need for the Hon Premier to stop the State of the Province Address and go and address a rented crowd of young people masquerading as unemployed doctors. Your directive, Hon Premier, to MEC Sekoati and myself was loud and clear that no young medical doctor from your province should stay at home without being employed. You were very clear, and you didn't mince your words when you said we must do everything in our power to make sure that they get employed. Your words were that because they are our Tintswalos, if we don't hire them now after such a huge investment, they will leave the country and might never come back.

By the time we start implementing the NHI, we will need them, and they will be gone. We heard you, like we always do, that there was no need for you to go and address them, because in the back of your mind you knew that the real unemployed doctors, nurses and radiographers, pharmacists and psychologists – 322 of them – are busy submitting their CVs and attending interviews.

So what's the need of addressing rented crowds when the real people are there. Those who think I'm lying, Hon Sekoati can attest to that. He lived up to the instruction, where he put up to R150 million of the Health Budget aside and ringfenced it for the appointment of 143 permanent doctors with posts already advertised. He did that to make sure that the Premier is not distracted during his SOPA and continues with his work. and that his foot soldiers must do the work. In 2016, Hon Premier, you made a commitment to buy 50 ambulances annually for the people of Limpopo after a dire situation. After a researcher found that there was a district with 5 ambulances and that 3 of them were in for repair, you took that bold decision when it was not fashionable. Today you are bidding farewell to the people of Limpopo as their Premier and handing over a baton to the next coming generation. Furthermore, you are handing over 566 ambulances not only because you were consistent in buying and delivering them every year, but you are telling the people of Limpopo that this is your last year. [APPLAUSE]

We must remember that these ambulances are our hospitals, moving hospitals. That is why they are our moving ICUs. That's why you also put aside R100 million to equip them, so I don't understand where Hon Lindy Wilson got the information that we don't have equipment inside the ambulances. However, she even contradicted herself when she said there are ambulances, but there are no drivers, and there are drivers, but there are no ambulances. You can see when you lie, you even get choked as you speak.

Hon Premier, you know your story because 120 of them are going to be mobile maternity wards to address the problem that you told us, of being traumatised as a young man driving a bakkie with your mother with a pregnant woman sitting at the back, and when labour pains came, you were subjected to stopping and listening to the screams.

We don't want any young person to be subjected to what Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa was traumatised by as a young boy. Therefore, 120 of these ambulances will be specifically utilised to deliver medical care to pregnant women. [APPLAUSE]

Tomorrow on your behalf, I will be joined by the provincial public service commissioner, Mr Sekonya, and we will be at Maila Segola Killers Sports Ground at GaMaila village, Makhuduthamaga, Sekhukhune, handing over another batch of 86 well-equipped ambulances. The public service commissioner had to be there so that all our paramedics could start taking a public oath and a public service pledge.

We are doing this because the Premier has already done his part, bought ambulances and equipped them. However, we need to deal with the attitude of the staff. As part of making sure that we are ready to implement NHI, hospital and clinic revitalisation is now back on track.

Hon Maritz, there is no facility in our province that does not have any alternative source of power in case of loadshedding. We currently have more generators. Even at head office, there's one standby generator. In the event that a hospital has a breakdown, we take it to go and assist; we don't wait.

So what you are saying is impossible; hence, you can't even mention the name of the facility. We have also delivered on our commitment of procuring the state-of-the-art technology equipment, whereby a woman from Phokwane who needs breast cancer screening and diagnosis will no longer have to travel to Gauteng for mammogram nor Polokwane but to St Rita's Hospital.

Hon Speaker, it is through the leadership and guidance of our Premier and him appreciating the rurality of our province that we needed to initiate health projects. As part of celebrating the Human Rights Month, the many Tintswalos that are being produced by the ANC-led government, who are ophthalmologists, have decided to embark on an Operation Bula Mahlo campaign. [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Ramathuba, please conclude.

THE MEC FOR HEALTH

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, this Operation Bula Mahlo campaign will take place in all our hospitals, e.g., Mankweng, Thabazimbi, Elim and Jane Furse, across the districts. We recently, as I conclude, lived up to the saying that dilo tse di botse di thoma Botlokwa when we performed the first ever robotic knee replacement operation in Botlokwa District rural hospital. Hon Lindy Wilson, unfortunately she's gone, continues to formulate these lies because we must go and read about her. This is a Member who served in a Portfolio Committee on Health for seven years, fighting tirelessly to make sure that the NHI Bill is not passed, and she said it would pass over her dead body. Today the Bill has been passed, and she is still alive.

Hon Wilson, as an enemy of progress, was defeated because the NHI will be implemented in our lifetime. Let me remind all of you that the time will never be enough to highlight the remarkable achievements of Limpopo province under the leadership of Premier Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa.

In particular, Hon Premier, let's acknowledge your vision and commitment in improving our healthcare. All these achievements and successful initiatives are owed to no one else but yourself and your unwavering commitment to the citizens of the province. While we celebrate the progress and achievements made in the past year, we are not blind to the challenges that still lie ahead. Our government remains committed to promoting inclusive growth and addressing inequalities and improving the lives of our citizens.

So Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, rena re a go leboga because if your leadership style was not what it is today, none of this would have been achieved. [APPLAUSE]
Re a leboga.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon MEC for Health. Let's proceed to the next item.

8. NCOP BUSINESS

Chief Whip, Hon Mokgonyana, you may take the floor.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

RATIFICATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL DELEGATES TO ATTEND THE NCOP PLENARY IN CAPE TOWN

Hon Speaker, House Rule 226(3) of the Standing Rules and Orders read together with section 61(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides for the designation and appointment of special delegates when the House is not sitting.

In line with these provisions, the following honourable Members were appointed to attend the following virtual NCOP plenaries when the House was not sitting and others attended physically:

- 08 February 2024: Joint Sitting (physical): State of the Nation Address by the President of the Republic of South Africa: Hon Premier, Hon Speaker, Hon Chief Whip and Hon Chair of Chairs;
- 13–14 February 2024: Joint Sitting (physical): Debate on the President's State of the Nation Address: Hon Speaker, Hon Deputy Speaker and Hon Chief Whip;
- 15 February 2024: Joint Sitting: President's Reply to the Debate on the State of the Nation Address: Hon Speaker, Hon Deputy Speaker and Hon Chief Whip;
- 27 February 2024: Consideration of the Eskom Debt Relief Amendment Bill; and Consideration of the Cannabis for Private Purposes Bill: Hon M A Mokaba, Hon S M Mathe and Hon M R Seono; and
- 11–15 September 2023: Consideration of the NCOP week (virtual): Hon Makamu, Hon Maseko, Hon Mochadi and Hon Makhurupetje.

Hon Speaker, I hereby move that this august House resolves to ratify the appointments of the above-mentioned special delegates in line with the above-mentioned rule.

I move accordingly.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Is there any seconder? Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I hereby second the presentation by the Hon Chief Whip.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Let's proceed to item 9.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are there any announcements? Hon Deputy Speaker, you are recognised.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Lunch is served.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable Members.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The House is adjourned to Tuesday, 12 March 2024 at 10:00 in this Polokwane Municipal Council Chamber. Thank you very much.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
POLOKWANE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
TUESDAY, 12 MARCH 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now take this opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you very much. You may all be seated. Honourable Members, order! Hon Premier, Members of the Executive, Deputy Speaker of the Legislature, Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip, Chair of Chairs and Deputy Chair of Chairs, Members of this august House, Leader of the Opposition, members of the public in the gallery, good morning and welcome to our Sitting. We will now move to item 2.

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Are there any motions without notice in terms of House Rule 145? Hon Aphiri, you are recognised.

MS APHIRI

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**CONGRATULATORY REMARKS TO DR KOKETJO TSEBE FOR HER
APPOINTMENT AS TEAM PSYCHOLOGIST DURING THE 13TH EDITION OF THE
AFRICAN GAMES
(Motion without Notice)**

Hon Speaker, I rise on behalf of the African National Congress for this House to note that the ANC is proud of Dr Koketjo Tsebe, a daughter of the soil who is a distinguished clinical psychologist hailing from Mahwelereng township in the Waterberg District.

Hon Speaker, Dr Tsebe is currently among 45 officials accompanying a squad of 214 athletes representing South Africa at this year's 13th edition of the African Games currently underway in Accra, Ghana, which commenced on 8 March 2024. She plays a critical role of ensuring the psychological wellbeing of the entire Team South Africa during these games. This is significant because mental health plays a significant role in optimising performance. Athletes with good mental health are better equipped to handle pressure, maintain focus, and execute their skills effectively during competitions.

Hon Speaker, sport often come with highs and lows, including injuries, losses, and setbacks. Athletes with good mental health are more resilient and better able to

bounce back from disappointment, setbacks, and failures. Good mental health helps athletes manage their emotions effectively. This means that they can stay calm under pressure, control their anxiety, and avoid becoming overwhelmed by stress.

Dr Tsebe, with her proficiency, understands that mental health doesn't just affect individual athletes, it also influences team dynamics. Athletes who are mentally healthy are better team players, communicate more effectively, and contribute positively to team cohesion. Equally, dealing with injuries is a significant challenge for athletes. Good mental health can facilitate the recovery process by helping athletes stay positive, motivated and focussed on rehabilitation.

Hon Speaker, this is not the first time Dr Tsebe is tasked with such a momentous role. She offered the same services as a team psychologist for Banyana Banyana during the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2023 that took place in Australia and New Zealand, and was also appointed as a psychologist for Team South Africa at the African Union Regional 5 Youth Games that were hosted in Malawi in the year 2022. This is just to mention but a few.

Dr Tsebe is an illustrious member of the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee's High Performance Psychology Working Group and also serves as a board member of the South African Institute for Drug-Free Sport. In her own words she indicated: 'Mental health wellness is vital in athletic performance, therefore the role of psychology in sports is to help both the athletes and the coaches on and off the pitch issues. On the pitch issues include overcoming pressure, and anxiety, recovery from injury, building resilience, commitment and mindfulness. Off the pitch issues are the personal difficulties that affect players and performance such as academic difficulties, relationships, stress and mental health conditions such as depression.'

As the ANC in Limpopo, we say, we recognise your selfless efforts and the significant role you play as a sport psychologist in the country, sacrificing your family time to serve the people of South Africa through sport psychology.

I so move, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Aphiri. Is there any seconder? Hon Matlou, you are recognise.

MR MATLOU

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I, Leswafo Joshua Matlou, stand to second the move as presented by Hon Aphiri.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Matlou. Is the any further motion without notice? Hon Mathye, you are recognised.

MS MATHYE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Good morning to the honourable House.

THE PASSING ON OF LEARNERS ON SCHOLAR TRANSPORT
(Motion without Notice)

I rise on behalf of the African National Congress for the House to note that the ANC is saddened by the untimely passing on of learners whom their minibus scholar transport that they were travelling in to school, lost control and overturned on the R37 road in Moroke outside Burgersfort.

Hon Speaker, two learners sadly lost their young lives near Chromex Mine in the Sekhukhune District. The report is that the minibus they were traveling in lost control and overturned, sadly resulting in the death of two learners, seriously injuring eight passengers while another nine are reported to have sustained minor injuries. Sadly, reckless driving is cited as a possible cause of the accident.

We note that the MEC for Education, Ms Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya, has expressed her heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and has sent her well-wishes to those recovering from this ordeal. In her own words, the MEC said: "This is very devastating, and no parent should ever have to experience the pain of losing a child. My heart aches with the bereaved families and wish a speedy recovery to the injured. Reckless and negligent driving is unacceptable and will never be tolerated by the department." Rules of the road must be obeyed. We humbly request the MEC, through her department, to offer the necessary support where needed to all the affected parties including the Lesedi-Sedi Independent Primary School.

May the souls of the departed learners rest in peace!

I so move, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mathye. Is there any seconder? Hon Mdaka, you are recognised.

MR MDAKA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Falaza Mdaka, hereby second the motion as moved by Hon Violet Mathye.

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mdaka. Is there any further motion without notice? There is none. Is there any notice of motion according to House Rule 146? There is none.

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Are there any Members' Statements according to Rule 200? Hon Managa, you may take the podium.

MS MANAGA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Greetings to each one of you who is seated in the gallery and in this Chamber today.

UNPAID EPWP WORKERS' STIPENDS (Members' Statement)

Hon Speaker, nonpayment of workers is the last thing any government should subject its people to. The ANC-led government has the guts to deny poor workers their hard-earned stipends and livelihoods. About 300 EPWP workers are employed in the greening and cleaning project by Polokwane Local Municipality. They had protested over the nonpayment of their January stipends which are now long overdue.

What kind of government does this to its people? We are now being told that there is an investigation on the matter. What are you investigating? Just pay workers what is due to them. EPWP workers just like us have families to feed, they are not immune from hunger because they too, are human beings.

This government continues to violate the rights of our people with no shame at all. All of us received salaries on pay day in January, but the poor workers did not receive their stipends. By the way, Hon Speaker, we are talking about the workers who earn between R1 750 and R3 500 which is below the minimum wage.

How do you even sleep at night when poor workers did not receive their January stipends which have been budgeted for? The "EFF government" will immediately after taking power restore the dignity of our people by increasing stipends and also pay them on time.

I so move, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Managa. Are there any further Members' Statement? Before we move to item 5, let me check from the Executive if there is any Member who would like to respond to the Members' Statement. Hon Makamu, you are recognised.

THE MEC FOR COGHSTA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. The initial decision was to proceed to the next item but nevertheless we have the opportunity to respond to the concern raised by Hon Managa on unpaid stipends. EPWP still falls under the Polokwane Local Municipality. It is correct that it is a programme of the African National Congress however, we just have to confirm here that it is not a job creation strategy. It is a skills development strategy. We have to investigate this matter. Regarding the other part about the "EFF government", we have 30 May where Hon Managa will have the opportunity to see as to who will govern Limpopo at the time. She doesn't have to say it here. The President has set the date. Whoever will be the government in Limpopo, will have the opportunity to speak. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Honourable Members, I suggest that we all rise and observe a moment of silence for those who passed away.

[SILENCE]

May the souls of those who passed away rest in peace. Thank you. We move to item 6.

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

6.1. Tabling of the 2021/22 Section 47, Annual Municipal Performance Plan Report by the MEC for CoGHSTA.

MEC, Hon Makamu, the floor is yours.

THE MEC FOR COGHSTA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Deputy Speaker, the Premier of our province, colleagues in the Executive Council, Members of the Legislature, greetings.

Madam Speaker, in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, section 37(1), the MEC for Local Government must annually compile and submit to a Provincial Legislature a consolidated report on the performance of municipalities in the province. Section 47(2) further indicates that the report must include the following; identify municipalities that underperformed during the year and propose remedial to be taken and be published in the provincial gazette.

Madam Speaker, in line with the abovementioned legislation, I hereby as the MEC for Local Government in the province, table the 2021/22 performance report of municipalities in the province, for consideration and adoption by this august House. Thank you, Hon Speaker. I so move.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. The report is referred to the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA for consideration and report back to the House.

We move to the tabling of the Departmental/Institutional Annual Performance Plans for the 2024/25 financial year by the Leader of Government Business. Hon Sekoati, you are recognised.

BACKGROUND

Malibongwe!

THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

TABLING OF DEPARTMENTAL/INSTITUTIONAL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLANS FOR THE 2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR

Thank you, Madam Speaker, Deputy Speaker of this august House, Hon Premier, distinguished Members of this House . It is in compliance with the dictates of section 27 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999, Act 1 of 1999 as amended by Act 29 of 1999 as well as chapter 5 of Treasury Regulations that I, Seaparo Charles Sekoati, as the Leader of Government Business in this House, on behalf of my colleagues in the Executive Council, hereby table the Departmental/Institutional Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans for the following departments and entities for consideration by this august House:

- Office of the Premier;
- Department of Education;
- Provincial Treasury;
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development;
- Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism;
- Limpopo Tourism Agency (LTA);
- Limpopo Gambling Board (LGB);
- Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA);
- Department of Health;
- Department of Transport and Community Safety and its entity, which is Gateway Airports Authority Limited (GAAL);
- Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and its entity which is Roads Agency Limpopo;
- Department of Sport, Arts and Culture;
- Department of CoGHSTA;
- Department of Social Development.

I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. All the Annual Performance Plans are referred to the relevant portfolio committees for consideration and report back to the House.

We move to the tabling of the Limpopo Legislature Annual Performance Plan for the financial year ending 2024/25. Deputy Speaker, Hon Matibe, you are recognised.
[APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Hon Premier, honourable Members, I, Matibe Tshitereke, rise to table the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature for consideration by this honourable House. This plan is tabled in compliance with section 13(b) of the (FMPPLA) Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, 2009 (Act 10 of 2009) that provides that the Executive Authority must table the Annual Performance Plan in the Provincial Legislature. I move accordingly.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Deputy Speaker. The report is referred to the Oversight Mechanism Committee for consideration and to report back to the House. Thank you very much. Let us move to item 7.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1. The Premier's Response to the Debate on the State of the Province

Hon Premier, the floor is yours.

THE PREMIER

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, Hunadi Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker, Vho-Tshitereke Matibe; honourable Members of the Legislature, Members of the Executive Council, Chief Whip of the governing party, the African National Congress; Leader of the Opposition, Director-General and the HODs of our departments, legal practitioners, people of Limpopo, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Madam Speaker, after completing his first of three-volume book titled: *The Capable Das Kapital: A Critique of Political Economy* on 25 July 1867, Dr Karl Marx added something as relevant as ever to the preface of that work, and he said, "I welcome every opinion based on scientific criticism". He emphasised that he never made concessions to opinions based on prejudices. He had a message for the critiques who propagated such opinions. He believed that you should follow your own route, and let the people talk. He said that taking his cue from the great flooring time and that was Karl Marx, one of the fathers of philosophy, scientific philosophy and dialectic analysis.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Legislature for allowing us to respond to the debate on the 2024 Limpopo State of the Province Address held last week on Thursday. We appreciate the feedback we received, especially the sincere acknowledgement of the progress. Millions and millions of our people realise the work of the African National Congress-led government since our 1994 democratic breakthrough. It was not just a handful but a mammoth of work.

It is a historical fact that the human rights for all and massive social advances that the ANC-led government included, since 1994 are unparalleled in modern history and in this country in particular. I'm saying in modern history because I want to encompass all those recently liberated countries. I say recently because it takes a period of 50 years, because on scientific social human development 50 years is like a year for you to undo the injustices of the past. It is a historical fact that the human rights for all and massive social advances of our ANC-led government are unparalleled. I am happy that no person was censored or arrested for expressing their own opinions, following the State of the Province Address despite that they decided to stay away, and we have warned, them that we are going to respond. However, because they are not here, we are going to spare them, Hon Managa. Nobody was censored like it happened to some of us. On 20 June 1976 I was arrested for exercising my political rights of which I was

right. I was tortured and taken through very serious interrogations processes just for expressing what I believed in, but that does not exist today.

Freedom of expression for Africans in particular and black people in general was then prohibited. But today, that is no more the case, courtesy of the African National Congress-led government. [APPLAUSE] Honourable Members, I was not the first or the last to be arrested for expressing human rights. As you know many of our luminaries and forefathers, President Mandela, Sisulu and many others, Biko and Sobukwe, were punished and arrested for expressing what they believed in.

For a simple thing; just asking for freedom. We, like you Hon Wilson, want to be free. They were denied that right, that basic right, but thanks to this giant, this glorious movement called the African National Congress and many South Africans who stood up against that. Today we are leading a life of freedom, today we are leading a life of democracy and freedom. And today, we are leading a liberated life.

Those that we cannot achieve or have not achieved are within our sight. We know that we will ultimately reach that destination sooner or later. Like we have always said, it will be aluta continua. Honourable Members and Madam Speaker, today, even those who benefited from apartheid, including those who continue to benefit from the inheritance that can be traced to the legacy of apartheid, do not hesitate to criticise our hard-won democracy.

In doing so, they are driven by prejudice; they choose to turn a blind eye to the democratic gains that have significantly improved the quality of lives of millions of our people and the face of our progress and the country at large. Discriminatory, colonial and apartheid practices such as white privilege are no more part of our law of development. Therefore, we wish to condemn the recent racist act perpetuated by some irrelevant Afrikaners in Groblersdal town.

We call upon the justice system to act accordingly against these architects of crime. People who are bent on the policy of institutionalised segregation. It is a fact that our province has changed remarkably since 1994. If you count the number of decent homes in our province and if your criticism is based on science, you will appreciate that our people are living a better life compared to before 1994 where many lived in mud houses in neglected communities because of the system of separate development of the old apartheid. Before 1994, the majority of our people had no prospect of household privilege, tarred roads in their communities and those who cannot afford, homes were built for them by the government. Prior to 1994, those single individual would receive a home free of charge. O nyala mosadi. Wa dira bana. Ra go agela ntlo. It doesn't happen anywhere in the world except in South Africa under the ANC-led government. [APPLAUSE]

Ladies and gentlemen, whilst it was called separate development, apartheid involved systematic underdevelopment of the oppressed majority. And this, honourable Members are scientifically verifiable facts. I shared important statistics during the State of the Province Address, including facts and figures from Statistics South Africa census.

I need not to repeat what I said during the State of the Province Address: If you count the number of learners who completed schooling after 1994, compared to before and

if your criticism is based on scientific opinion, you will commend the massive expansion of access to education that the ANC-led government has brought. Equally important, the government has roll out a school nutrition programme. This helps to ensure that the beneficiaries, mostly leaners in need are not condemned to learning on an empty stomach.

Many of us who studied, or perhaps went to school during apartheid days will remember that there are many brilliant young men and women who left school because they would leave home on empty stomach, go to school stay at school the whole day and come back home not very certain as to whether there's food when they get home. Those brilliant minds were lost to the wilderness because of that. Today young women and young men go to school because they know that at least they will get free meals at school.

Even if there's no food at home, young men and young women know that at school, o tla ja, a khura a bowa a khotse ka gae. Thanks again to the ANC-led government. I am not certain as to what would have happened had the ANC not won the elections in 1994. Would we still be getting these privileges? I don't think so.

Our learner performance improvement has reflected in the 2023 matric results. Is not only quantitative, it is also an improvement in quality as reflected in the improved number of bachelor passes. In addition, if you count the number of post-school qualifications in our province up to the doctoral level and if your criticism is based on science, you will appreciate that our educated population has increased hugely since 1994.

It is unfortunate that you are not here, Hon Maraga, but even learners in our basic education system today know about Early Childhood Development centres and can correctly pronounce the words ECDC and industries. The ANC-led government has introduced Adult Basic Education and Training. This can help adults who are struggling with reading for meaning, statistics and pronunciation to improve.

There can be no doubt you'll find this helpful if your criticism is constructive, includes self-criticism and based on scientific opinion. In the State of the Province Address, I clarified improvements in our spending patterns and why this is important in the delivery of public goods and services. The MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Seaparo Sekoati, made important additions during the debate. The clarification we provided as the Executive Council is more than sufficient. I believe that honourable Members will agree with me, there's no need for me today to repeat everything that we said because we made sufficient clarification on this matter.

And if your criticism is based on science or scientific opinion, I have got no doubt that you will agree with this. The only point I wish to emphasise is that every party represented in this august House must pay attention to detail. It does not help, and it will not help to either misinterpret or neglect facts in rush to electioneering. That will not help any party. Whilst unemployment worryingly remains a challenge in the global south and nationally, it is an undisputable statistical fact that Limpopo experienced an increase in employment from 2019 to 2023.

Limpopo is in the top 3 provinces that have shown rising employment in our country. As frankly acknowledged in the State of the Province Address, we lost 40 000 jobs in the last quarter of the 2023 financial year. However, we have created 182 000 jobs in 2023 making us the second largest province in employment creation. [APPLAUSE]

In our catalytic projects by the end of 2023, we submitted our application for cabinet designation of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park as a Special Economic Zone. We are, therefore, currently awaiting cabinet's decision on this matter.

Honourable Members, noting the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone has commenced with the implementation of bulk infrastructure to prepare the zone for occupation by investors. We are pleased that the province will be hosting a delegation by the Chinese investors during March/April 2024, to finalise their investment due diligence. It is against this background that the MEC responsible for LEDET, Hon Rogers Monama, will provide more details about this and other projects during his departmental budget vote. I wish to call upon all Members of this House to use science when they debate.

This is because when the provincial government began the project of purchasing ambulances, due diligence was made. The bottom line is that here in Limpopo all our commissioned ambulances are attached to two medically qualified personnel to deliver requisite healthcare services. There's no such thing as we've got parked ambulances and no personnel. Honourable Members, whilst we have made progress in the last 30 years since 1994, we are the first ones to acknowledge that we still have a lot of transformation and development work to do.

There is no doubt that we are equal to the task and that we will ensure that everything that has to be done is done. Bit by bit we will finish this task, bit by bit we will make these thousand miles. Ka Sepedi, ba fela ba re, tshoswane e itekanya morwalo. Honourable Members, Hon Speaker, I listened attentively to all the speakers during the State of the Province Address debate on Thursday.

Of course, there was some a bit of electioneering done, even though I don't think the debate got the necessary mileage we wanted to make. But once again, I would like to extend my appreciation to the governing party, the African National Congress, for the opportunity it has granted to me to serve our people as Premier of this province. [APPLAUSE]

And with the progress we have made, I have no doubt that the people of Limpopo will return the mighty African National Congress as the governing party in this province. [APPLAUSE] Hon Speaker, the people shall speak. Batho ba tla bolela. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Premier.

7.2: Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration.

I call upon the committee chair.

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Mahlodi Caroline Manthata-Mahasela, hereby present the 2023/24 revised Annual Report of the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration for consideration and adoption by this august House. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, committee chair. Is there any seconder? Hon Lekganyane, you are recognised.

MS LEKGANYANE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I, Nakedi Maria Lekganyane, rise to second the tabling of the report by Hon Manthata-Mahasela. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Lekganyane. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List for the debate, and our first speaker is Hon Matlou. [APPLAUSE]

MR MATLOU

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Hon Premier, Hon Chief Whip and the Deputy Chief Whip, Members of the Executive Council present here, Chairperson of Committees and the Deputy Chairperson of Committees, Leader of the Opposition and honourable Members of this august House, distinguished guests in the gallery, ladies and gentlemen.

Hon Speaker, this Sitting takes place 11 weeks just before the entire country heads to the polls to renew the mandate of the African National Congress to do more, together with the people, and to build a better life for all. Over three decades the ANC has been at the forefront of the people's struggle to achieve better education and quality healthcare for all, to build a united, free, and peaceful society, to transform and to broaden and to bring and meet basic services to our people.

The upcoming national and provincial elections are an opportunity for the movement to renew its contract with the people. The African National Congress will not take the mandate bestowed by the people for granted. Building on the achievements of the past three decades, we will correct past mistakes and soldier on to build a better life with better opportunities for the current and future generations. As our 2024 National and Provincial Elections Manifesto attests, "Our journey to create a truly united, nonracial, nonsexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa is far from over."

Madam Speaker, the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration previously on 23 March 2023 tabled the 2023/24 Annual Performance Plan of the Office of the Premier and it was adopted by this august House. The Office of the Premier, therefore, complied with the applicable timelines to table such report. The exercise of today is

therefore not a cover-up for noncompliance or the reinvention of the wheel or an insinuation that people do not know their jobs.

It is a necessary process, informed and guided by the new conditions and circumstances under which we execute the national democratic revolution, leveraging state power to attain our goals, and advancing in creating a national democratic society. There are several oversight bodies that play a role and have a keen interest in the working of spheres, tiers, and institutions of government. Some of those are the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and the Auditor-General of South Africa.

The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation is a critical player in ensuring that all the National Development Plan priorities are mainstreamed and translated into government programmes and are aligned with institutional strategic plans and APPs. It also provides oversight of strategic annual and quarterly performance and reporting across all departments.

The AGSA has a similar role albeit from an auditing point of view. The AGSA had previously raised concerns on areas that were deemed not to be properly aligned on the 2022/23 financial year APP of the Office of the Premier and even advised on how to handle them.

Both AGSA and DPME, in their final assessments, required that the Medium-Term Strategic Framework and other emerging priorities should be clearly expressed in the strategic plan and APP and therefore be properly funded. Their assessment reports recommended improvements in the alignment and comprehensiveness of the 2023/24 Annual Performance Plan of the Office of the Premier.

It must be indicated that the assessment results did not imply that the Office of the Premier was derelict in the performance of its functions. The opposite is true. The DPME assessment findings report that was issued on 27 January 2023 attests to this fact. The two bodies were happy with the initial APP, safe to say that there was a need for improvements and alignments.

The Office of the Premier heartily welcomed the report and incorporated the recommendations into the final plan because those recommendations could not be ignored. This was done in recognition of the fact that South Africa is a unitary state. We are not a federal state, and we do not advocate for the cessation of any part of South Africa or for a federal state for that matter.

The portfolio committee is satisfied that the Office of the Premier has complied with all the necessary legislative frameworks governing the revisions and amendments of the strategic plan and the APP. To this end, the portfolio committee supports the revision of the APP of the Office of the Premier.

The ANC remains committed to building resilient and strong democratic institutions to defend democracy and advance people's freedom. We remain committed to promoting and defending the rights of all against racism, sexism, gender-based violence, homophobia, discrimination, and intolerance. Such democratic institutions must help in the fight against corruption, improve government accountability and strengthen

working relationships with various stakeholders to improve and deliver quality and reliable services to our people. We have lived up for the past thirty years as the African National Congress in making sure that we improve the lives of our people. Through our 2024 National and Provincial Elections Manifesto we will work for their realisation in the next thirty years of ANC-led government.

Thank you, Hon Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Matlou. Hon Maraga is not here, I will then call upon Hon Wilson.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker. The Office of the Premier has a pivotal role in providing coherent strategic leadership and overseeing service delivery planning and implementation in support of provincial and national priorities and plans. A quick and simple response to any report that involves APPs, is to go straight to the concluding recommendations and see what is found wanting. And there is nothing more frustrating or annoying than reading the concluding recommendations and finding out that they are almost a carbon copy of the previous year's recommendations, and the year before that and the year before that.

This year is no exception, another copy and paste. The report recommends that the Office of the Premier must monitor and ensure that spatial planning responds to the immediate needs of the people, especially where residential developments are not provided with adequate basic services such as water, electricity, and access to schools.

In the AG's consolidated report on the local government audit outcomes for the year 2018/19, released on 1 July 2020, the AG expressed concerns about the growing trend of water loss and water shortages in Limpopo. In 2020 the AG noted that poor management of water distribution had resulted in significant water losses due to:

- Water leakages;
- Deteriorating infrastructure;
- Unauthorized consumption due to re-routing of water from the water stream;
- Illegal tampering of water meters; and
- Inadequate systems to verify water purchased.

Limpopo province reported water losses amounting to R341 million during the year under review, and an increase of R114 million from the previous year. This represents a substantial amount of revenue lost by our municipalities, but more importantly, this water could have been distributed to another 26,3% of people living in Limpopo.

The AG attributed the escalation of water losses to leadership's lack of concern or inadequate action to address the basic right of access to water to poor management of water distribution despite national grants provided to restore and upgrade water infrastructure.

Four years later, the water infrastructure has all but collapsed and the revenues, important for the fiscal health of this province, continue to dwindle. The recommendations request that the Office of the Premier monitors the prioritisation of commercialisation of nature reserves. Limpopo tourism cannot continue to piggyback on the private tourism sector.

In 2023 the LEDET report said that there were more than 300 vacancies for field rangers in 25 of the 55 provincial reserves. These reserves were once the jewels of the province that attracted people from all over the province and brought in much-needed revenue. The poor state of our neglected reserves keeps tourists at bay and stunts the economic growth in these predominantly rural areas.

Communities who are beneficiaries of these reserves, rarely receive much more than free firewood and water. The province, under the watch of the Office of the Premier, has failed in its mandate to not only unlock economic opportunities but also to protect our natural diversity again. The recommendations ask that your Office, Premier, monitors special economic zone projects and ensure that they are sufficiently supported and significant progress is made, especially on job creation.

The Premier has been politically capitalising on the Musina-Makhado SEZ for 12 years, since 2014 when you first announced the project and that it was going to create 45 000 jobs. And 12 years down the line, and despite millions being allocated to the project there is nothing to show.

Now Premier, as you turn around and walk away, somebody else will have to pick up the pieces of what little is left, and to any new Premier, I say this, you may accuse us of political grandstanding, but every Member of this House regardless of your political affiliation must play an oversight role. For years we have been highlighting these issues and warning of the red flags. You have chosen to ignore them. It has cost the province dearly, and more particularly the poorest and the most vulnerable.

Let me assure you of this if the ANC does win this province... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Wilson. Let's proceed to our last speaker, Hon Mahasela.
[APPLAUSE]

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Speaker, Hon Molapo, Deputy Speaker, Hon Tshitereke Matibe; Chief Whip, Members of the Executive Council present here, Premier, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha; honourable Members of this august House, ladies and gentlemen.

Hon Wilson, we are here to talk about the revised APP of 2023/24, and I think the honourable Members said it all on Thursday because I was not here, and I think what you have said is out of order and irrelevant. Thank you, honourable Members.

Hon Speaker, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa enjoins all spheres of government and all organs of state to cooperate in mutual trust and good faith by fostering friendly relations by assisting and supporting one another. It fosters information sharing and coordination of efforts across the board.

Hon Speaker, in pursuance of this noble goal the government passed the Inter-governmental Relations Framework Act in 2005. It was through this Act that various mechanisms coordinated and streamlined the work of all spheres of government and all organs of the state to alleviate poverty, promote development and provide quality services.

The roles of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and the Auditor-General South Africa in providing assessment reports about compliance and coordination of various departmental Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans with agreed national priorities should be understood in this context.

The two institutions, in the spirit of cooperative governance, conducted an assessment of various aspects of the 2023/24 APP of the Office of the Premier. Their findings necessitated the revision of the plan and its subsequent tabling in this august House. Without labouring the point further, the assessment amongst others, found that:

- There was inadequate alignment between the 2023/24 APP and the revised Medium-Term Strategic Framework;
- There was inadequate alignment between the APP and the National Infrastructure Plan 2050, and
- There were challenges concerning the incorporation of the previous assessment reports into the new plans.

The assessment report made recommendations that were useful in improving the quality of planning and the plan itself. Some of the recommendations were that:

- There must be full alignment of the final 2023/24 APP with the 2019-2024 Revised Medium-Term Strategic Framework and the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy;
- There must be adherence to the minimum requirements of the Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans and related guidelines for the implementation of the revised framework; and
- The assessment findings be addressed in the final APP to be tabled in this august House.

Madam Speaker, the Office of the Premier heeded the advice and acted accordingly and promptly. We therefore commend the Office of the Premier for their sterling work in ensuring that there is compliance with the requisite plans and programmes.

As things stand now, there is total alignment between the Annual Performance Plan and the various national plans, including the Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans, as Hon Matlou has alluded to.

We commend the Premier and reiterate our conviction that the province is today a better place than it was yesterday, thanks for your leadership, Hon Premier. We call

on all the departments to emulate the work of the Office of the Premier and use the recommendations of the DPME and AGSA to improve and comprehensively align their plans with the relevant prescripts. This should be done to ensure that our plans achieve the priorities of government and improve service delivery.

We are satisfied that the outcomes between the APP and the Strategic Plans have been properly aligned, that the alignment of targets, output and output indicators has been achieved, and that all the recommendations from the assessment have been incorporated into the APP.

We urge the Office of the Premier and the broader provincial administration to work together in the good spirit of cooperative governance to better the lives of our people. We hope that the Office of the Premier has put processes in place and ensured that future plans are quality-assured locally before assessment by external parties. This would enable us to identify gaps and deal with them proactively. The guidelines are there, ours is to comply.

I thank you, Hon Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, chairperson, Hon Mahasela. We shall now again call the honourable Premier to come and respond to debate on the report of the portfolio committee. [APPLAUSE]

THE PREMIER

Thank you, Hon Speaker and honourable Members. Let me also echo what Hon Matlou and Hon Mahasela said. All findings were addressed, and all plans were properly aligned, so there's indeed very little, if there is any, that was not done in terms of the Annual Performance Plans.

Hon Speaker, also allow me to respond to what Hon Wilson was saying despite the fact that what she was saying was very irrelevant to the topic. There is an ancient saying, Hon Speaker, that says ... taste not the Pierian spring: There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, And drinking largely sobers us again. In short, what this means, honourable Members, is that little education is dangerous. You know, you can't lead a huge party in this democracy, in this era of science without a single tertiary qualification, with only matric. That says a lot about the party you are leading.

So, I am not surprised that the honourable Member does not understand that there are different spheres of government in this country. Within these spheres there are competencies. The Office of the Premier has got its own competencies, that is free education for no cent. The Office of the Premier has got its own competencies in terms of the Constitution and those competencies don't transcend or infiltrate or cascade down to local government.

In local government, the Mayors and their municipalities report to their councils. Ours is just to do oversight and coordination in a very good manner. All these things you just mentioned here have nothing to do with the Office of the Premier. They've got

nothing to do with the premier's office. The reason you can't learn and be educated is because you can't listen, a simple skill of listening.

Some of these things that I am saying for politicians are supposed to be common sense, of course I know that common sense is not always common to others but is common and supposed to be common sense. The issue of water is a national and local government competence. It is not a provincial competence. So don't come with issues that don't belong to a particular house and make them a property of that house and be like those people who came to our country as visitors and from there decided that we cannot own land in our own country. They are the only people that can own land in our own country.

I don't expect you to be like them honorable Member. When the honourable Member was saying that the province has failed to unlock the economic opportunities, I sat back and asked myself a lot of questions like: Where does this honourable Member come from? Is she really from the province? Did she grow up in the province. I doubt that aspect of her past.

If I have to give a snapshot of where we come from, from 1994 to today, the whole area of Dilokong, as they call it, had less than 10 mines. Today it has got about 45 mines which have got a huge multiplying effect economically, if you understand what I am saying. That's unlocking the economy. We have unlocked those opportunities.

I don't know if you ever heard about the African Ivory roots in tourism in this province. I doubt if you know anything about that., That was another means of unlocking tourism opportunities in this province. Hence, we are currently the second preferred tourist attraction centre in the country. When you say we didn't unlock economic opportunities, what economic opportunities are you talking about? Which single one did we not unlock?

I don't want people to come here in a public platform like this, the Legislature, and just talk for the sake of talking. Please follow what Marx said – that every criticism, every analysis must be based on scientific opinion. When we say it must be based on scientific opinion or scientific view, perhaps to explain it to you is that anything that is scientific proven is something that you can always touch and ultimately, quantify the result for that judgement. Then you know that this thing is scientific when it can be proven.

So, every criticism that you make, make it a point that you make a criticism that is scientific, because at the end of the day we want to get the basic scientific tenants of that criticism. I don't know whether you have ever heard of agroprocessing. I don't know whether you have ever heard of economic incubators that are mushrooming in this province.

That was unlocking economic opportunities, and we have done that, and we have proof that we have done that. What you said here, I don't know what to classify as, but is simply not true. The delay in SEZs is common knowledge to all of us. We are a constitutional democracy. If somebody takes us to court, we must comply. You can't just operate as if you are in a banana republic when you are in a constitutional democracy, and I don't think you want us to do that.

Hon Speaker, I therefore think the honorable Member will actually do herself and her party a favour and go and do a thorough analysis of what this ANC-led government did. It indeed has delivered. Thank you, Hon Speaker [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Premier. Thank you very much. Let's proceed to item 8. Hon Deputy Speaker, are there any announcements?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Lunch is served.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. The House is adjourned to Thursday, 14 March 2023 at 10:00 in this Polokwane Municipal Council Chamber. Thank you.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
THURSDAY, 14 MARCH 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you very much. You may be seated. Hon Premier, Members of the Executive, Deputy Speaker, Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip, Chair of Chairs, Leader of the Opposition, Members of this august House, guests in the gallery, members of staff, good morning and welcome to our Sitting.

Honourable Members, we shall now proceed with our Order Paper. Items 2 to 5 are deferred until after the Budget Speeches.

[ITEMS 2–5 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

Are there any tablings of Reports, Other Reports and Papers? There are none.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1 Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury on the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Bill

Honourable chairperson, you may proceed.

ADV PHALA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I hereby rise to table the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury on the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Bill [B01-2024], as it appears on the ATC. I move accordingly, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable chair. Is there any seconder? Hon Masekoameng, you are recognised.

MR MASEKOAMENG

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I hereby stand to second the report as tabled by the honourable chairperson.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Let's move to the debate on the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Bill. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List, and our first speaker is Hon Lebea.

MS LEBEA

"The people shall share in the country's wealth; the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks, and industries shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole."

Hon Speaker, Hon Deputy Speaker, Members of the Executive Council, honourable Members of this august House, distinguished guests, and members of the media fraternity logged on different live stream channels, a very blessed morning to you.

The Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Bill [B01- 2024] was introduced in the House in terms of House Rule 164 by the MEC for Provincial Treasury and referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration, scrutiny and reporting back to this House. The Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Bill is a Money Bill that seeks to amend the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Act of 2023 and its schedule. As usual, the committee had a briefing on the principles and provisions of the Bill. The committee then considered and adopted the report on the Bill on 13 March 2024 as such. Hon Speaker, this debate takes place in the month of March, a significant month in the politics of this country. On that note, this debate is dedicated to the Gugulethu Seven.

One might ask, who were the Gugulethu Seven? Allow me to take a minute of my time to educate some of the Members, particularly those on my left-hand side, about the Gugulethu Seven. The Gugulethu Seven were a group of anti-apartheid activists who were ambushed and killed by the South African police on this day in 1986 in Gugulethu, a township near Cape Town. The group consisted of young activists who were members of the United Democratic Front and African National Congress, two organisations that were fighting against the apartheid regime at the time. The seven activists; Mandla Simon Mxinwa, Zanisile Zenith Mjobo, Zola Alfred Swelani, Godfrey Jabulani Miya, Christopher Piet, Themba Mlifi and Zabonke John Konile were on their way to a meeting when they were stopped by the police. The police claimed that the activists had attacked them with firearms, and they had to respond with force. However, this was a draconian and inhumane norm perpetrated by the oppressive

apartheid regime. An eyewitness later disputed this claim, indicating that the activists were unarmed, and the police had fired upon them without provocation. This incident sparked widespread protests and condemnation both within the country and internationally. What does this teach us, Hon Speaker? It teaches us that the systems of segregation and apartheid crafted on the blood and sweat of, already, suffering men and women will never, not in a million years, capture the essence of the strides made by the ANC-led government in changing the lives of the people for the better.

There once walked a great man this side of heaven. He hailed from Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, and was both a revolutionary and a thinker who imparted on us the values of commitment to struggle and truth and justice. He said: "Tell no lies, and claim no easy victories." These were the words of the great Amilcar Cabral.

Back to the business of the day. The Bill does not need any level of articulation. It needs great minds of men and women, who have over the years implemented the manifesto of the Congress Movement to the best of their ability. Hence, since the dawn of democracy, the masses of the people of Limpopo have entrusted this very same party to lead and continue changing their lives. Hon Sekoati, as we have done since 1994, upon examining the appropriations, it is important to note that the allocations are geared towards rendering services to the people of Limpopo. The adjusted allocations aim to enhance service delivery, improve the standard of living, and create an enabling environment for socioeconomic development. It was found that the national Department of Human Settlements reallocated funds to the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements, and Traditional Affairs in compliance with section 19 of the Division of Revenue Act of 2023. Guided by the priorities of the financial year, the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development received a rollover of R6,768 million for the Comprehensive Agricultural Support programme. The Limpopo Department of Health received a rollover of R2,0721 million for the National Health Insurance plan. The Department of Education and the Department of Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure both requested R100 million and R1,66 million, respectively. As a committee, we have discovered that the Provincial Treasury requested departments to declare savings or projected underspending towards the end of the financial year to assist in releasing funds to the affected departments. Not only did we approve the Appropriation Adjustment Budget, but we also expressed concern about the expenditure related to the additional allocation in the Adjustment Budget. We were informed that the allocations were specifically for infrastructure spending and that commitments had already been made to that effect.

In response to a clearly ignorant view from a Member on my left, I quote the Hon Premier, who in his absence, reiterated the words of Franklin D Roosevelt: "The test of our progress is not whether we add to the abundance of those who have much, but whether we provide enough for those who have too little." Our happiness belongs to millions. [Inaudible]

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, we implore that the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill [B01-2024] for the financial year ending 31 March 2024, aimed at providing necessary services to the people of Limpopo, be moved for adoption as a report of this august House.

I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Hon Mphahlele, you are the next speaker.

MS MPHAHLELE

Hon Speaker; Hon Premier in absentia; Leader of the Opposition, Hon Maraga in absentia; Members of this august House, and members in the gallery, good morning. Regarding the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill [B01-2024], the national Department of Human Settlements reallocated funds to the Limpopo Department of CoGHSTA to the amount of R250 million. How much of this amount has been allocated for the building of houses for the poor, whose dignity continues to be violated? The majority of these houses in this province have been abandoned by contractors before completion, despite being paid millions of rands. Shoddy contractors are squandering business with corrupt politicians. Officials steal money meant to build houses for the poor. Consequence management will never apply, hence, stealing of money meant to build houses for the poor continues unabated.

The Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development received a rollover of R6,768 million for the Comprehensive Support Agricultural Programme Grant. Despite this rollover, the majority of irrigation schemes in the province have collapsed and there is no revitalisation plan to rescue these schemes. The majority of emerging Black farmers continue to suffer lack of government support. They are essentially on their own. How many of these emerging Black farmers in Limpopo have succeeded with government support? The reality is that many of them end up closing-shop due to a lack of government support. There are no extension officers to provide daily support through a systematic mentoring programme to help them become better farmers.

The Department of Education and the Department of Public Works, Roads and infrastructure on behalf of RAL requested R100 million and R166,7 million, respectively, due to cash flow challenges. We have not been informed of the causes of these cash flow challenges in these two departments. Sweeping things under the carpet will not solve the issue. We need a transparent and accountable government that the people can trust.

The EFF is not surprised that the trust of the people on the ground in the current ANC-led government has long since vanished. This will become evident in May during the 2024 national and provincial elections. It will take a miracle for the ANC to obtain 50% of the votes. For this reason, the majority of ANC members in this House are panicking. They do not know what will happen with the total of R301,24 billion addition made to the Adjustment Budget Bill, increasing the Budget from R81,462 billion to R81,944 billion for the 2024/25 financial year.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mphahlele, may you pause for a while please. Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise on a point of order. Hon Mphahlele is deliberately and intentionally misleading this House and the public by standing at that podium and claiming that we are panicking, whereas we are not.

It is out of order and untrue. I request that she withdraws that statement because we are not in a state of panic. She is the one who is panicking because she is not on the party list.

THE SPEAKER

You may proceed Hon Mphahlele.

MS MPHAHLELE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. The EFF is concerned about the misuse of the Adjustment Budget in departments and entities. Hence, departments like Education, and Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure experience cash flow problems. Instead of allocating funds to priority infrastructure projects, they spend money on things unrelated to improving of the lives of our people.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Hon Wilson, you may proceed with your debate.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I am going to keep this very short.

Hon Speaker, it does not matter what is on paper, the absence of consequence management leads to underexpenditure, underperformance and a lack of revenue collection, relying solely on grants.

If we are not fixing dysfunctional municipalities and appropriately budgeting for things that are most important to the poor and vulnerable people in this province, the Appropriation Budget means nothing unless it is correctly managed and consequence management and monitoring of our failures are done on a regular basis.

I thank you, Hon Speaker.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Honourable Members, may we proceed please? Hon Phala, it is your turn to reflect on the debates.

ADV PHALA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, for the opportunity to debate the Limpopo Adjustments Appropriation Amendment Bill [B01-2024], as tabled in this House by the honourable MEC Sekoati.

I want to echo the sentiments of Hon Lebea, who eloquently dedicated her speech to the memory of the Gugulethu Seven. Following in her footsteps, I wish to dedicate this debate on the Limpopo Adjustments Appropriation to commemorate Cde Collins Chabane, born on 15 April 1960 and tragically passing away on 15 March 2015. Tomorrow marks March 15, 2024.

Therefore, it is opportune to dedicate this debate to the memory of a distinguished Member of this Legislature and an honourable Member of the National Parliament, as well as a former Minister in the National Cabinet. Collins Chabane was an outstanding freedom fighter and a patriot who rose from the dusty streets of Xikundu in Malamulele. He came to the University of the North and joined other activists such as JJ Maake, Peter Mokaba, and Lembeza Makwela. As comrades of the struggle, they operated underground until the ANC instructed them to go into exile. They then left the country through Swaziland and Mozambique, eventually reaching Angola. Upon arrival in Angola, he was appointed as a Commissar of uMkhonto weSizwe due to his intellect and strategic thinking, he was very cerebral. The role of a commissar requires someone with a sharp mind. Returning to South Africa, he continued his underground work until his arrest in Tzaneen, leading to his sentencing to serve imprisonment on Robben Island. He returned in 1989. In 1990, he played a pivotal role in the revival of the ANC and became the first and longest serving Provincial Secretary of the ANC. Subsequently, he served as a Member of Parliament and as MEC for Economic Development and others until his passing. We pay tribute to this outstanding son of South Africa and son of the soil of Limpopo.

We are debating the Adjustment Appropriation Bill. These are the funds that the MEC has adjusted based on the adjustments made last year. It is a very small amount. Section 31 of the PMFA outlines the broad parameters of what an adjustment appropriation includes in the case of what we are dealing with now, as mentioned by Hon Lebea. We have received R250 million that was not spent by the Western Cape provincial government. It was allocated to us, and we are going to spend it before the year ends. We will also be receiving additional funds in the Department of Agriculture, approved by the Minister of Finance during the adjustment at national level in November. As a result of these adjustments, we are reallocating smaller amounts to various departments, reflecting the amendments we made last year.

The committee has reviewed and agreed upon these adjustments, and we are hopeful, along with MEC Sekoati and other MECs, that these funds will be expended before the fiscal year ends on 31 March 2024, thereby preventing any rollover into the next financial year. The departments receiving these funds have assured us that they are prepared with implementation programmes to effectively utilise this funding. We are confident and believe that, indeed, it will be directed towards servicing the people of this province.

Since 1994, we as the ANC-led government have served our constituents with scintillating stars, and we believe that these adjustments will further this commitment

to the people of this province. Therefore, I take this opportunity, Hon Speaker, to move that the House adopts the adjusted Budget, advancing it through the subsequent stages as a Bill of this honourable House.

I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable Members.

7.2 Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee for Provincial Treasury on the Limpopo Appropriation Bill [B02-2024]

Over to you, committee chair.

ADV PHALA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I hereby move that the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury on the Limpopo Appropriations Bill [B02-24] be adopted as a report of this honourable House.

I so move, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Is there any seconder? Hon Selane, you are recognised.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you. Hon Speaker. I second the motion as presented by the chairperson.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you.

7.2.1 Second Reading: Debate on the Limpopo Appropriations Bill [B02-2024]

We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. Hon Selamolela, you are the first speaker on the list. Hon Masekoameng will be representing Hon Selamolela.

MR MASEKOAMENG

Thank you, Hon Speaker and all protocol observed. Good day.

Today, I am not using a paper. I am educated because of the ANC-led government. We welcome the Budget, as presented in this august House by the MEC, Hon Sekoati. We are of the view that the allocations transferred to the departments will be spent to meet the expectations of the residents of Limpopo.

The MEC presented the provincial allocation for the 2024/25 financial year amounting to R83,110 billion. This amount consists of an equitable share allocation of R71,331 billion and a provincial conditional grant allocation of R11,778 billion. We are saying to the departments and state-owned enterprises that these allocations are for the people of Limpopo and must not be retained in the accounts of the departments and SOEs. The residents are patiently waiting for the delivery of services. We do not want to hear at the end of the financial year that money has been returned to Treasury. What we want to hear is that the entire allocation was spent, and quality services have been rendered. We have received a report that a significant amount of conditional grants would be transferred to departments and SOEs to ensure the successful spending of the conditional grant allocation.

All departments must adhere to proper planning and prioritisation. They must also explore new ways to increase revenue collection in the province so that the provincial budget would experience growth in the near future.

Honourable MEC Sekoati, if you return in the next term as MEC for Provincial Treasury, ensure that departments and SOEs pay their municipal debts, and provide a report on municipal debts by individual departments and entities to this august House. The Provincial Treasury and other affected departments must implement mechanisms to reduce contingent liabilities, and the provincial government must work on a mechanism to increase infrastructure spending.

The young people of Limpopo need jobs. What is the plan to reduce the unemployment rate? The President of the ANC and of the Republic of South Africa, Hon Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, through the presentation of the ANC manifesto, made remarkable promises that industrialisation will be highly considered in the next term of office. The Premier of Limpopo also emphasised in his presentation of the State of the Province Address that, together, let us build on the progress we have made, harnessing the potential of our youth, investing in infrastructure, fostering industrialisation, and promoting sustainable job development.

I assure this august House that with good planning by the departments, based on what the President and the Premier have assured citizens, we will see a reduction in unemployment. The gross domestic product would rise to exceed market expectations under their leadership. I want to assure the young people of this province that it is only the ANC that will ensure they get jobs. Hence, it is the ANC-led government that is currently equipping them with skills needed in the market.

The MEC for Treasury presented a Budget that definitely brings hope to the people of Limpopo, and that hope would be realised through the ANC-led government. The Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury in this august House certainly supports the passing of the provincial Budget.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Hon Mphahlele, you may ascend the podium.

MS MPHAHLELE

Thank you, Hon Speaker; Hon Premier in absentia; Leader of the Opposition, Hon Maraga; honourable Members of this august House; MECs present, and members in the gallery. Once more, good morning.

The EFF outrightly rejects this Bill because it lacks a focus on the people's needs, it is not people-oriented. We are disappointed that over R1 billion was returned to the National Treasury, indicating underspending in the 2023/24 financial year. The tabling of the Appropriations Bill is merely a routine and does not contribute to improving the lives of our people. Regrettably, the province experienced budget cuts over the 2024 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, amounting to R2,27 billion in the 2024/2025, R2,39 billion in the 2025/26, and R2,4 billion in the 2026/27 financial years. Why are budgets being cut when the province is still experiencing serious service delivery backlogs? The majority of our people are living below the poverty line and cannot afford food. Our roads are riddled with potholes, leading to fatalities, daily. Many of our citizens lack shelter and access to primary healthcare. It is shocking that budgets are being cut when over 200 clinics remain closed outside regular hours.

The budgets for the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone, totalling R1,17475 million and Fetakgomo-Tubatse Special Industrial Park, totalling R1,3848 million are disappointing.

The EFF is concerned about the continuous allocation of funds, particularly to the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone, without any tangible progress being made on that project. Where has the previously allocated money for these projects gone, and why is there no visible progress?

When we enquire about this budget we are met with excuses after excuses, as it seems this project has become a channel to steal money.

The funding allocated to the Cuban Doctors' programme for the 2024/25 financial year, totalling R20,900 million is a drop in the ocean. Our communities are in need of doctors, and therefore, the government should allocate more funds to this programme. We have heard about the suffering of our children participating in this programme in Cuba due to lack of government support. The budget allocation to this programme is a clear evidence that the government does not prioritise the wellbeing of our children.

In the 2024/25 financial year, a total budget of R200 million had been allocated to commence the construction of the provincial theatre. Where are the funds that were previously allocated to this project? The budget of R37 million meant for the construction of traditional council offices and R5 million for furnishing the traditional council offices is disappointing. This is a clear indication that the government does not take the institutions of our traditional leadership seriously. Hence, they are disrespected with this slim budget. The majority of our social workers are still unemployed, despite many having completed their studies through government bursaries. Yet, there seems to be no plan to provide them with employment. Is the R1,5939 million allocation for the social workers' programme not intended to address the issue of unemployment among social workers?

The province's vacancy rate is a matter of concern, particularly regarding the vacant positions in municipalities. This contributes to the underperformance of the majority of municipalities. Additionally, the spending of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant leaves much to be desired, and there appears to be a lack of political will to address issues in these dysfunctional local governments.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Hon Wilson, you are the next speaker.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Every year we meet in this House to debate the province's Budget, and every year it is the same issues that continue to hinder progress in the province. While there is no doubt that the country and Limpopo are not immune to the effects of global economic performance, we cannot shy away from the role and failures of the current provincial government in shaping the socioeconomic development fortunes of Limpopo.

In his speech, the MEC highlighted sectors like construction and manufacturing, which could significantly contribute more to our provincial economy. However, instead of growing these sectors to create more opportunities, they continue to hemorrhage jobs. The latest QLFS (Quarterly Labour Force Survey) showed thousands of job losses in the manufacturing, agriculture, trade, finance and community and social service sectors. This does not bode well for the future of our unemployed youth.

The compensation of employees amounts to 67,1% of the overall provincial allocation of R83,110 billion. This remains too high and unsustainable, when taking into account the large staff shortages across the board that still exist and the great need for resources to provide adequate services, encourage economic development, and create jobs.

The provincial equitable share and conditional grants are the primary revenue sources for the province. It is unacceptable that only 2,2% of the revenue is generated provincially. This level of revenue generation does not do enough to support the development needs of the province. Therefore, revenue enhancement strategies need to be explored, and efforts to generate more revenue must be intensified. Fiscal dumping is not the answer.

The Provincial Treasury needs to continue to intensify efforts to ensure consequence management within departments and maintain effective financial controls. Regression in audit outcomes is unacceptable.

Noncompliance with regulations also continues to affect our departments. The Department of Education, with R1,96 billion, accounts for over half of the R3,61 billion in irregular expenditure, and RAL for R1,33 billion. This level of irregular expenditure is massive. Additionally, the province has entities that are perennial underachievers

and need effective turnaround strategies urgently. Entities like GAAL, GNT and Corridor Mining Resources are in severe financial distress and cannot collect enough revenue to fund their own operations, let alone contribute to the province's revenue. The 3D Business Enterprises, LEDA and GAAL, should no longer be funded by the provincial government.

It is unacceptable that the Education and Health Departments continue to significantly underperform while receiving 78% of the province's Budget. These departments are characterised by classroom shortages, poor school sanitation, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, medical staff shortages, and excessively high medical legal claims. With allocations of R1,6 billion for Education and R848,228 million for Health from the provincial infrastructure budget, it will take decades to meaningfully address the infrastructure and maintenance backlogs at current funding levels.

The Budget indicates that the Department of CoGHSTA will receive R1,7 billion from the provincial infrastructure budget, representing a drop of 17,4% from the last financial year, which will negatively impact the department's programmes. We already have three municipalities recorded as dysfunctional. The poor performance of our municipalities, both in terms of their financial health and the rendering of services to the communities, continues to go unabated. The weak oversight provided by CoGHSTA has exacerbated the situation, resulting in poor performance in infrastructure development. Efforts by Treasury to support municipalities and the funds allocated for Municipal Intervention Capacity Building must be coupled with enhancing financial governance and strengthening oversight to ensure the improvement of the financial health of municipalities.

The MEC's speech did offer a few rays of sunshine in the gloomy budget forecast. The allocation of R100 million for storm-damaged schools and R36,9 million for the Sanitary Dignity Project will assist vulnerable learners. Additionally, an amount of R150 million for the appointment of 143 permanent doctors will provide some relief, although it is a drop in the ocean in addressing staff shortages. The allocation of R13 million to fight GBVF is much needed, but is a pittance, considering that Limpopo has about four stations that feature in the country's top 30 stations for sexual offences, rape, and sexual assault.

The Provincial Treasury must continue to provide thorough oversight and ensure proper consequence management, good governance and fiscal controls in provincial departments, entities and municipalities. We will monitor these aspects very carefully.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Hon Phala, it is your turn to reflect on the debates.

ADV PHALA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, for the opportunity to debate the Limpopo Appropriations Bill [B02-2024] as tabled by the honourable MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Sekoati, in this august House.

Let me join Hon Lebea and Hon Masekoameng and dedicate this debate on the Limpopo Appropriations Bill to an outstanding daughter of the soil of this province, St Manche Masemola. She is a saint of the Anglican Church in England who hails from Marishane, a small village in this province. She was born in 1913 and died in 1928. She strived to be a devout Christian of that church and was killed by people in that process. In later years when the spirit of Christianity became much more tolerant and inclusive, her tragic death served as a reminder of the importance of religious freedom and acceptance. Most of the people who were responsible for those deeds turned around and joined the church, embracing its teachings of tolerance and inclusion in the wake of her tragic death.

In 1969, her own mother was baptised, and in 1975 the Anglican Church decided to nominate her to be one of its saints. To find her statue, one must travel to London, England, where you'll find St Masemola alongside other saints like St Gregory, and St Mark. She represents the Bapedi in London. We dedicate this speech to St Masemola.

The honourable MEC has tabled the Budget Speech, which includes the Appropriation Bill, covering the financial year 2024 up to 31 March 2025. Billions of rands are allocated to all departments and entities in the province to serve its people.

This is the work that, for 30 years, has defined our efforts. As we near the end of this five-year term from 2019 to 2024, we reflect on this significant period and our accomplishments. In the name and on behalf of the ANC, we proudly announce the election of Mr Ngoako Ramahlodi as the first Premier of the province and George Mashamba as the Speaker. Notably, Mashamba's term as Speaker lasted only one day in 1994.

Most of Lebowa, Gazankulu, Venda, and parts of KwaNdebele formed part of the Transvaal Provincial Administration. That is why the first reason was that we, as the Northern Transvaal Government, before it became Limpopo in 1996, decided to change the name Pietersburg to Polokwane. This is what the African National Congress has accomplished in 30 years. Even in building national unity, where people of different ethnicities such as Shangaan, Vendas, Pedis and others see themselves as South Africans and residents of Limpopo. Hon Mdaka will tell you that we brought a truck here in May 1994, because Chief Minister Ntsan'wisi had better furniture. We sent a truck to Giyani to collect furniture. However, someone mobilised the people of Giyani to block the gates saying, the Vapedi va nga teki fenichara ya hina, hawa, va nga yi teki, va nga teki fenichara ya hina. [LAUGHTER]

They blocked the road, preventing us from taking Ntsan'wisi's furniture, the best furniture in this place. Despite this, we have built a united province where the people see themselves as residents of Limpopo, and as South Africans.

That is the distance we have travelled in constructing hundreds of clinics and new classrooms across this province. Additionally, in 1994 communities were contributing R20 per household to build school classrooms. We have successfully built hundreds of classrooms. We have rolled out thousands of kilometres of tarred roads. We have constructed dams. We have accomplished a lot of work since 1994. Therefore, in this

Budget, Hon Speaker and Hon Sekoati, we hope that it will contribute to the period starting from 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

We aim to build upon the excellent work that we have done for the people of this province. Everyone on board, Hon Sekoati, will concentrate on ensuring that the Budget is spent for its intended purpose. Additionally, none of this Budget will be subjected to further debate today. As a portfolio committee, we commit that none of it will be spent on unauthorised expenditure, irregular expenditure, or fruitless and wasteful expenditure. We hope that the mechanisms you have put in place regarding conditional grant spending will contribute to ensuring that we spend conditional grants, which come from the national level entirely. Additionally, we expect the provincial government to continue enhancing revenue mechanisms and strategies to maximise our revenue. Strong action will be taken against those officials found involved in any irregularities of any kind, to set an example for others with similar intentions.

One of the points outlined in the ATC is that this money must not be underspent. It has been noted that departments have received funds that are not being utilised. These funds are dedicated for serving of the people of this province. That summarises what we have emphasised. Many of the points were articulated by Hon Masekoameng and they are detailed in the ATC. These are the recommendations to the House, already adopted as resolutions that we will carry out in implementing this Budget.

With these few words, I thank you for allowing me to debate the Limpopo Appropriations Bill [B02-2024], as tabled in this House by the honourable MEC.

Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. We shall now call upon the MEC for Provincial Treasury, to come and reflect on the debate.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Thank you, Madam Speaker, Deputy Speaker, my colleagues in the Executive Council, Members in the opposition benches, and our guests in the gallery.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to address the issues raised by Members of the House, particularly members of the portfolio committee. I want to emphasise that we carefully consider all the concerns raised by Members, especially regarding the allocation of funds to the provincial government. It is crucial that the allocated funds are spent efficiently and directed towards the priority areas earmarked for expenditure in the province. Furthermore, we are mindful of the allocations made in the adjustment Budget, which we will address as part of our ongoing work. As previously mentioned, we conducted a rigorous assessment within each department to ensure that every cent is spent wisely and in accordance with its intended purpose.

We do take into account the issues raised by Hon Wilson in terms of accountability. Hon Rudolph Phala, the chairperson of the portfolio committee, has indeed alluded in

many capable ways to the fact that there will be consequence management for those who do not comply, for those who may have sticky fingers. I acknowledge that when the Premier was speaking, he quoted Karl Marx regarding scientific facts when acting. He actually said, “Go na le ba e le go gore o ka ba apha le letlapa, gomme gwa butšwa letlapa pele”. Ka nnete letlapa lehono le budule, Mohlopmhegi phala, eupša ba sa tiile go feta letlapa lela. Go feta le taamane. We are just stating facts. Go na le ba e le go gore letlapa le budule pele. You must translate what you have said to Hon Wilson, so she knows what you are made of and who she is sitting next to.

We also want to take this opportunity to address this House, as Hon Phala has alluded, to the fact that we have traversed a long, hard journey riddled with complexities. There was a time when this House would sit and discuss paying back money for items bought with allocations from this House, such as a leather jackets. It was not because someone simply bought it. It was due to a misunderstanding, as people did not understand how budgets functioned. We have traversed that long journey, and today we are happy to say that Limpopo is in a better financial state.

Limpopo is on a better path to development. The allocations that we are making are allocations that are addressing areas that matter most to the people of this province, including infrastructure, education and health. We agree that not everything has been achieved as we had hoped. This is not due to a lack of desire, but rather because of insufficient allocations.

The economy is not growing at the pace we would like to see, as we do not have enough revenue generated within our province. We are not receiving enough conditional grants and so on. However, we are making progress, step by step. We are confident that the path we have chosen will lead this province to a better trajectory in terms of development. It is a path that will benefit the province as a whole. None of us should engage in grandstanding because the responsibility to uplift this province is in our hands. This responsibility falls not only on the African National Congress but also on the opposition and everyone else who is keen and interested in seeing development in the province. Those who engage in grandstanding do not understand our goals and objectives. We are engaged in rebuilding and transforming this country into a better place than it was before. Our aim is to build prosperity for the children of this province, so they can take pride in being citizens of this province. I rest my case, Madam Speaker.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the chairperson of the portfolio committee for his capable leadership, the members of the portfolio committee, and this House for their support as we conclude the Sixth Administration.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much for the response honourable MEC. Let's proceed to the next item.

7.3. Second Reading: Presentation of Budget Vote and Schedule of the Limpopo Appropriations Bill [B02-2024]

We shall now call upon the MEC for Education, Hon Lerule-Ramakhanya, to present the Budget Vote.

THE MEC FOR EDUCATION

THE BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(Address by Ms M M Lerule-Ramakhanya: MEC for Education)

Hon Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Hon Premier, honourable colleagues in the Executive Council, Members of the Provincial Legislature, chairperson of the portfolio committee, Chair of Chairs, leadership of the African National Congress, leaders of the opposition parties, royal leaders, religious leaders, stakeholders in Education (SGB associations and unions), LDoE acting head of department and other heads of department present, partners from the education sector, distinguished guests, members of the media, ladies, and gentlemen, ndi matsheloni. Avuxeni. Thobela. Good morning.

Hon Speaker, as I start my presentation, let me begin by saying that today, as the Department of Education, the MEC has been dressed by a learner from one of our schools for intellectually challenged learners, Grace and Hope, in Seshego. I want to thank you so much. [APPLAUSE]

Let me begin by heartily appreciating this opportunity given to us to deliver Budget Vote 3 of the Limpopo Department of Education. It is biblically written in the book of Genesis 1, verses 3 and 4, where God Almighty said: "Let there be light" and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from darkness."

It is also important that I give a glimpse of the remarkable 30 years of excellent service delivery since the dawn of democracy. We are from a dark era where accountability was non-existent, and the black majority had no voice. We finally have light, the light that led us to deliver quality basic education for the past three decades without fail. Hence, I am standing before you this morning beaming with fulfilment as I give an account of the successes we have recorded in the past financial year.

Limpopo is today counted amongst the best because the light is shining on us. It is the light of democracy that has led us to prioritise school infrastructure to ensure that our children have proper and dignified shelter over their heads. We are boasting over a million children in the classroom today compared to the low numbers we had in the past. Absenteeism is a thing of the past in our quantile 1-3 schools, because every child has access to nutritional meals, including breakfast in the morning for primary learners, something that they hardly had in the past.

The light continues to shine for a learner from Gogogo in the rural parts of Venda and Mahlathi in the eastern side of Mopani. They have gadgets and are exposed to the fourth industrial revolution, E-learning. The promise of equal education for all was not a talk-shop but a vision realised. There is indeed light, the darkness that separated rural and urban learners is no more. At the dawn of democracy, we promised free basic education for all and because of the light, our learners are enjoying the fruits of

the struggle waged by our forebears during the dark days of apartheid. Who ever imagined that a rural community of Kgohloane in Moletjie in Capricorn North could one day boast a state-of-the-art-school? The Badimong Community has one of the best facilities, Mphetsebe Secondary School, recently completed by this caring government, a testimony that where there is light, there is life. All interventions have seen a rise in the number of rural learners who obtained bachelor passes in Matric last year.

In his last State of the Nation Address for the Sixth Administration, His Excellency President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa presented to us Tintswalo, a young girl who was born and raised by the democratic government. I must indicate that as the Department of Education in the province, we were the first to receive Tintswalo as she walked into the classroom, barefooted but hungry for success. We embraced and nurtured her in her 12-year journey filled with challenges and a lot of fun. We never gave up on her, and 30 years into democracy, we are narrating a success story of a young black child.

Let me take this opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved and the challenges we faced in the 2023/24 academic journey to adopt steps that will enable us to improve and deliver on our mandate. Let me first start by acknowledging successes and achievements we made since the last Budget Vote.

In order to make reading enjoyable, we have created Reading Corners in all our primary schools in the province. The Reading Corners are used as enrichment centres for learners who struggle to read with understanding. We also provided 45,431 readers in English, Sepedi, Isizulu, IsiNdebele to primary schools. We have introduced digitisation, Reading Assistive Technologies, and e-Books to enhance reading capabilities to learners with reading problems.

I've also launched Reading Clubs in collaboration with the MEC for the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and other strategic partners like AVBOB, UNICEF, NECT and Room to Read and many others in several districts in compliance with the President's call to mobilise every citizen to read for pleasure. Hon Nakedi Kekana will remember how our learners from Siyandhani Primary School were beaming with pride as they read some of the books delivered at the launch. I also took the same initiative to Nzhelele as a way of empowering and equipping our children with reading material. We will continue reviewing the impact made by these reading clubs quarterly to check their effectiveness.

The language enrichment activities have proven to improve learners' cognitive and literacy levels. We are proud, honourable members and distinguished guests, to announce that a learner from Capricorn North District, Bochum East Circuit, Dendron Primary School by the name of Lesedi Seemane was crowned 2023 Africa Spelling Bee champion. The 13-year-old outsmarted her peers in a continental competition held in Uganda in December 2023. [APPLAUSE]

Hon Speaker, the release of the 2023 National Senior Certificate results provided context in which the class of 2023 wrote the National Senior Certificate examinations. Over the years, our education system has demonstrated resilience and determination

in the face of numerous challenges. Through concerted efforts and strategic interventions, we have witnessed a significant surge in the academic achievement of our learners. Among others, the strategies that we employed in the 2023 academic year, is the Rapid Response Intervention. The intervention assisted us to strengthen and internalise the intervention to all the circuits in the 10 districts. This intervention was implemented in term 2 and 3 coupled with Grade 12 enrichment classes in all education districts.

Hon Speaker, we are continuing with our strategy for e-learning. We have procured 35,000 tablets for our Grade 1 and 8 for the 2024 cohort of learners. For the 2024 budget, we intend to procure tablets for the FET band, especially for Grade 10 and 11 so that it becomes easier for them to acquaint themselves with the gadgets before reaching Grade 12. We have witnessed that e-learning is the way to go for Grade 12 because one of our districts, Mopani West, managed to distribute tablets to all its Grade 12 learners, thereby improving their performance. This year, we requested R300 million for the e-learning strategy towards procurement of tablets, but so far, we have received R100 million. We hope more funds will be made available for this very important intervention so that we can reach out to the targeted 351 schools.

Honourable Members and distinguished guests, we will continue to support our learners living with disability to perform well by providing resources that assist them with their day-to-day learning. The light of technology is everywhere; we have delivered technological Braille assistive devices and hearing equipment to Setotlwane, Rivoni, Letaba, Bosele, Siloe and Tshilidzini Special Schools. The other resources that we have procured for our public special schools are 10 buses designed specifically for challenged learners in their different categories. In the next few days, I will officially visit Bana Ba Thari Special School at Solomondale to handover the buses to our special school. We will continue to purchase specially designed buses for our remaining public special schools. We have set aside R100 million for this very crucial intervention. [APPLAUSE]

The department continued its history of excellent performance in the National Teaching Awards (NTA) competition. We managed to produce excellent teachers who competed at the national level and won. I am extremely proud to announce to this august House that five of our educators won in various categories. Their dedication to this noble profession is always appreciated, and we will continue to offer them support and give them the recognition they deserve.

We were able to identify the schools that are underperforming as mandated by the South African Schools Act. This is one amongst other strategies that the department employs towards improvement of the learning outcomes. I am pleased to report that during the 2023 Budget Speech, we reported a reduction in the number of underperforming schools. Within the 310 underperforming schools, there are 114 newly underperforming schools, meaning that only 196 out of 440 had underperformed. The department will continue to support all schools so that we can sustain the gains made in 2023.

Hon Speaker and distinguished guests, the Limpopo Department of Education will continue to enhance the implementation of, amongst others, a Rapid Intervention plan focusing on the bottom three districts, namely, Sekhukhune East, Sekhukhune South

and Mopani East. The plan is to target all underperforming circuits and schools in these districts. The efforts made in 2023 have made us proud because we no longer have any underperforming districts. As a result of the interventions, all three districts improved their performance by more than 9%. In the 2023 Budget Speech, I reported that we had 32 underperforming circuits, but currently, there has been a reduction to only 19.

The department has properly managed learner admissions for the 2024 academic year, and the administration of the admission process went well with only some challenges compared to the previous year. We were able to eliminate long queues in our hotspot circuits, including Pietersburg and Lephalale. This, of course, is a result of proper planning and the early admission process that commenced in May last year. However, we still have people who are fabricating documents to enable their children to attend schools of choice instead of their assigned feeder zones. We will continue to work with all affected municipalities to address this matter.

Over the years, we have invested in capacitating staff at all levels for better results. It is through capacity building that we are able to fulfil our mandate of delivering quality education. Other than the success of the plans for 2023/24 financial year, where we managed to enrol and graduate 908 educators on Strategic ICT Integration to push the agenda of integrating ICT into teaching and learning, the department has trained 6 507 educators on Strategic ICT Integration and ICT Champions through the Wits School of Education in the past seven years. In the 2023/24 financial year, the allocation for the overall Skills Development programme was R212,6 million and it was successfully utilised.

Hon Speaker, it is crucial to track and highlight the positive changes and improvements that our skills development programmes brought to the province. The department has trained school management teams, principals, and deputy principals from 2009 to 2014 on the Advanced Certificate in School Management and Leadership through the Universities of Venda, Limpopo, and Pretoria. From 2020 to 2023, 566 school management team members, including principals, deputy principals and departmental heads, were trained in the Advanced Diploma in School Management and Leadership. This was a huge milestone for us, considering they had to adapt to virtual learning in 2019.

The department ensures that the posts of departmental heads in schools are filled because the function performed by these posts is critical for curriculum delivery and coordination. In collaboration with teacher unions, the department identified the need to empower the appointees to effectively deliver the required service. From 2016 to 2023, we trained 1 288 newly appointed departmental heads in a Post Graduate Diploma in Public Management specialising in mentoring and coaching. This resulted in many of them gaining confidence in their work and proficiency, with some being promoted through the ranks to become principals, circuit managers and district managers.

Over the past 27 years, we have funded 4 106 matriculants, of whom 4 031 pursued a Bachelor of Education degree, focusing mainly on Foundation Phase, Technology, Mathematics and Physical Sciences as well as Economic and Management Science subjects as their majors. Between 2009 and 2014, the department made the

unprecedented decision to enrol 290 educators who were serving the Foundation Phase on a full-time basis, in a fully funded Bachelor of Education degree programme specialising in Foundation Phase. This programme was offered in collaboration with the University of KwaZulu-Natal. We continue to strengthen and empower our educators through various developmental programmes.

Other than the targeted programmes, we have managed through the limited skills development, to provide bursaries to all employees who only had a matric certificate at the time of their employment, as well as taken general workers through ABET training until they managed to enrol for N6 courses at our TVET Colleges, some of whom were promoted from cleaners to administrators.

Furthermore, 300 newly appointed principals and school management team members enrolled in a 2-year School Management and Leadership Programme offered by the University of Pretoria. It is important to note that we have programmes with various universities, such as Wits University, to receive additional tuition on Mathematics and Physical Sciences from Grade 10 to Grade 12, which boosted the pass rate and increased Bachelor passes while exposing learners to careers that were commonly dominated by males. This has surely placed Limpopo on the map. It must also be noted that more than 35,000 employees have benefited from various skills development programmes since 2001 to date.

Honourable Members, it is critically important to report that from 2011 to 2023, the Department of Education has also participated in the government agenda of opening the workplace for unemployed graduates by making funds available for 3 128 internship positions. Looking forward, in the 2024/25 financial year, we have set aside R23 million to continue servicing the current cohort of 332 interns while beginning the process of recruiting a new cohort for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years; R13,179 million is allocated for training administrative support staff at all levels; R42,9 million for the training of the different categories of educators, and R21,4 million for Initial Teacher Education, including investing in the Early Childhood Development sector and our ECD practitioners.

Despite the challenging and unfavourable economic conditions, the department has retained the educator post basket of 51,752 posts for the past eight academic years. The department continues to sustain the same post basket in the 2024 academic year. This serves to ensure that the quality learning and teaching is not negatively affected by the current economic environment. The department is thankful that the Department of Provincial Treasury remains supportive to the sector, despite the austerity control measures put in place in the public service.

It should, however, be noted that the pressure related to educator provisioning remains. The increase in learner enrolment over the years is putting pressure on educators. The department is contending with the resultant rise of the learner-educator ratio, which in turn has increased the average class size in all categories of our schooling system. Class size is among the important variables of quality learning and teaching.

The drive to recruit and replenish the system with young new entrants to the profession continues. The recruitment of educators who are 30 years and below remains our

priority. The Limpopo Department of Education, Funza Lushaka and NSFAS bursary scheme continue to be impactful pipelines for the supply of educators for scarce skills subjects. For the past 10 years, the Limpopo Department of Education has been one of the best-performing provinces in the appointment of the Funza Lushaka Bursary graduates. The province managed to appoint 4 622 bursary holders. In the 2023/24 financial year, 429 bursary holders were appointed in our schools.

In the 2023/24 financial year, the department appointed a total of 1 622 teachers who are 30 years and below. This is an increase of 247 educators compared to the previous financial year. The departmental plan to appoint 2 000 young educators for the 2023/24 financial year remains. The supply for the bursary schemes for the 2023/24 financial year is projected at 737 bursary holders who will be appointed in schools based on need.

As per the commitment made to strengthen school management teams, we are glad to report to this august House and the people of Limpopo that we appointed 200 principals, 53 deputy principals and 141 departmental heads in our schools in the year under review.

We reiterate that the filling of these posts will enhance the capacity of the SMTs in driving school governance and curriculum management responsibilities. We therefore expect improved functionality and performance of our schools. The filling of SMT posts remains our key component of our recruitment plan even in the 2024/25 financial year.

It is worth noting that the Limpopo Provincial Treasury has approved the filling of 2, 550 promotion posts in schools, including 506 principals, 400 deputy principals and 1 644 departmental heads. This will assist in reducing the vacancy rate and strengthening the management of schools.

The department continues to build capability within the Infrastructure and Physical Resources Unit by recruiting key professionals to the unit. The recruitment drive will continue in the 2024/25 financial year, with the objective of reducing the high vacancy rate and countering the high turn-over rate in the area.

We are delighted to report that we have managed to train 555 members of school management teams, as mentioned in the 2023/2024 Budget Speech. The department has successfully promulgated a Gazette on the 2024 SGB elections, issued at the beginning of this month.

The department is currently conducting the 2024 SGB elections from 01 to 31 March 2024. Every quarter, the department held provincial consultative forum meetings with both SGB associations and principals' associations. We have also resuscitated QLTC (Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign) structures in all public schools, and the involvement of various structures give hope for the future.

Furthermore, the department has managed to establish a Representative Council of Learners (RCL) in all public ordinary secondary schools, circuits and 10 districts, including a provincial structure. On 29 February 2024, the department launched a Provincial RCL Campaign on academic excellence to support quality learning and teaching.

Early childhood development remains a top education priority of the government for the year 2024. We continue to focus on expanding access to early childhood development and improving the learning environment. A total of 129,784 children, happy feet, were enrolled for early childhood development education during the 2023 academic year. These children were accommodated at 3 936 ECD centres located across the province.

Additionally, a total of 768 ECD practitioners successfully completed a training programme on parenting, while a further 2 312 practitioners were trained on norms and standards. The main purpose of this training was to capacitate participants on ECD norms and standards to increase compliance amongst ECD centres. All our 60 social workers have since received training on the registration of ECD centres and parenting programmes. The department has trained all social workers on the norms and standards of ECD centres as contemplated in the Children's Act 38 of 2005.

The Department of Education is funding 2 100 ECD centres from both equitable share and conditional grants. A call for funding for the new ECD centres to be funded for the 2024/25 to 2025/26 financial years was advertised, and the department is currently in the final stage to confirm ECD centres that will qualify for the next three financial years.

The function shift from Social Development to Education is one of the best highlights of the Sixth Administration. Our children or "happy feet" are no longer going to school just to eat and sleep; they are now in a proper curriculum system.

I am here this morning to report back that in 2023/2024 financial year, the norms and standards allocation to public schools and subsidies to independent schools were transferred to schools within the timeframes and in accordance with predetermined quintiles and categories, respectively. For the 2024/2025 financial year, the department has allocated an amount of R2,7 billion as part of norms and standards for school funding for public ordinary schools, R108 million for special schools, and R167 million for independent schools. [APPLAUSE]

During the 2023/2024 financial year, the department managed to rationalise a total of 62 schools according to our plan. We have also noted that rationalisation is met with resistance in most parts of the province, but I want to assure you that the decision is meant to benefit our learners. We urge parents to consider the future of their children.

On our HIV and Life Skills programme, the department has managed to provide care and support in 1,000 high burdened schools in the province, reaching an estimated number of 1,850 learners. The allocated budget in the 2023/24 financial year was R27,3 million and we have managed to cover all intended programmes.

Since the beginning of the year under review, 12 radio talk-shows in three languages Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda using Limpopo Combo were conducted, wherein 36 learners, 16 SGBs and 16 educators took part. These programmes, help us focus the challenges faced by learners and adolescents, creating a platform for peers discuss pressing issues that directly affect them.

We are further supported by the IHPS in Sekhukhune, East of Fetakgomo where 30 primary schools and 30 secondary schools are covered. In Vhembe East in the Malamulele Circuits, Soul City is providing School Zones, Rise Young Women and Soul Buddies in 60 schools. In the Mopani District, 122 schools, and in the Capricorn District, 135 schools are supported by Dreams partners, whereby 260 SMTs and SGBs were trained on CSE and management of learner pregnancies in schools. So, we are on the right track.

The department is continuing with the national school nutrition programme for learners from quintiles 1 to 3 schools in the province. Since the implementation of NSNP, there has been an improvement in learner attendance and punctuality.

Part to the NSNP objective is to encourage schools to advance sustainable food production. This is done through collaboration with the Department of Agriculture. Schools that participate in this programme are encouraged to enter the Best School Awards competition, which is hosted from district to national level. In our previous Budget Speech, we have presented to this august House the achievement made by Madjadji Primary School from GaSelwane, in the Mopani East District.

In our previous year's Budget Speech, we have reported that the number of learners from our schools changes every year because of their movement and new entrants in Grade R and exits in Grade 12. In the previous academic year, 3,552 primary and secondary schools, as well as 35 special schools benefited from the school nutrition programme. We have appointed 10,664 voluntary food handlers whose responsibility was to cook nutritious meals for learners. In the 2024/25 financial year, the programme will serve meals to learners in 3 524 primary and secondary schools, as well as 35 special schools, a minimal decline compared to the 2023/24 financial year. Ten thousand six hundred and sixty-four voluntary food handlers will be appointed. Over the years of rolling out the school feeding in the province, significant strides have been recorded.

In the area of scholar transport, amidst various challenges in its rollout, the province is making strides to ensure the transportation of learners to schools. This programme is assisting in minimising absenteeism and late coming. A budget allocation of just over R361,6 million for the 2024/2025 financial year has been set aside for the provision of learner transport to qualifying learners to access their learning centres with ease.

Due to the number of learner transport accidents, the relationship we have with the Department of Transport and Community Safety will be reinforced in this financial year. It is worth mentioning that this relationship is vital and accordingly paying dividends as those who are determined to compromise the safety of the learners are exposed and dealt with decisively.

I must indicate, honourable Members that infrastructure is very key to our mandate. We have seen huge progress in some of the schools that were provided with infrastructure compared to the results produced in previous years. The year under review was declared a year of school infrastructure, and I am delighted to announce to the House that we have made remarkable progress. It is not yet uhuru, but the light is visible at the end of the tunnel.

Honourable Members, the Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG) budget allocated for infrastructure development in this financial year is R1,4 billion. The department has received an additional allocation of R100 million to attend to storm-damaged schools. The total Infrastructure Development budget amounts to R1,533 billion. The Infrastructure Budget will be utilised towards new and replacement of aging infrastructure; upgrading of existing infrastructure; refurbishment, rehabilitation, and renovations of existing infrastructure, including storm damaged schools; as well as maintenance and repairs of existing infrastructure.

The department has received an additional R89 million as part of the performance-based incentive system. The department has identified 13 schools to benefit from the allocation. The allocation will be used to provide the much-needed infrastructure upgrades at schools. In the 2023/24 financial year, the Limpopo Department of Education was able to complete major upgrading and additions at the following schools: Monala, April Makgakga, MR Mamaila Phakeng, Tshamiseka Primary Schools; Roedtan Combined School; and Monyong, Mphetsebe, Matokane Secondary Schools.

Over and above the major upgrades highlighted above, the department succeeded in providing water infrastructure to 82 schools as well as appropriate sanitation infrastructure to 89 schools. The construction of Rivoni Special School for the Blind is proceeding and on course to be completed as contracted. The contractor for Asiphumelele Special School has been appointed, and construction has commenced. The completion of the new special school project will provide the much-needed infrastructure improvement in the special needs' education space.

In order to further improve teaching and learning conditions, the department is currently undertaking major upgrades and additions to 57 schools across all 10 districts in the province. Contractors have been appointed, and construction is in progress. This investment will ensure a major improvement in the teaching and learning environment, particularly for schools in the rural areas. All these projects are anticipated to achieve completion during the 2024/25 financial year.

The following are some of the schools that are under construction and are scheduled to be completed between the last quarter of 2023/24 and the first quarter of 2024/25: John Xikundu Primary School, Mahwahwa Secondary School, DZJ Mtebule Secondary School, Nhlayisi Secondary School, Manthe Primary School, Makgongoana Secondary School, April Makgakga Primary School, Maboko Nkomo Primary School, Napsadi Secondary School, and Ngwanamakhutswe Secondary School.

The planning phase of an additional 84 is at an advanced stage and should be completed by the end of the financial year. The schools include: the new Bendor Secondary School, Greenside, Tzaneen Secondary, Tiyani Secondary, Vungela Primary, Nhombelani Primary, Maila 2 Primary, Noblehoek Secondary, Tibane Fontein Primary, Unity Primary, and Ndzalama Primary, to name just a few.

Twenty-two more school infrastructure upgrading projects, implemented through the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, are at a contractor

procurement stage. We know, Hon Premier, that you made mention of a few schools that are still using pit toilets, a site of shame that will soon be a challenge of the past. We will push and finalise the remaining few under the current administration.

It is my honour to present to you the 2024/25 Vote 3 Budget for the Limpopo Department of Education. The department received a total Budget of R40,029 billion in the 2024/25 financial year, which is made up of equitable share R35,654 billion, conditional grant, R3,614 billion, and own revenue R760,498 million. This represents an increase of R992,603 million or 2,5% from the R39,037 billion adjusted appropriation in the 2023/24 financial year. The allocation has been broken down per economic classification item as follows: Compensation of employees (CoE), R30,641 billion; goods and services, R4,333 billion; transfers and subsidies, R3,622 billion; and payments for capital assets, R1,433 billion, respectively. The compensation of employees' item receives the biggest share of 76,5% of the total departmental budget for both equitable share and conditional grants.

Equitable share CoE accounts for R30,537 billion, which is 85,6% of the total equitable share allocation of R35,654 billion. Out of this amount, R27,773 billion or 90.9%, is meant for educators' salaries.

Once again, let me take this opportunity to thank all the stakeholders in the sector who have been working tirelessly to support us to realise our mandate in delivering quality basic education to all our children in the province. the sector unions for your unwavering support and the journey we travelled together in the past two years. We are today walking tall because of your contributions and interest in what we do.

Our SGB associations have been very effective; thanks for your presence in all our engagements and programmes we had together in an endeavour to improve results. Our donors and sponsors for ensuring that school programmes happen without fail. Our traditional leaders for showing interest and taking a lead in school matters in your respective communities. I need to report to this House that, in most traditional areas now, there is no traditional authority without an education committee. To all the Executive Mayors and Mayors, Speakers and Chief Whips, all honourable councillors, we say thank you for visiting schools, availing bursaries for learners, and for adopting the schools.

I need to thank the Hon Premier, both as Premier and chairperson of the ANC, for the delegation to do work on your behalf to serve the people of Limpopo, and for the support you gave to us as Education and providing leadership. I appreciate the journey and exposure as delegated by the ANC.

Lastly, I want to thank our church pastors for the counselling role in their society. You have always been there when we needed you most, especially ahead of exams and other challenging programmes that are part of our work. Limpopo is a better place because of you, and I encourage you to continue the good work of uplifting your communities. Remain exemplary to the coming generation.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Team Education; they deserve a round of applause [APPLAUSE]. This includes the office of the acting HOD, DDGs, DD, circuit

managers, chief directors, directors, managers, ECD educators, practitioners, and specialists in the department, as well as clerks, and all administrators.

I also want to thank the team in the office of the MEC for Education. I have seen you working hard, trying each day to please all our stakeholders, forging new relationships, and keeping our partners happy. I have seen you attending to queries on time. We have indeed led together. My happiest moments were when I received feedback from stakeholders on your prompt response to their issues. When I give feedback, I always emphasise that there is only one MEC, so why are you working so hard and better than me? Thank you so much; I appreciate each one of you.

To the team in communication in the department and my office, you are the best. You know your work and still remain the best. I could not have asked for a better team. From preparing/branding the events to coverage of all our activities, but most importantly, maintaining the decorum of the department.

To my educators: In his thesis under the topic, A Study of Continuous Assessment for Effective Teaching and Learning at Vhembe District, Dr H Ramakhanya wrote: "When developing teaching strategies and learning activities, teachers should take into account the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their learners. Teachers should emphasise that the development of understanding of concepts and principles is more important than the recall of factual information or the development of routine skills. Taking into consideration the above description, one clearly sees the importance of planning in order to achieve certain goals after learning has taken place. Longhran and Russel (1997:63) agree that teaching is inextricably linked to learning and therefore is a two-way process. They maintain that teaching and learning are interconnected through a dynamic system in which one continually influences the other." This thesis was written by my husband; may his soul continue to rest in peace!

Thanks also to my children, siblings, and family friends for your support and for going the extra mile for me and the team. I also want to thank the Department of Treasury for working with us when we had so much pressure, adjusting our budget, yet you came through for us.

To all the stakeholders, you are the guiding light that the Department of Education needs on our academic journey. The light that will brighten our careers and future prospects. Let there be light.

I thank you, Hon Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC. The Budget Speech for Vote 3 is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Education for consideration and report back to the House.

7.3.2 Second Reading: Presentation of Budget Vote and Schedule of the Limpopo Appropriations Bill [B02-2024]

We shall now call upon the MEC for Provincial Treasury to present Budget Vote 05.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

THE BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL TREASURY

(Address by Mr S C Sekoati: MEC for Provincial Treasury)

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker, Mr Tshitereke Matibe; Hon Speaker, Ms Rosemarry Molapo; Members of the Executive Council; Members of this august House; leaders of various opposition parties; House of Traditional Leaders; Director-General of the province (HOD), Mr Gavin Pratt; Auditor-General's office, Mr S Kheleli; leadership of the ruling party; leaders of organised labour, faith-based and civil society organisations; captains and leaders of various industries present in this House; ladies and gentlemen, good morning, once more.

In this pivotal moment, as we transcend into a new era through this final departmental budget presentation of the Sixth Administration, it is essential to highlight the collective efforts of the Limpopo Provincial Treasury. Our dedicated endeavours have not only significantly moulded our financial landscape but have also played a pivotal role in bolstering the confidence of the citizens in the province.

We have, throughout the term, strived to lead by example through our internal financial management processes, thereby encouraging all other provincial institutions to contribute to the overall improvement in the credibility in our provincial fiscal practices. Treasury's commitment to fiscal probity and transparency has cultivated a legacy of trust and reliability. This legacy is indeed not just a testament to our financial prowess, but a testament to the faith instilled in us by the people we serve.

As we embark on the journey of the next administration, our pledge to restore our department to a clean audit is a commitment not only to financial rectitude, but also to the people of Limpopo. We recognise that the trust bestowed upon us by the citizens is paramount, and we undertake to rebuild that trust through decisive actions, corrective measures, and an unwavering focus on accountability.

Hon Speaker, allow me to table the 2024/25 Budget for Vote 5; Provincial Treasury, together with the attached summary of payments and estimates for consideration by this august House.

The Provincial Treasury has been allocated a Budget of R478 million for the financial year 2024/25. The Budget allocation represents an increase of 4,5% compared to the main appropriation of R457,7 million tabled for the 2023/24 financial year.

The departmental economic classification allocation is thus as follows:

• Compensation of employees	R 337,9 million;
• Goods and services	R 128,6 million;
• Transfers and subsidies	R 4,8 million; and
• Payment for capital assets	R 6,6 million.

The key focus in the current financial year will therefore be to further strengthen the Provincial Treasury to improve its strategies to support, monitor departments,

municipalities, and public entities. This is meant to ensure that we improve compliance to the PFMA, MFMA and other policies and legislation.

The Provincial Treasury continues to provide support to departments and public entities to explore and optimise provincial own revenue collection and to ensure the implementation of the Provincial Revenue Enhancement and Retention Strategy. Quarterly bilateral meetings were and will continue to be held to track progress on the collection of annual targets and continuous identification of new revenue initiatives to maximise provincial own revenue collection. The Provincial Treasury has planned to collect R320 million in own revenue in the 2024/25 financial year, growing to R349,5 million over the MTEF period. The main source of revenue is interest received on positive cash balances.

The implementation of the Provincial Personnel Management Framework of 2016 proved to be very instrumental in ensuring that only critical positions are filled and that such appointments are restricted within the available resources. This has resulted in a reduction in the provincial wage bill as a percentage of the total provincial adjusted budget to about 64,7% in the 2023/24 financial year compared to over 72% in the previous years. Although notable progress has been made, the provincial expenditure on Compensation of Employees remains high when compared to the national average of 61%, hence there's still a need to intensify efforts aimed at reducing expenditure on this spending category. This reallocation will free up additional funds for developmental projects in the province.

The national fiscal consolidation over the MTEF period makes it mandatory for the Provincial Treasury to continue with strategies to curb the spending on the compensation of employees. To this effect, the Provincial Treasury, in collaboration with the Office of the Premier, has reviewed the Personnel Management Framework, endorsed by the Executive Council for implementation in the 2024 financial year and over MTEF period. The framework was also revised to enhance the turnaround time in filling vacant funded critical posts.

Throughout the year, bilateral meetings are held with MECs to assess the overall financial performance of departments and public entities. Additionally, departments and public entities receive support to submit catch-up plans to ensure funds are spent by year-end on intended programmes and projects, particularly earmarked funds, and conditional grants. Consequently, spending on conditional grants has improved, with 78,2% of the provincial grants' budget spent as of 31 January 2024, compared to 68,7% in the corresponding period of the previous financial year, indicating significant progress.

The Provincial Treasury has beefed up personnel in our Municipal Finance Unit to enhance our capacity and performance in supporting municipalities in the 2024/25 financial year. In this regard, a support programme commenced during the third quarter of the 2023/24 financial year, as we build this capability and capacity.

We also continue to work closely with the Department of CoGHSTA and MISA (Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent) to reform the quarterly Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) Forum, focusing more on water service functions in our municipalities.

Honourable Members, the Budget details of our department are as follows:

Compensation of employees (CoE) increases to R337,9 million in the 2024/25 financial year, allocated to fund current filled posts and reprioritised critical vacant posts.

Goods and services increases by 10,9% from R115,9 million in the 2023/24 financial year to R128,7 million in the 2024/25 financial year due to reprioritisation of the budget to fund contractual obligations and key accounts.

Transfer and subsidies increases to R4,9 million in the 2024/25 financial year due to an increased number of officials retiring in the next financial year.

Payment for capital assets decreases by 21,2%, from R8,4 million in the 2023/24 financial year to R6,6 million in the 2024/25 financial year and will further increase over the MTEF period to R12,9 million in the 2026/27 financial year. This allocation will cater for the procurement of IT equipment and other necessary working tools.

Our department consists of five integrated programmes operating as branches, with allocations outlined as follows:

Programme 1: Administration is allocated R207,8 million to provide effective and efficient strategic management, administrative support, and sound financial management to the Provincial Treasury. Through this programme, the department appointed 30 interns for 24 months and appointed another 21 experiential learners, with their stipends paid by respective SETAs. These interns and experiential learners have attended in-house capacity-building programmes covering advanced Excel, report writing and digital skills.

We also continue to implement the Business Continuity Plan, which looks at a holistic process to identify potential threats to the organisation and provides a framework for building resilience and effective response, safeguarding the interests of the department's key stakeholders and the organisation's reputation.

Programme 2: Sustainable Resources Management is allocated R80,8 million to fund financial resource allocation, manage the provincial budget, support, and monitor provincial departments, municipalities, and public entities for efficient and effective use of the province's fiscal resources.

An amount of R11,8 million is ring-fenced to strengthen the Provincial Treasury's capacity to support our municipalities with focused support and intervention projects, and an additional R5,7 million is ring fenced to strengthen the Provincial Treasury's support to our institutions and improve infrastructure capacity-building programmes in the province.

Programme 3: Assets, Liabilities and Supply Chain Management (ALSCM) receives an allocation of R46,7 million. This allocation will be utilised to provide policy direction and facilitate the effective and efficient management of assets, liabilities, and

provincial supply chain management processes in all our departments and public entities.

Supply chain management remains one of the important instruments in the department, which is used to transform the provincial economic patterns by encouraging departments and public entities to prioritise and support procurement from SMME's, as well as encouraging participation by historically disadvantaged individuals and groups in provincial supply chain opportunities.

The Provincial Treasury has also embarked on an enhanced evaluation and monitoring plan to improve adherence to procurement plans by departments in order to aid in budget and contract management.

Programme 4: Financial Governance receives an allocation of R81,3 million. The main task of this unit is to promote trust among stakeholders through improved accountability and compliance with regulated financial norms and standards.

The programme is also responsible for providing and supporting the financial management information systems used in the province and supporting all provincial institutions with risk management practices. One of the key functions in this programme is to monitor the implementation of the 2025 Audit Improvement Strategy, through which we aim to rid the province of all qualified audit opinions and increase the number of clean audits over the MTEF.

I am pleased to announce that the province attained three clean audit outcomes in the 2022/23 audit period. These were achieved by the Provincial Legislature; the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism; and the Limpopo Gambling Board.

Seven departments, namely: the Office of the Premier; the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; the Department of Provincial Treasury; the Department of Transport and Community Safety; the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture; the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements, and Traditional Affairs; the Department of Social Development; along with two public entities, Roads Agency Limpopo and Limpopo Tourism Agency, attained unqualified audit outcomes.

However, three departments, namely: the Department of Education, the Department of Health and the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, as well as two public entities, Gateway Airports Authority Limited and Limpopo Economic Development Agency, received qualified audit outcomes. This indicates an improvement trend, and we believe that we will take this trajectory even higher.

In this context, the province has revised the Limpopo 2025 Audit Improvement Strategy to identify control deficiencies and propose measures for achieving and maintaining clean audit outcomes in the upcoming audit periods.

Additionally, as part of the province's roll out the LOGIS system, we are finalising the migration of our asset registers to the LOGIS system. LOGIS scanners have been procured and distributed to all our departments to eliminate manual asset verifications, which is prone to errors and may result in material findings. The success of this project

will be assessed during the 2023/24 audit process, and we are anticipating clean audit outcomes in asset management.

The allocation in this programme will be utilised to strengthen governance structures, including the Shared Audit Committees and other oversight bodies, support departments and public entities with financial accounting and audit matters, conduct forensic investigations, and support and monitor all departments and public entities in implementing effective risk management.

In this regard, the province has moved to centralise the appointment and remuneration of Independent Risk Management Committee chairpersons in departments to encourage uniform and standard risk reporting frameworks, accounting, and overall oversight on enterprise risk management.

Programme 5: Shared Provincial Internal Audit receives an allocation of R58,4 million. This unit protects the organisational value of the province by providing risk-based objective assurance, advice, and insight. It also coordinates a Combined Assurance Model to ensure broader audit coverage, as well as avoiding duplication of audit effort. This approach aims to improve collaboration with assurance providers within provincial departments as well as transversal functions within the Provincial Treasury and the Office of the Premier.

During the 2024/25 financial year, learners will be recruited for the Internal Auditor Technician (IAT) programme, facilitated by the Institute of Internal Auditors. Upon completing this programme, the learners will be prepared for the job market. Additionally, the unit has produced eight CA trainees who are now certified as chartered accountants by SAICA through the CA Training Programme. We are also collaborating with the Department of Public Service and Administration and National Treasury on a retention strategy for these programmes.

The Provincial Treasury has a statutory task of allocating, monitoring, and managing our provincial funds to ensure that they meet the developmental objectives of the government. We will continue to do our utmost to ensure proper and sound financial management and governance in line with the PFMA and MFMA to ensure progressive realisation.

Honourable Members, in the realm of politics, change is not an event; it is a process. Real progress is not just about altering policies; it is about evolving perspectives and fostering a collective commitment to a better future. With these words, I would like to thank the HOD, Gavin Pratt, and colleagues in the Provincial Treasury for the years of productive collaboration, which have improved the fiscal status of this province.

I also want to take this opportunity to express gratitude to the chairperson of the portfolio committee, Hon Phala, for his leadership and guidance, together with the collective in that portfolio committee. I also want to wish everyone well, particularly the Department of Provincial Treasury, as they prepare for the new administration.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC. The Budget Speech of Vote 05, Department of Provincial Treasury is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration and to report back to the House. We shall now call upon the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Hon Mokone, to present Budget Vote 04 for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. [APPLAUSE]

THE MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

(Address by Mr T A Mokone, MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development)

Hon Speaker, Ms Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tshitereke Matibe; Hon Premier in absentia, Hon Stanley Chupu Mathabatha; Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the majority party, Hon Mokgonyana; honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature; leadership of the ruling party, the African National Congress, Seshoka; leaders of the opposition parties; Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, led by Hosi Ngove Ndhavezitha n'wina makulu-xiluvele, n'wina vo dlaya nhongana hi xibakele; members of agricultural advisory committee...[INTERJECTION]

MR SESHOKA

Hon Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.,

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

What is your point of order?

MR SESHOKA

I strongly believe that Hon Mokone must withdraw his statement. It cannot and won't happen again in my life for me to be a member of the ANC. He must withdraw that statement. I will never become a member of the ANC.

[NOISE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Sorry, sorry honourable MEC. May I respond to this? You can sit down, Hon Seshoka. Hon Seshoka, he did not say you are a member of the ANC. He said: "Hon Seshoka and leaders of the opposition parties." Thank you very much.

MR SESHOKA

No, he said "member of the ANC".

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

You can continue Hon Mokone.

MR SESHOKA

Honestly, he said I am a member of the ANC, and I am not one. He did say that. He must withdraw. He must not associate my name with the ANC.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon Seshoka, I will refer to the Hansard report and get back to you.

MR SESHOKA

You must do that.

THE MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

...members of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and technical working group; officials of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development; all sector departments and state agencies; representatives of the organised farming and agribusiness, and civil society organisations present; members of the media; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, my sincere greetings, Avuxeni.

I rise before this august House today to table Budget Vote 04 of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for the year 2024/25, and to give a detailed reflection on service delivery for the past year and plans for 2024/25. Today, South Africa is a much better place to live in and farm than it was in 1994. Namuntlha ku tlula tolo, mundzuku ku ta tlula namuntlha, mundlwana ku ta tlula mundzuku.

Indeed, we are on a successful journey of empowering our province and improving the lives of our people. The country has made remarkable progress in dismantling the oppressive apartheid system. Thus we proudly echo President Cyril Ramaphosa's, 2024 State of the Nation Address (SONA) stating: "We have transformed the lives of millions of South Africans, providing the necessities of life and creating opportunities that never existed before."

Hon Speaker, please allow me to reiterate the pronouncements made by the Premier, Ntate Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, on agriculture and rural development during the 2024/25 State of the Province Address (SOPA). He stated: "We have made significant progress in agriculture. We implemented agricultural support programmes such as the Land-Care, Revitalisation of Agriculture and Agroprocessing Value Chain (RAAVC) Plan, and the Market Access Certification Programme.

The Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has developed a Service Delivery Model which follows an agroecological zone developmental approach. Five agricultural development zones are clearly identified with a view to developing agriculture based on a commodity approach model as follows: Molemole local area in the Capricorn District is pioneering the potato belt by involving unemployed youth in agriculture, and five young farmers are now suppliers to companies like McCain and Simba. The department has also identified Waterberg as

the Red Meat Cluster, Mopani as a citrus and subtropical cluster, Vhembe as a subtropical and vegetable cluster, and Sekhukhune as a grain and cotton Cluster. I hope you are happy, honourable MEC for Provincial Treasury. [APPLAUSE] This agriculture production focus is integrated in the Limpopo District Development Model.

According to the country's gross domestic product report (GDP) of 2023, there is a positive indication that the agriculture sector has consistently contributed positively to the provincial GDP since 2013. The agriculture sector contributed 2,1% or R5,8 billion to the province's growth in 2013. This contribution increased to 2,3% or R6,9 billion in 2014 and further to 2,7% or R10,2 billion in 2017, correlating with years of bumper crops due to favourable climatic conditions. Furthermore, Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Force Survey of 2023 indicates that the employment trends in the agricultural sector have had a positive impact on the lives of our people.

In the 2008/09 financial year, the agriculture sector created 274,000 jobs. However, a 4,74% decline, approximately 13,000 jobs, was observed in 2009, likely influenced by the global economic recession, which reduced economic activities. In 2011-2013, there was a notable rebound in employment, with the addition of 140,000 jobs, a 44,16% increase. This surge is attributed to increased output in field crops and horticultural products. In the 2016/17 financial year, the agricultural sector in Limpopo witnessed a 'bumper crop' due to favourable climatic conditions, leading to expanded production lines and the need for additional labour in the fields.

Since then, in 2018, the sector witnessed a growth of 16,000 jobs, 2,87%, increasing from 558,000 to 574,000 jobs compared to 2017. This growth demonstrated the sector's resilience and its capacity to rebound. Over the past 30 years, government agricultural support initiatives have shown a direct link between food security and agricultural activities. Statistics South Africa's General Household Survey Report of 2022 reveals that Limpopo has the highest number of households with adequate access to food, at 95,5%, against the national average of 80,4%. This correlates with the number of people involved in agricultural production activities, at 35,2%, also the highest against the national average of 35,2%.

Limpopo had the honour of hosting the BRICS Ministers of Agriculture in August 2023 under the theme, "Strengthening collaborations towards sustainable agricultural production and increasing productivity". We have started to see the positive results of the BRICS summit. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has finally lifted the ban, allowing exports of red meat from South Africa. Saudi Arabia has also allocated an enormous budget of R2 billion dollars for the initial meat import from the BRICS countries. As part of the BRICS countries, South Africa begun exporting red meat to Saudi Arabia in January 2024. On 18 August 2023, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development announced that China, as confirmed by Beijing Reuters, will resume importing beef from South Africa and will only import meat from regions free of foot-and-mouth disease. I am proud to inform the people of Limpopo that these regions include our three districts: Waterberg, Capricorn, and Sekhukhune. [APPLAUSE] The demand is estimated at 20 000 tons per year.

Allow me to quote a public statement by the ZZ2 group of companies issued... Seshoka, I am told that the two groups here have produced 87% of the tomatoes in South Africa. They are part of South Africa. They are part of this inclusive economy.

Hon Seshoka, I was saying allow me to quote a public statement by ZZ2 Group of companies issued on 22 August 2023 about the 11 memoranda of understanding and other agreements signed between South Africa and China. This includes the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza, signing an agreement on sanitary requirements for the export of avocados from South Africa to China. The ZZ2 Group writes that: "Now that the Chinese market has been opened, the avocado industry has the opportunity to greatly expand its plantings, creating not only direct employment on farms but many downstream job opportunities. Up until now, due to the oversupply of avocados into Europe, mainly by Peru, the South African avocado industry has been reluctant to grow its production base due to a lack of market options. South Africa has the potential to triple its avocado plantings, and therefore is well placed to service these markets".

Thus, we would like to join the ZZ2 Group of companies in thanking the South African Avocado Growers Association for their untiring work in assisting the government from a technical standpoint to gain access to the Chinese market and other established and emerging markets. Let us give them a round of applause. [APPALUSE]

Regarding meat production, we have seen massive agricultural innovations and developments since 1994. In the heart of the bushveld, Emmanuel Mudau's journey from a salesman to esteemed livestock farmer and educator, is truly inspiring. You may rise Sir. [APPLAUSE]...[INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

What is your point of order, Hon Seshoka?

MR SESHOKA

Hon Speaker, on a point of privilege, it must be noted here today that the ANC-led government is sitting here and wants us to clap hands for ZZ2, the same people who ...[NOISE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon Seshoka, sit down.

[NOISE]

MR SESHOKA

Hon Speaker, I am going to sit down, but you must allow me to raise my point of privilege. Hon Speaker, you must address me after I have made my point.

[NOISE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Raise your point, Hon Seshoka.

MR SESHOKA

I am not finished raising my point, and you must allow me to finish.. I was saying, it must be noted in this House that the ANC-led government wants us to clap hands for ZZ2, the same people who continue to exploit our workers. It must be noted from today that the ANC is siding with the white minority...

[NOISE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Order, order honourable Members! Hon Mathe...

[NOISE]

Order! Can we make this House orderly and allow the MEC to continue. The point of order and the point of privilege is not sustained. Can we allow the MEC to continue.

THE MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

With over 15 years of experience, he imparts invaluable wisdom through Mathuba Genetics, nurturing the next generation of farmers and advocating for the preservation of indigenous farming practices. [APPLAUSE] A few years ago, Mudau who is based in HaRavele, in the Vhembe District, decided to transform his livestock business into a training institute to share his wealth of knowledge with fellow farmers, with the support of government extension officers and accreditation by AgriSETA.

Ladies and gentlemen, our quest for universal food security in the province is intertwined with the task of a deliberate and continuous effort to improve the quality of public administration and services thereof. We continue to enhance the capacity of the department through skilled personnel and adequate recruits to bolster our Service Delivery Model of Agroecological Zones.

We believe that our commitment to transformation is guided by affiliation to good governance. We have promised, MEC for Provincial Treasury as instructed. Thus, department's quest for clean audit remains on course, as we continued to sustain unqualified audit opinions in the past five years, with continuous reduction in matters of emphasis from the Auditor-General. The department continues to put credible systems of internal controls that ensures credible financial reporting, reliable performance reporting against predetermined objectives and compliance with laws. We believe that the allocated budget of R370 634 000 will enable us to strengthen our organisational capacity in the coming 2024/25 financial year.

During the 2023/24 financial year, the Sustainable Resource Use and Management Programme was bolstered by allocation of R15 428 000 for LandCare to curb natural resource depletion and build the adaptive capacity of our farmers to the effects of climate change.

This budget allocation led to the following achievements: Construction of 25 km of fencing to improve agricultural productivity; rehabilitation of 2 559 ha from land degradation; and 1 405 ha of alien and invasive plants, as well as bush encroachment. Furthermore, the department was able to cultivate 454 ha under conservation agriculture practices, while 905 producers implemented climate smart technologies.

These achievements contributed to the department's creation of 1 284 work opportunities in the Expanded Public Works Programme, with a budget of R8, 593 000 in the 2023/24 financial year. In the 2024/25 financial year, the department has allocated R13, 480, 000 to the LandCare Programme to further efforts of to combat soil erosion and improve agricultural productivity.

To deal with the consequences of industrialised agriculture, serious attention must be paid to advancing ecological approaches to sustainable agriculture. This includes greater focus on alternative energy, soil quality, minimum tillage, and other forms of conservation farming. The effects of climate change continue to weigh heavily on farmers. During January 2024, the province experienced above-normal rainfall, which was counteracted by the frequency of heat waves during the summer months.

It is times like these that, as a caring government led by the ANC, we should undoubtedly and strongly support our farmers. In November 2023, the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development convened a Provincial Climate Smart Agriculture Dialogue to address the challenges created by climate change.

It is with great honour to introduce to this august House, Ms Rosa Ramaifadi, [APPLAUSE] who is a small-scale farmer and agroecology advocate, who said, "The climate is not going to go back to normal. It's us who should go back to normal so that we can help the climate go back to normal." Rosa encourages her community to use climate-smart farming methods to produce their own food and sell the excess harvest. Ms Ramaifadi is pioneering indigenous farming for community resilience. Her farm is based in Onverwacht - Dalmada, Polokwane City Municipality in the Capricorn District. Let us give her a round of applause. [APPLAUSE]

Despite the challenges posed by climate change in the agricultural sector, as a caring government we extended support to farming communities through the subprogrammes of Sustainable Resource Use and Management Programme and continued to reinforce our participation in various research initiatives that promote the role of sustainable production strategies in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Through this programme, 875 farmers were assisted in line with the department's priority of reducing vulnerability and risk associated with climate change. There are 600 ha of land cultivated under conservation agriculture practices, and 69 infrastructure projects have been completed. More than 1 200 jobs created, ensuring that the producers are resilient.

In the 2024/25 financial year, the department has allocated the Sustainable Resource Use and Management programme a budget of R125, 449, 000. This will also enable the department to provide relief measures to mitigate the predicted unusual extreme weather conditions and assist farmers negatively affected by natural strains such as drought and veld fires.

Notable progress has been achieved regarding our transformation agenda by providing support to smallholder producers and subsistence farmers through our Agricultural Development and Producer Support programme. During the past year, the department increased participation of producers in the integrated value chain through support of 8 700 producers across various agriculture commodity groups.

To date, the department has managed to support 13 298 producers across various agricultural commodity groups, 4 598 above the target. In the coming financial year, 2024/25, the department has targeted increased participation of producers through the integrated value chain by supporting 9 414 producers across agricultural commodity groups. Furthermore, we fulfilled our 2023/24 commitment to capacitate farmers by training 3 829 producers through demonstrations and farmers' days, an overwhelming achievement against our plans.

During the 2024/25 financial year, the department will capacitate 1 500 farmers through demonstrations and reach a further 1 349 through farmers' days. To alleviate poverty in households, a total of 4 539 subsistence producers were provided with mechanisation support through government and contracted tractors to cultivate land in communal areas for food production. However, our intentions to increase support to smallholder producers and subsistence farmers were negatively impacted by the volatile price escalation of inputs, especially fertilisers, due to the Russian-Ukraine conflict and other global and national market turbulence. To maximise skills and knowledge, a total of 1 586 producers were capacitated in the 2023/24 financial year, and 1 000 farmers will be capacitated in the 2024/25 financial year through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support programme.

Honourable Members, among the key deliverables of this Agricultural Development and Producer Support Programme is the revitalisation of small-scale irrigation schemes. As we pronounced in the 2023/24 Budget Speech, notable progress has been made in four irrigation schemes through the revitalisation of infrastructure development. The development of the Mogalatšane Irrigation Scheme infrastructure is 100% complete and 40 ha are now planted with cotton. I must repeat. The development of the Mogalatšane Irrigation Scheme infrastructure is 100% complete and 40 ha are now planted with cotton.

Significant progress has been achieved at the Hereford Irrigation Scheme, owned by the Tafelkop Farmers Association. A total of 15 producers each received a full support package of an irrigation system. The development included bulk water supply and in-field irrigation system development, the establishment of shade nets covering one he per plot, the refurbishment of the packing facility, the construction of ablution facilities, and a storage facility to ensure compliance with South African GAP market requirements.

The Hereford Irrigation Scheme is redesigned to allow a free flow of water to reduce electricity costs and improve profit margins of farmers. Phase 2 of the project involves the development of a further 16 plots with one ha shade nets and a packing shed to be implemented in collaboration with the national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. The department will continue with the provision of extension and advisory support to increase production and off-take on this scheme.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the 2023/24 financial year, a total of 43 irrigation infrastructures have been developed. In the 2024/25 financial year, a total of other 34 vegetable and 5 fruit production projects will be supported with irrigation infrastructure. The production of cotton at irrigation schemes in the Sekhukhune District, namely, Zamerkomste, Readira Baswa, Dichweung and Swara O Tiiše Molemi is also progressing well. Seasonally, an average quantity of cotton produced is 400 tons, with more than 300 jobs created.

In the 2023/24 financial year, a total of 33 irrigation projects costing R107 million and benefiting 188 small holder farmers were completed, creating 99 jobs. In the 2024/25 financial year, a total of 36 irrigation projects will be implemented benefitting 257 small holder producers with an injection of R100 million and creating 603 temporary job opportunities.

In the 2023/24 financial year, a total of 399 ha was cultivated as part of the Sekhukhune cotton cluster development, and 133 producers received training in cotton production, thanks to the department's collaboration with Cotton SA and the Agricultural Research Council. This intervention has greatly increased the knowledge and skills base of cotton producers and is aimed at achieving market access breakthroughs. In the 2024/25 financial year, producers in the cotton production cluster will be supported with mechanisation to cultivate 250 ha of cotton in partnership with Cotton South Africa.

In the year under review, 250 breeding livestock and 10 000 fish breeding stock were earmarked for distribution to farmers to improve production. Two hundred breeding livestock and 10 000 fish breeding stock were distributed to farmers to improve production, respectively. During the 2024/25 financial year, the department will provide 200 breeding livestock through the departmental livestock loan scheme and departmental livestock resale scheme. In the 2024/25 financial year, the Farmer Support and Development programme has been allocated R759,217 million, which constitutes 42,6% of the departmental Budget. This budget includes allocations for farmer support programmes and projects, ranging from agricultural infrastructure and equipment for primary and secondary production activities, production inputs, food security initiatives, mechanisation support to farmers, and capacity building.

The department further envisages reviewing the farmer support policy to ensure that subsistence farmers are not subjected to the normal application process. We will continue to improve the application process and requirements of farmer support programmes to ensure that more farmers access our support. This includes supporting farmers from the planning stage and assisting with the acquisition of legislated requirements such as water rights.

Our Veterinary Service programme is our testimony to eradicate animal diseases, particularly livestock disease control, and further demonstrates our intention to address all aspects of production, value adding, and market access. Foot-and-mouth disease continues to threaten the livelihoods of our livestock farmers, not only in the Limpopo Province, but also the broader livestock industry in South Africa, which affects the export of red meat. However, we can confidently announce to this House that the province has been FMD free for the past 24 months. We want to thank MEC Sekoati for allocating funds to address FMD. You know what devastation FMD can cause. [APPLAUSE]

In the 2023/24 financial year, over 40 000 cats and dogs were vaccinated during the rabies month in September 2023, achieving the targeted mass vaccination of 70% of pets in the province. In August 2023, for the first time in the province, the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak was detected in the Waterberg District. However, the impact of this outbreak was contained and eradicated by our dedicated personnel of veterinarians and extension officers. Thus, we confidently report that we have reclaimed our agricultural production status free of FPHI.

To continue with the implementation of the above stated interventions and other key priorities, which are critical to ensuring a disease-free environment and meat safety for public consumption, the Veterinary Service Programme has been allocated R193 million, an increase of R77 million to enable FMD interventions. Once more, thank you, honourable MEC for Provincial Treasury.

MB Waite, an American Agriculture Scientist, in his paper, The Importance of Research as a Means of Increasing Agricultural Production, writes, “The great new feature of modern progress in agriculture is the rapid increase in the utilisation of science and the results of scientific research as a source of information and guidance in improving and perfecting agricultural methods.” In this regard, the department is enhancing its research output by initiating a programme to revitalise the two agriculture research stations in the province, including infrastructure development and human resource capacity.

The Mara Research Station is currently the hub of livestock breeding and a major source of our livestock distribution in the Farmer Support Programme, while Towoomba Research Station is conducting various research projects in plant production. Thus, the department is setting aside R87,521 million for research and technology development to render agricultural research services and develop information systems about agricultural and natural resource utilisation technologies.

In the Budget Speech of 2023/24, we introduced to this august House our adopted slogan of “Evangelising agriculture and food production to be a culture by all, no longer just a leisure for some.” As part of spreading this evangelism, the department, through the Agricultural Economic Services Programme, hosted a Revitalisation of Agriculture and Agroprocessing Value Chain Summit (RAAVC).

The RAAVC Plan’s intention for the aspiration of the people of Limpopo is to contribute meaningfully to the expansion and increase of agricultural production across the value chain, and in turn, the sector’s inclusive growth, job creation and food security as

espoused in the Limpopo Development Plan, Limpopo Socioeconomic Recovery Plan and the Agriculture and Agroprocessing Master Plan (AAMP).

Since 2021, RAAVC has been allocated R80 million, and the projects still under development include Majeje Citrus, Zebediela Citrus, Magadimane Citrus, Tafelkop Farmers Association, Potato Belt and the cotton cluster. The success of the RAAVC plan depends upon the participation by all critical stakeholders in the sector. Going into the 2024/25 financial year, about R31 million is available for the continuation of the implementation of the RAAVC plan. Hon Speaker, I would not like to bore you with the details of each individual project, which are tabulated in my speech.

The Agricultural Economic Services Programme also includes the development of the cannabis plant production and the agroprocessing part of this new industry. Thus, I am delighted to share with this august House that the coordination and facilitation of the support of the Cannabis Master Plan, as committed in the 2023/24 financial year, has progressed fairly well, and the implementation of the Cannabis Master Plan will be intensified in the coming financial year. A lot has commenced on the ground, including the establishment of the Limpopo Cannabis Forum, which is in its final stages. We shall further intensify awareness on hemp or cannabis and provide support to prospective producers with licensed applications across the province.

The Agricultural Education and Training Programme demonstrates our commitment to agricultural education, in addition to other policy interventions, and our resolve to build a prosperous and inclusive agricultural sector. As part of expanding our agricultural evangelism to schools, the MEC for Education, Hon Lerule-Ramakhanya, in the 2023/24 financial year, together with our sister Department of Education, committed to work closely on identifying mechanisms to support the eight agricultural schools in our province.

It is worth noting that Agriculture, as a school subject of choice is beginning to take the spotlight among the new generation across the province. This school subject had long been termed “unattractive and for the lower class, not for the youth.” The department has since profiled the eight agricultural schools, and stakeholder consultative meetings are ongoing to establish funding sources for school farms and agricultural equipment. In the meantime, the department has assisted Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural High School with shade nets and drip irrigation, while Merensky Agri-Academy was assisted with animal feeds.

In the 2024/25 financial year, eight agricultural schools will be assisted with production inputs and EPWP workers to establish and maintain food gardens. Dimani Agricultural High School and Merensky Agri-Academy will also receive support through the construction of broiler houses and the supply of production inputs. [APLLAUSE]

Prof Wale Zegeye of the University of the Free State’s Agricultural Economics Department writes in the January/February 2022 edition of *Water Wheel Magazine*: “The youth have a crucial role to play in South African agriculture and ensuring that the nation has enough food. But while the country needs more food producers, its farmers are ageing. The average age of South African farmers is 62, despite the fact that young people, those between the ages of 18 and 34, make up a third of the population.” However, the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

has been deliberately investing in youth in agriculture since 1994 to mitigate the challenge identified by Prof Zegeye, through programmes such as young farmer awards, placement of graduates to farms, reopening of agricultural colleges, and provincial and district young farmers associations.

Thirty-years later, we are proud to join President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa by introducing some ambassadors of our democratic dispensation in the province, our Tintswalos. Kholofelo Kenneth Malatji, grew up in a rural area called Moletjie in Polokwane, Limpopo. He is very passionate about agriculture, particularly livestock. He developed a love for animals from a young age because he was a herd boy for his grandmother's cattle and goats. He completed matric in 2009 at Khaiso High School, then went to study BSc Animal Health at North-West University from 2010-2013, which was funded by the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Kenneth embarked on an academic journey fuelled by a profound curiosity about infectious diseases, particularly in the realm of virology, and is currently a PhD student focusing on Foot-and-mouth disease. I think he is amongst us. There he is. [APPLAUSE] That is our Tintswalo.

Dumisani Elmon Sibuyi, born on 25 April 1988 in Acornhoek, Bushbuckridge grew up in Folovhodwe Village, Vhembe District, where he completed his secondary education at Thengwe Secondary School. Whilst in Grade 12, being amongst the top 10 achievers, Sibuyi refused to apply for any field of study except agricultural studies. He told his teachers that he wants to be an engineer for farmers. The teachers would tell him that such a course does not exist. O tšwa kgolekgole kua. Barutiši ga ba tsebe gore go na le thuto ya Engineering. In 2005 he applied and received a bursary from our departmental bursary programme to pursue his passion at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He completed his Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering in 2010 and started working at the department as a candidate engineer. In 2023, Mr Sibuyi was appointed as the Director of Engineering and Infrastructure Development Services. Mr Sibuyi, please rise That is another Tintswalo there. [APPLAUSE] The department will continue to encourage our youth to participate in the Limpopo Youth in Agriculture Network Portal, to ease their frustrations. This app will become a lifeline for many who are suited for the agricultural sector.

In the 2024/25 financial year, this youth employment initiative will absorb 135 unemployed graduates with agriculture qualifications, an increase of 20 from the cohort absorbed in the previous year, thanks to AgriSETA's contribution of R2,4 million.

This cohort will be placed in various commercial agricultural enterprises across the province for two years to gain work experience. Furthermore, 68 graduates who recently completed the programme will undergo four weeks of training in enterprise development.

This educational effort to improve skills in the agricultural sector extends to our continued investment in the two Agricultural Colleges and the revitalisation of the two Agricultural Research Centres in the province. Since the reopening of Madzivhandila and Tompi Seleka Agriculture Colleges in 2015, 288 students have graduated, and currently, we have enrolled 80 students for 2024 academic year. In the 2024/25 financial year, the department is investing R149,031 million to cater for, among others, the two agricultural colleges in the province that provide student academic programmes, college infrastructure revitalisation and learnership programmes.

The department continues to integrate rural development as cross-cutting element of all the programmes and projects to address rural poverty effectively through integrated agrarian transformation and strategic investment in agricultural infrastructure that will benefit farmers in rural areas. Thus, R6,287 million has been allocated to cater for the administration and coordination of rural development activities in the department.

In summary, the overall Budget for Vote 04, the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, is R1,782,612 billion. The Budget is composed of an equitable share allocation of R1,461,652 billion and conditional grants amounting to R320,960 million. The overall departmental Budget has increased by R11,826 million, which is almost a 0,7% increase year-on-year.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Hon Premier, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, for giving me the opportunity to serve the people of Limpopo in the Provincial Cabinet. Let me also acknowledge the support of the Chief Whip of the majority party, Hon Mokgonyana. We also give thanks to the guidance of members of the portfolio committee and Scopa, through their respective chairpersons, Hon Jerry Maseko and Hon Donald Selamolela. Thanks to my colleagues in the Executive Council (EXCO) for the great team spirit. I also want to thank the former Head of Department, Ms Ramatsimela Maisela for holding the fort and providing strategic guidance and leadership during the past 10 years.

Furthermore, thanks to our acting HOD, Mr Jethro Nowata, the executive management, and the entire workforce of the department, the agriculture evangelists. My heartfelt appreciation to all our farmers for continuing to work the land 24/7, feeding the people of Limpopo and South Africa, and sharing our produce with the world. Let me not forget to thank the people of Limpopo by quoting from the book of Ecclesiastes 7:8: "Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." Special thanks to my family; my wife Ms Rabbie Mokone, and my two children Lethabo and Matome, for their support and allowing me to serve the people of Limpopo. I don't take it for granted. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

The Budget Speech for Vote 04, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and other supporting documents are referred to the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural development for further scrutiny and reporting back to the House. Thank you very much.

8 ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE SPEAKER

Are there any announcements? Hon Chair of Chairs, you are recognised.

THE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. Lunch is arranged by the department. Guests of the department should receive tags at the entrance of the municipal Chamber, while other guests should proceed to the designated lunch area. Thank you.

9 ADJOURNMENT

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Chair of Chairs. The House is adjourned to Tuesday, 19 March 2024, at 10:00, at Polokwane Municipal Council Chamber. The House is adjourned.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
POLOKWANE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHAMBER
TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you, you may all be seated. Hon Premier, Members of the Legislature, honourable Members of this august House, Chief Whip of the majority party, Chair of Chairs, Deputy Chief Whip, members of the SAPS, members of the opposition, good morning and welcome to our Sitting. Let's proceed with our programme.

Honourable Members, we are going to defer items 2–5 on the Order Paper in order to allow all Members of the Executive Council to finish the presentation of their Budget Speeches.

[ITEMS 2–5 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITH NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

We may now move to the next item.

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

Are there any tablings of committee reports, other reports and papers, honourable Members? There are none.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1 Motion for the Third Reading of the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Bill, 2024 [B01-2024]

Honourable MEC for Provincial Treasury, you may take the podium.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. I hereby move that the above-mentioned Bill be read for the third time in terms of those provisions mentioned above. I move accordingly, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. Is there any seconder? Hon Lebea, you are recognised.

MS LEBEA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the motion as raised by the MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Sekoati. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. We may now move to the next item.

**7.1.1 Third Reading of the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Bill, 2024
[B01-2024]**

We shall now adopt schedule by schedule of the Bill. Those who agree will say, "Yes" and those who disagree will say, "No".

Schedule 01: Appropriation of the Budget amounts of money?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Schedule 02: Amendment of schedules?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Schedule 03: Short title?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

We shall now adopt vote by vote of the Bill. Those who agree will say, "Yes" and those who disagree will say, "No".

Vote 01: Office of the Premier?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 02: Limpopo Legislature?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 03: Department of Education?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 04: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 05: Department of Provincial Treasury?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 06: Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 07: Department of Health?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 08: Department of Transport and Community Safety?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 09: Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 10: Department of Sport, Arts and Culture?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 11: Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA)?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 12: Department of Social Development?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

We shall now call upon the Secretary to read the short tittle of the Bill. It's over to you, Secretary.

MS MAKGATO [ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARY]

Thank you, Hon Speaker. This Act is called the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Amendment Act, 2024. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Secretary. We shall now proceed to the next item.

7.2 Second Reading: Presentation of Budget Votes and Schedule of the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B02-2024]

7.2.1 Budget Speech Vote 08: Department of Transport and Community Safety

We shall now call upon the MEC for Transport and Community Safety, Hon Radzilani to the floor.

THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

(Address by Ms F Radzilani, MEC for Transport and Community Safety)

Thank you so much, Hon Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, Reneiloe Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker, Hon Matibe Tshitereke; my colleagues in the Executive Council under the Premier, Hon Stanley Chupu Mathabatha; Chief Whip and the Deputy Chief Whip of our Legislature; chairperson and members of the Portfolio Committee on Transport and Community Safety; Chair of Chairs and the Deputy Chair of Chairs, honourable Members of this august House; HOD for the Department of Transport and Community Safety, Mr Stephen Matjena; management of the South African Police Service in Limpopo, under the stewardship of the Provincial Commissioner, Lt Gen Thembi Hadebe; CEO of GAAL, Ms Mokgadi Matli; pastors who are in our midst; leadership of the department's fraternal organisations, viz., the South African National Taxi Council, National Taxi Alliance and the Road Traffic Management Corporation; leadership of the South African National Small Bus Operators Council; chairpersons of the community policing forums and the community safety forums; our distinguished guests and government officials in the public gallery; people of our beloved Limpopo province, who are accessing this Sitting through various platforms; members of the media; ladies and gentlemen, a blessed morning to all of you.

Hon Speaker, this, being a year of elections, which happens on the 30th anniversary of our democratic state, it is imperative that we must start from where it all began.

In doing so, it would be impossible not to draw on the inspiration from the fond memories and guidance of our forebears who laid the foundation stone to the freedom and democracy we enjoy today.

The memory and spirit of Tata Nelson Mandela, Albertina Sisulu, Mama Lilian Ngoyi, Peter Nchabeleng, Elias Motsoaledi, Happy Joyce Mashamba, "Pharephare" Mothupi,

and many other gallant freedom fighters, on whose shoulders we stand and remain a singular lodestar to the future we seek for our children.

As descendants of these great heroes and heroines, the great grandchildren of King Hintsa, Sekhukhune, Makhado, Ngungunyane and others who resisted conquest and dispossession, we commit ourselves, Hon Speaker, never to betray their legacy.

In their names and in the name of the cause for which they dedicated their lives, we promise to stay true to the ideals of our battle call, by forever emulating their vigour and indomitable spirit.

As we conclude “what was an illustrious” term of office, it can only be correct that we use the significance of this occasion to highlight the strides that have been underscored since 1994.

I invite you, honourable Members, to join me in this journey as I try to narrate the road we have traversed together, and how we negotiated its high-pitched bends and descending slopes, together.

As I begin doing so, allow me to replicate what the Premier, Hon Chupu Mathabatha did on the occasion of his State of the Province Address, when he reminded all of us about the decisive steps which this ANC-led government took since 1994, in the face of high levels of squalor and dilapidation we found upon taking the reins of power.

May I again remind you that we took over government in 1994 at a time when all of its focus and services were dedicated and tilted in favour of the white minority. Through sheer force of legislative power and persuasion, we managed to broaden the scope of the inherited state to work inclusively for the benefit of all its citizens, black and white.

Hon Speaker, it is not a secret that during apartheid, the majority of government services were tailor-made to benefit the chosen minorities, hence we are not surprised that to this day, they still have a warped sense of entitlement, and would do everything possible in their powers, to cast doubt and aspersion on the commitment of this government to serve our people.

In the past 30 years, we have connected more households to the electricity grid, than the apartheid government had, in the more than 300 years that it ruled this country.

Today, we are confronted with power generation challenges, only because we have increased the access to electricity for the majority of our citizens. This was a privilege only for white people.

We have widened water provision to our communities, like never before, and where there are challenges, we are always the first to interface with our communities to untie possible bottlenecks.

The narrative of creating an equal society has also helped us in the fight against gender-based violence and femicide because our children are no more viewing the world through the eyes of masculinity.

During his State of the Nation Address, President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa impressed upon us the several measures that government has introduced to combat gender-based violence and femicide, and how it provides better support for survivors of such violence.

We are gradually eradicating gender stereotyping, not as an act of favour towards women, but because we believe in the fundamental ethos of social justice.

Like never before, our collective actions have led to a greatly transformed public service in terms of gender, as today we have more females occupying senior management positions in both government and the parastatals.

Over time, the number of women lawmakers has also increased in our Legislature. Our Executive Council consists of nearly 50% representation of women. This by any standard cannot be a mean feat, as we are counted head and shoulders above some of the so-called matured democracies.

We have crossed the rubicon, and we can hear the sounds of the bleating goats, the wailing cows and the barking dogs, because our destiny is on the horizon. The winds of economic growth are starting to blow, and all the boats are set to start sailing, as we focus on a trajectory of rebuilding the economy.

Hon Speaker, together, we have seen the worst, and together we have seen the best, and in all of these, we held each other's hand, and sang, "We shall overcome."

As we cast our eyes behind us and reflect on the insurmountable challenges that we have conquered, we all agree that this ANC-led government has outdone itself to serve this country and her people.

Despite the enormous challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, that confront our people, we have built sound socioeconomic policies that are meant to cushion our people from these hardships.

Through our numerous efforts of stabilising the economy by crafting bespoke policies, we have caused some serious dents on the country's poverty levels. Under an ANC-led government, our people have borne witness to an unprecedented rollout of services, irrespective of their residential location or socioeconomic background.

During the years of apartheid, rural communities would have been very privileged to have a tar road or a telephone line, because by sheer luck, it would have been passing through their village to a farm owned by a Meneer Van Tonder or Meneer du Plessis.

Hon Speaker, we inherited a province that was demarcated according to ethnical lines, because the apartheid government's spatial arrangement had thought that by discarding us into tribal homelands, we would grow apart and dislike each other.

The apartheid government had made all mannerism of attempts to confine black people in spaces and pockets of our land, which were deemed not arable for any form of development. This also, we overcame.

Despite managing this country's transition flawlessly and peacefully, our detractors are still adamant that we can't run a successful election after the many elections that we have conducted in the past 30 years. Our revolution and transition would have taken a different posture and format, if it was not for the ANC's distinct leadership. Hon Speaker, today, as we forge ahead with the process of reclaiming back our land, and reversing the ill-fated thuggery that was the 1913 Native Land Act, we do so with boundless joy and little remorse.

We have witnessed the ramifications of land dispossession towards the welfare of our people, and we rely on the sacrosanct wisdom of the ANC-led government as we discharge a process to correct this crime against humanity.

We have built the most solid constitutional democracy, with its founding principles being nonracialism, non-sexism and the yearn to create an equal society for all. Our democracy counts amongst the best in the world, surpassing even some of the countries that have gained their independence from the aggressive colonialists, decades before our 1994 watershed moment.

We are unflinching on these achievements of building a free and democratic society, that is the envy of the global community. It is our wish that the same freedom and democracy that we are currently basking in, should be experienced by other nations throughout the world.

Hon Speaker, it is for this reason that we are unrepentant in our stance that the people of Palestine and the Western Sahara must also be reprieved from the same oppression that we experienced many years ago. In the words of former American President, Abraham Lincoln, "Those who deny freedom to others, do not deserve it, for themselves."

The peace and stability that we have crafted over the years, is the envy of the global community, and it is our desire in the interest of the realisation of African Renaissance, that our sister countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, could also attain the same levels of tranquillity. Indeed, we shall overcome.

Hon Speaker, we are not only good story-tellers, who craft speeches to narrate and soothe the ears of our listeners, but we are notable implementers of change in the lives of our people.

Our service delivery record speaks volumes, is unmatched and second to none. Where we made promises, we will surely deliver, at the right time, to the deserving citizen, at the right cost to government.

Our efforts of building an inclusive economy were hugely undermined and dealt a severe blow by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are still reeling from this disruption, and just like many other trepidations that we have endured, this one too, we overcame.

Hon Speaker, last year we came into this august House to give an account as the Department of Transport and Community Safety on how we intended to serve the people of Limpopo.

Today, almost a year later, we have convened in this Legislature precinct to report back to our people about the strides we made in our resolve of creating safer roads and communities.

With an estimated allocation of R2,611 billion, which is a reflection of a growth of 5,1% from the 2023/24 financial year, this department has been charged with the mandate of overseeing and managing the Gateway Airports Authority Limited, coordinating public transport operations, promoting road safety and supervising police functions in the province.

The increase in the 2024/25 financial year allocation is an intervention mechanism to inject funds into the Bus Subsidies Programme, and assist the Gateway Airports Authority Limited in its management of the Polokwane International Airport and adjacent facilities in the province.

Honourable MEC for Provincial Treasury, as the main contributor to the provincial revenue, we envisage to collect in excess of R2,794 billion over the 2024 Medium-Term Expenditure period. The inception of the new registering authorities in Lephalale, Polokwane, Makhado and Tzaneen will be a “jerk in the arm” towards the realisation of this goal.

We are alive to the challenges that are confronting our people, of poverty, inequality and unemployment. We have tailored our programmes to wage a battle against these anomalies. We have made a special provision of R25 million for the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) as a way of fending our people against poverty and unemployment.

As a department, we have curated a myriad of EPWP opportunities in the fields of Records Management, Road Safety Ambassadors, Young Civilians on Patrol and the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Programme as a way of creating employment for our youth.

We made a huge dent against unemployment, and we can only hope that the little wages drawn from these programmes will help our young people to look for other jobs or develop themselves further.

I'm now coming to the programmes of the department. We are on programme 1: Administration. Hon Speaker, with an allocation of R600 million, this programme is the heart-beat of the department as it oversees its day-to-day management. This equates to 23% of the total Budget of the department.

The amount of R330 million of this goes towards compensation of employees, which is a growth of 5% from the 2023/24 financial year. This is mainly due to our ability to fill most of the vacant positions from the 2023/24 financial year.

Hon Speaker, last year, in this august House, we made a commitment that all the critical vacancies, which are key towards the realisation of the department's service delivery objectives, will be filled.

This is a moving target because with each employee that gets promoted to a senior position, they leave a vacancy behind. Around April last year, we commenced with a recruitment process to identify 150 learners to be included in the Traffic Learnership Programme.

This process was conducted meticulously. It succeeded in identifying candidates from the poorest of the poor backgrounds, who are now at the Limpopo Traffic College, in Manenu, in the Vhembe District.

Upon completion of this learnership programme, these learners will, in all likelihood, be absorbed as part of the workforce of this department. Hon Speaker, this injection will positively impact on our endeavours of heightening road safety, as it is likely to increase officials' visibility on our roads.

In order to create a capable state that will discharge its service delivery mandate to our people with distinction, we will not overlook skills development avenues and initiatives for the department's workforce.

We constantly workshop our senior management personnel, and fine-tune their administrative skills to assist them to implement fundamental policy directives.

Our recruitment endeavours are biased towards women and people with disability because we are alive to the existing barriers that have shaped the workplace to be unfavourable for them.

We continuously assess the targets that we have set for ourselves, and there has been a remarkable progress that has been made to this end. We have set aside an amount of R192 million for contractual obligations such as cleaning services, security management, office space, procurement of machinery and equipment, government vehicles and other transversal services.

An amount of R8 million has also been set aside for maintenance and repairs to ensure that our buildings are compliant and fit for human occupation. On programme 02: Transport Operations, the budget for this programme increases from R932 million in the 2023/24 financial year to R1,065 billion in the 2024/25 financial year, which represents a growth of 14,2%.

This significant growth is due to the funding of the Bus Subsidies Programme and transfers to the Gateway Airports Authority Limited. For the 2024/25 financial year, GAAL has been allocated an amount of R127 million, which is also allotted towards the attainment of the targets set within its turnaround strategy.

Hon Speaker, R74 million of this amount is for capital expenditure, repairs, maintenance and upgrade of the airport's infrastructure. This will also assist the airport to comply with the regulations of the South African Civil Aviation Authority, and to improve services to attract more users and operators at the airport.

Hon Speaker, we have held several engagements in the Executive Council to ponder various ways and means to assist GAAL to attain a state of financial sustainability. A turnaround strategy has been formulated, and it is our firm view that if properly implemented, this entity will attain an optimal level of self-sustainability and become a dominant player within the provincial aviation space.

We shall continue with our engagements with the Maruleng Local Municipality, the national Department of Transport, the Department of Defence and Military Veterans, and other critical stakeholders to repurpose the Eastgate Airport in Hoedspruit.

Engagements are at an advanced stage to acquire an international operating licence for this airport. Hon Speaker, once concluded, this will open a seamless flow for both passengers and agricultural products between Maruleng and other parts of the globe.

In the 2024/25 financial year, we will also review and update the Provincial Freight Strategy, which was last developed over a decade ago. We have also made an allocation of R16 million for the remedial work on the Thohoyandou intermodal facility.

This funding should help us unlock a long-standing stand-off between government and the public transport operators in Thulamela who could not use this facility because of structural defects.

We have resolved to continue work on this facility, while a litigation process is underway to recoup the moneys that government paid to the contractor. The subsidies we provide within the public transport fraternity have lessened the burden of transportation costs on our people as they traverse between their homes and workplaces.

We are doing this because we are dealing with the ramifications of apartheid's spatial planning, which has thrown our people on the periphery of economic zones. Without this subsidy, millions of our people would not afford transport services, which are essential to their livelihoods.

We have spent around R2,8 billion on bus subsidies in the past 5 years, and we remain committed to continue with this programme to assist our people in these tough economic times. We have set aside an amount of R833 million for the Bus Subsidies Programme for the 2024/25 financial year.

This industry has helped in the creation of around 2 000 jobs in the form of drivers, cashiers, dispatchers, bus washers, inspectors and clerical staff within the 18 bus companies involved in the subsidy scheme. There are more jobs which are also created within the value chain, like petrol attendants, security personnel and vendors at bus terminals.

In our quest to transform this bus subsidy regime, to allow new entrants and create a much healthier competition within the market, together with the Council for Science and Industrial Research, we will finalise and implement the new service contracts and rationalise the old contracts.

The department has set aside an amount of R5,3 million, in the 2024/25 financial year, to promote openness and transparency in the processing of applications for public transport operators.

Through the provincial regulatory entity, the department will continue to oversee and monitor public transport affairs in the province, and ensure a fair balance between the need and demand for public transport services in specific areas.

As we discharge this function, we do so with diligence and utmost care to ensure that there will be no tensions and conflicts between operators across the province.

We are sustaining our relations with the South African National Taxi Council because we are alive to our commitment of ensuring a peaceful taxi industry. It is these good relations we have maintained with the taxi industry that have yielded positive tranquillity in the industry thus far.

Hon Speaker, may I dare reiterate that the issuing of new operating licences is dependent on the conclusion of Integrated Transport Plans by the municipalities.

These plans spell out demand and the supply imperatives, modes of transport, networks and flows, terminals, economic nodes, including route descriptions, which are informed by the actual movement of people and goods, within a defined municipal area.

For more route-based operating licences to be issued, it is therefore critical for all municipalities to speedily conclude their Integrated Transport Plans. We are, therefore, making a clarion call to municipalities to set aside resources to prioritise the development of their ITPs.

For the 2024/25 financial year, we have allocated an amount of R5 million to assist the Maruleng Local Municipality in the Mopani District to develop its ITPs.

We have also received financial assistance from the national Department of Transport to develop plans for the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality. This must be concluded before the end of March 2025.

A process is underway between us and the Polokwane Local Municipality because they also have approached the department with a view to finalising their ITP processes. We will work hand in glove with all municipal councils in the province to finalise this process because they are the planning authorities.

Hon Speaker, we are on programme 03: Transport Regulations. The budget for this programme increases to R881 million, which represents a growth of 3,7%, for the 2024/25 financial year.

This growth caters for the Expanded Public Works Programme, social sector grant to fund the stipend for point duty officers, revenue enhancement projects, revitalisation of the Limpopo Traffic Training College and the revamping of the K53 projects in

Seshego and Thohoyandou. Our core mandate as a department is to promote and ensure road safety for road users.

Hon Speaker, we have decreased road fatalities by 9% from 1 238 fatalities in the 2021/22 to 1 164 fatalities in the 2022/23 financial years, respectively. We are hopeful that this number will drastically reduce as we conclude our report for the 2023/24 financial year. However, I must forthrightly register our concern in this august House that we have seen a spike in the number of passengers and pedestrians that are becoming victims of road accidents. This is a worrying observation, and as a department we shall be amplifying and heightening our road safety messages towards passengers and pedestrians, as they are the hardest hit members of our society. We have also seen a pattern of motorists who wantonly fail to stop after hitting pedestrians on our roads.

We have adopted a strategy of placing traffic officials on systematic intervals to ensure maximum police visibility as a way to mitigate against road fatalities. Our attempts continue to yield results, but there are some unfortunate instances where human behaviour by road users, defeats our efforts.

We had multiple crashes that led to numerous fatalities in this previous financial year, and most of them were as a result of human behaviour. Speeding accounts to the majority of crashes on our roads, which means that some of these crashes were avoidable.

Sometime around September 2023, we lost over 20 lives at once in an accident that involved workers of the Venetia mine in Musina. There had been several others which resulted in multiple fatalities, and what is more saddening is that in some incidents, family members perished together.

In the 2023/24 financial year alone, we have conducted over 13 000 speed operations, over 3 000 drunken driving operations and over 600 000 vehicles were weighed at our weighbridges.

Hon Speaker, we are a department at work, and we have stopped over 2 million vehicles on the provincial roads to ensure that they adhere to the traffic regulations and their drivers are also fit for purpose. To ensure compliance with the National Road Traffic Act 93 of 1996, we have conducted 450 compliance inspections in all the testing centres. Our road safety campaigns are putting concerted efforts on interactions with schools.

We have conducted over 4 700 awareness campaigns in the 2023/24 financial year to educate road users about road safety. To improve the living conditions of traffic officers undergoing training at the Limpopo Traffic College, we have completed the construction of the 37 bed Block B dormitory.

Progress on the Block C dormitory, kitchen and canteen is also underway, and we have also impressed upon the contractor, the importance of having these facilities concluded timeously. The department will continue to implement the National Traffic Contravention Management System to capture traffic summons. An amount of R8

million has been set aside for the implementation of technology in traffic law enforcement.

Hon Speaker, this innovation includes the utilisation of hand-held devices which will be linked to the National Traffic Contravention Management System. In other words, officers will no longer issue traffic summons by hand, instead they will use gadgets which will automatically transfer the information to the system.

This will eliminate human error, possible acts of corruption and will also reduce the time spent to capture the infringement notice. We will also implement a programme called Radar Speed Solution, in all the major provincial routes. This solution will be omnipresent. It will capture speed without officers and will increase voluntary compliance by motorists.

We are in the process of appointing an additional 128 road safety ambassadors who will be deployed to minimise pedestrian accidents and assist in alleviating traffic congestion in busy intersections.

This will add to the current 178 to make the total number of road safety ambassadors to 306 throughout the province. [APPLAUSE] In monetary terms, we have set aside close to R13 million for the finalisation of the Block C dormitory, the kitchen and canteen at the Limpopo Traffic College.

An additional R25 million has also been set aside for the construction of the K53 centres in Thohoyandou and Seshego. An amount of R6 million has also been allocated for the continuous maintenance of all traffic facilities, with the Grobler's Bridge weighbridge and Lephalale Provincial Traffic Station getting the bulk of this allocation.

Hon Speaker, we are on programme 04: Provincial Secretariat for Police Services. This is our last programme. Hon Speaker, this programme increases from R56,6 million in the 2023/24 to R63,7 million in the 2024/25 financial years, respectively, which represents a growth of 12,6%.

This programme monitors and oversees the effectiveness and efficiency of the South African Police Service and how it administers its compliance with the Domestic Violence Act and reacts to incidents of gender-based violence.

The allocation caters for the stipends of community structures such as community police and safety forums, crime prevention through Environmental Design and Young Civilians on Patrol. These stipends are funded through conditional grants and equitable shares.

The department has on its records over 400 Young Civilians on Patrol (YCOP) distributed throughout the province at all police stations.

This is an Expanded Public Works Programme, whereby the young people conduct patrols in their respective residential and business areas, under the supervision of SAPS members.

Hon Speaker, an amount of R4,5 million was budgeted for the project, and the participants receive R400 per patrol as a stipend.

We have also made an allocation of R3,161 million for crime prevention through Environmental Design programme. This programme focuses on mitigation factors to eliminate security risk of environmental design.

Hon Speaker, the department also conducts regular crime awareness campaigns in the form of workshops throughout the province to address rural safety with emphasis on stock theft, drug abuse and crimes against vulnerable groups. Together with our community structures, we continue to wage a ferocious war against the drug trade and use within our communities.

The only way to nab drug peddlers is to swell ground with community structures, such as community police and safety forums in order to identify the traders, and intercept their operations.

Through the assistance of these structures, police have registered impressive successes and have arrested numerous king-pins, and the conviction rate is also notable.

Our fight against gender-based violence will never cease until we record a complete state of zero occurrence, where women and children will always feel safe. We are reengineering our approach in the fight against crime and drug use in the province.

As we draw towards the end of the sixth provincial administration, I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of Limpopo for placing their trust in the African National Congress as a leader of their government.

Together we have walked this journey, and we have turned darkness into light. We have dreamt together, cried together, laughed together, created memories together, and together we will stroll this journey towards building a better life for all mankind.

Hon Speaker, in conclusion, I also want to thank Hon Chupu Mathabatha, who is our Premier, for the 11 years that he held the fort as the Premier of this province. A lot has been said about his impeccable leadership, and we can all wish him the best in his future endeavours.

To my colleagues in the Executive Council, just like Apostle Paul in the book of 2 Timothy 4:7 who says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith," we also have fought a good fight, we have finished the race, and we have kept the faith.

To the chairperson, Hon Rebecca Seono and all members of the Portfolio Committee on Transport and Community Safety, receive my warmest messages of gratitude on this occasion for being the guiding light and a constant reminder that, at the heart of our services, must be a yearn to spend public funds in a transparent and accountable manner.

To Members of this august House, let us continue to utilise the Legislature as a site of

struggle to help our people to attain a better life.

To my political party, the African National Congress, a leader of this society, I want to send my sincerest gratitude for being honoured with this deployment, and in the true spirit of servanthood, I surely hope that I executed this task to the best of my ability.

To the head of department, Mr Stephen Matjena, members of his executive management and the entire workforce, our job will remain incomplete until we reach a state of no fatalities on the roads.

To the leadership of the South African Police Service, I want to say that I salute you. Since I joined the Department of Transport and Community Safety, you have always been available to give support and to render services in such a way that we give the best to the people who voted us into power.

Hon Speaker, pending that, we will have to “keep on, keeping on”. To my family, my husband Apostle Azwihangwisi Stanley Radzilani and our children, you remain the wind beneath my wings.

Hon Speaker, we operate by hope and faith for a better tomorrow. As long as we have hope, we shall not despair, and renege on our commitment of building a better life for our people. When everything seems hopeless, hope becomes our only strength.

There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, no tonic so powerful, as an expectation of something tomorrow. Great hope makes great men and women. Hope is praying for rain, but faith is bringing an umbrella.

Hon Speaker, I, therefore, table this Budget Vote 08 of the Limpopo provincial Department of Transport and Community Safety for the 2024/25 financial year.

I thank you, and may God bless South Africa. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. The Budget Speech for Vote 08: Department of Transport and Community Safety is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Transport and Community Safety for consideration and report back to the House. We may now proceed to the next item.

7.2.2 Budget Speech Vote 06: Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism

We shall now call upon the MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Hon Monama to the podium.

THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIROMENT AND TOURISM

(Address by Mr G R Monama, MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism)

Speaker of the Legislature, Hon Reneiloe Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker of our Legislature, Hon Tshitereke Baldwin Matibe; Premier of our province, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha; Leader of Government Business, Hon Seaparo Sekoati; fellow honourable Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the majority party, Hon Essob Mokgonyana; Deputy Chief Whip, Dr Sekutu Monicca Mochadi; Chair of Chairs, Hon Nkome Sarah Monyamane; Deputy Chair of Chairs, Hon Che Bonnie Selane; chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Hon Mapula Annah Mokaba; honourable Members of this august House; leaders of various opposition parties; our esteemed district and local Mayors present; distinguished Council Speakers and Chief Whips present; leadership of the ruling party, the African National Congress; our esteemed traditional leaders and Your Royal Highness, Director-General and all heads of departments present here today, provincial Commissioner of the Provincial Service Commission, Mr Magerule Daylor Sekonya; Provincial Commissioner of SAPS in Limpopo, Lieutenant-General Thembi Hadebe; chairpersons and board members of the public entities, Limpopo Economic Development Agency, Limpopo Gambling Board and Limpopo Tourism Agency; chairpersons and board members of our subsidiaries; Head of Department and accounting authority, Isaiah Matodzi Rathumbu; and platoon of executive management echelons, SABC regional manager, Mr Oupa Mamabolo; leadership of organised business and labour; captains of the industry; members of the media; people of Limpopo province; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, ndi matsheloni. Avuxeni. Thobela. Lotjhani. Good morning.

First and foremost, I seize this opportune opportunity to express my profound sense of gratitude to be afforded time to table this Budget Speech Vote 06 of the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, which takes place against the backdrop of the country celebrating epoch-changing 30 years of democracy.

We humbly convey our heartfelt gratitude to you, Hon Speaker, Hon Rosemarry Molapo, who, throughout the Sixth Administration, managed to maintain the decorum and presidium of this august House. You proved beyond doubt to be a phenomenal woman of substance and fortitude, a leader par excellence.

We are taken back to the fanfare and jubilation as thousands of millions of South Africans casted their votes in the first ever democratic elections, held after many years of oppression and colonisation meted out against the black people, and Africans in particular.

We also remember with bittersweet memories of how the Premier of Limpopo province, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, was brought home to lead the province when the material conditions on the ground dictated for such a change.

The Hon Premier rolled his sleeves, pulled the strings together and corrected the fault lines, all these to the dismay of the armchair critics and the naysayers who had their fingers crossed that the Premier would not succeed.

Undoubtedly his unparalleled work ethics and unmatched commitment to the construction of the developmental society placed him in the high-performance zone of public administration. Our province is indeed honoured to have an exceptionally outstanding and remarkable leader of his calibre leading transformation trajectory.

He is an exemplary leadership which addressed most of the overwhelming challenges that the province faced, knowing fully well that they are formidable, but not insurmountable. If he is not exceptionally talented, then the meaning of exceptional talent should have changed.

As he descends the stage, we are proud of the strides the province made under his judicious stewardship. Under him, we built a positive economic trajectory that continues to impress and make the people of Limpopo province to be proud citizens. Indeed, a good actor knows when to leave the stage, while at the top of their game.

We shower you with kudos and accolades for having created a beautiful history and narrative that astonishes the world. You are indeed a truly impeccable human being of individual excellence.

We say so because you are a unique rarity and a fine specimen of human eloquence who touched and inspired us. Your unparalleled leadership qualities give you unassailable credibility and unimpeachable integrity.

This world needs people like you, who are principled and selfless, who add value to the people and organisations they serve, strategist extraordinaire, erudite intellectual and consummate academic. Farewell, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, Morwaswi a Molea, you have done your part.

Honourable Members, as we reflect on the 30 years of freedom and democracy, one draws inspiration from a song composed by the legendary Brenda Fassie in 1989, four years after the longest serving president of the ANC, Oliver Reginald Tambo declared 1985 as the year of youth.

The lyrics to the song, "Too Late for Mama" read as:

"Ten kilometres barefooted in the bush;
Started raining on the way to fetch some water;
Poor woman had a baby on her back;
Was struck by a lightning;
On the way to fetch some water;
She tried hiding under the tree to save her child;
Poor woman had no place to go;
Lightning caught her with her baby on her back;
Friends, relatives ran for her;
It was too late, too late for mama."

It is in this context, honourable Members, that we need to ask ourselves important and relevant questions, what if Brenda Fassie was still alive and had an opportunity to compose a song about the struggles of the black majority in our country. Would she still write the same lyrics? The answer is without doubt "No".

The story of Tintswalos and the lyrics of the Brenda song are two sides of the same coin, the bad as created by the atrocious apartheid system and successes and opportunities brought by the ANC-led government, which has qualitatively changed the lives of ordinary people for the better.

This ANC-led government is poised for development trajectory that reflects the steady progress in infrastructure investment, building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with improved access to social amenities which is a precursor for sustainable livelihood.

This Budget Speech must be understood in the context that we have comprehensively identified the substantial progress that the ANC-led government has made since 1994 democratic breakthrough as well as the overarching challenges that still need to be overcome, as well as bringing concrete intervention measures in meeting the objectives of rolling back the quagmire of triple challenges which are poverty, unemployment and inequality.

This Budget Speech cannot be defined by hope alone but evidence of ANC-led government at work and in action. It is this government that brought hope to the hopeless and the same government that humbles itself that a lot still needs to be done to complete the course of freedom as Vladimir Lenin, former chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of the Soviet Union, always reminds us that only he who never does anything never makes mistakes.

Albert Einstein is on record as having said, "Everything that is really great and inspiring is created by the individual who can labour in freedom. Nothing is as precious as one's freedom. Dreams, aspirations and ideals mean nothing if one does not have freedom to pursue them."

Hon Speaker, in terms of the programmes under LEDET, we are on Economic Development programme. The department is explicitly outlining a multi-pronged turnaround strategy of propelling our province to the highest socioeconomic trajectory and accelerating our economic recovery through Limpopo Socioeconomic Recovery Plan and Industrial Masterplan, by implementing economic reforms aimed at creating sustainable jobs and driving inclusive growth.

Hence, the provincial economy showed good resilience in the last two quarters of 2023 and it is expected to continue with this growth performance. According to the latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey released by Statistics South Africa, Limpopo province recorded a decrease of 1,5% points in official unemployment from 30,8% to 30,3% between September 2023 and December 2023.

Although this is a drop in the ocean, given the myriad of economic challenges we face, it presents a glimmer of hope that tomorrow will indeed be better than yesterday. Limpopo province led the pack on economic recovery from the devastating impact of COVID-19 with 200 000 new jobs created between 2021 and 2023.

Limpopo's economic trajectory is steadily changing for the better, and it must be underpinned by our people acting together to intensify the reconstruction and recovery project.

Ladies and gentlemen, it must be stated that small, medium and macro enterprises (SMMEs) play a key role in the economic growth of any country. It is a fact that most, if not all, world's progressive economies are succeeding off the backbone of SMMEs.

These SMMEs help to improve the standard of living and lift individuals, families, and communities out of abject poverty. In the year under review, the department committed R10 million towards the support of SMMEs and cooperatives in the urban, township and rural areas.

We are fully committed to the implementation of the Limpopo Township and Rural Economy and Cooperatives Plan. To this end, R500 000 was spent on the Township and Rural Business Support Strategy, benefitting 100 entrepreneurs across the five districts.

The department is also mainstreaming the coordination of enterprise development and support where collaboration with the public and private enterprise development institutions is prioritised. The department also concluded a partnership, in line with social compact that President Ramaphosa has signed with the private sector, with Coca-Cola Beverage South Africa (CCBSA) with the aim of complementing the Business in a Box programme.

Through this programme, 52 youth-owned enterprises were supported with mobile kitchens, fully furnished with stock, equipment, and tools to strengthen their retail businesses.

Honourable Members, in the 2024/25 financial year, the department will continue with the designed Limpopo Township and Rural Business Support Programme to strengthen and empower local enterprises (SMMEs and cooperatives) with access to funding opportunities, and business operating equipment to increase their capacity to conduct business more effectively and efficiently.

We will support 100 entrepreneurs in pursuance of Limpopo Township and Rural Business Support Programme. The department will continue mainstreaming the coordination of enterprise development institutions to leverage available resources from both the public and private sectors to contribute towards the support of local entrepreneurs with emphasis on the targeted groups which are youth, women, people with disability, and military veterans.

Furthermore, the department will continue to collaborate with Coca-Cola Beverage South Africa (CCBSA) and support 40 enterprises from the township and rural areas in the next 2024/25 financial year. The department also conceptualised a programme designed for youth graduates with technical skills and aspire to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.

The impetus on the implementation of this programme is on leveraging available resources, both technical and financial from all relevant stakeholders inclusive of the

institutions of higher learning such as TVETs, universities and technical training institutions, development finance institutions, and enterprise development institutions.

In our endeavour to capacitate and develop our local government, the department initiated the LED capacity-building programme in collaboration with Salga, municipalities and the University of Johannesburg to empower LED practitioners who are municipal councillors and officials in Limpopo province with requisite economic development acumen to effectively and efficiently develop and support enterprises to contribute towards growing the local economies. This will continue in the 2024/25 financial year with the additional 75 LED practitioners standing to benefit, and the support is valued at R1,6 million.

Hon Speaker, according to Stats SA's provincial GDP experimental estimates released in September 2023, the provincial economy grew by 1% in 2022. The province's economic contribution to the national economy grew from 7,3% in 2013 to 7,7% in 2022.

This is a positive sign of growth and improvement, and as the province, we are optimistic that the long-term industrialisation measures put in place will continue to yield better results and a desired change in the structure of our economy.

Hon Speaker, cognisance should be taken that the province held a successful third edition of its Investment Conference, which is aimed at promoting, encouraging and optimising private sector investment in the province. The partnership with private sector is critical towards the realisation of an industrialised and inclusive economy.

The conference achieved investment pledges amounting to R37,45 billion by the private sector to propel our provincial economy to a higher growth path. These investments cover mining, manufacturing, energy, health, agroprocessing, ICT, infrastructure and property development.

We are pleased to report the benefits we derive from the investment conference such as:

- Bolobedu Solar Farm PV at R2,4 billion;
- Powgex Energy at R5 billion;
- Samancor Chrome Solar Energy Plant at R2 billion;
- Lephalale Solar Plant at R1,56 billion; and
- Limpopo Academic Hospital at R4 billion.

The province is well in progress towards the refurbishment of our industrial hubs. Through partnership with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), we are committing R49 million towards the refurbishment of industrial parks and the digital hub.

There is a hive of activities in Seshego Digital Hub to realise this, and the work will be completed by the end of this calendar year. We take pride in the construction of the digital hub in our province, as it will serve as a training centre for community members, provide access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities and enable incubation for mainly young entrepreneurs operating in the ICT sector.

Unlocking of all the blockages like the approval of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Township Establishment is creating a conducive environment for the roll-out of Musina-Makhado and Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZs. These are catalytic projects which seek to diversify the economy and to reverse the decline of local manufacturing and most importantly, promote reindustrialisation through deeper levels of localisation and export.

In terms of the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone, the designation phase is completed and has begun with the implementation of bulk infrastructure projects such as internal roads and stormwater on the north site. Despite the teething challenges, the entity is working around the clock to ensure that bulk infrastructure is put in place and ready for investors. During the 2023/24 financial year, MMSEZ initiated the implementation of the internal roads and storm water project at a total budgeted value of R200 million. Progress on the project is currently estimated to be 25% complete. During the 2024/25 financial year, the following multi-year projects will be implemented:

- Electricity lead materials;
- Bulk electricity infrastructure;
- Internal roads and stormwater
- Bulk wastewater infrastructure;
- Bulk water supply; and
- Security perimeter fence.

The estimated value of these projects is R760 million, and R300 million is allocated for the 2024/25 financial year. Bulk infrastructure development at the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park is at the planning stage. The entity commenced with the technical and financial assessment preliminary due diligence processes on the investment companies keen to locate on the SEZ land.

Currently, there are 37 companies on the investment pipeline with a combined investment value of approximately R56,6 billion. We have since submitted a business case to DTIC for designation of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park so that it becomes a fully-fledged special economic zone.

The engagement with the Mining Equipment Manufacturers of South Africa to build manufacturing plant to produce mining equipment will create tens of thousands jobs as well as the supplier base to our more than 55 Platinum Group Metals mines in the province.

These special economic zones have been tailor-made to ensure that the province becomes a honeycomb that attracts investors from far and wide. As economic game changers, these mega high impact projects will certainly change the socioeconomic landscape of our province.

It is through these projects that we will succeed in our aspiration of benefiting the minerals that are now exported in raw form into various products such as stainless steel, battery parts and energy products.

Honourable Members, it is noteworthy to mention that the Limpopo province has a competitive advantage of having industrial parks that we are busy ramping up a revitalisation programme. These industrial parks remain a breeding ground for industrialists.

The industrial parks will assist us to respond to the economic disruptions and restore the economy to inclusive growth through their revitalisation and expansion of broadband access to low-income households and the youth entrepreneurs.

The department runs what we call a manufacturing support centre through the Limpopo Tooling Initiative, which is situated in the Nkowankowa Industrial Park. The centre is equipped with state-of-the-art machinery to develop tooling skills aimed at broadening and strengthening the manufacturing sector.

In the previous financial year, the centre managed to develop ten apprentices into becoming qualified artisans, and in the coming financial year, six apprentices will be capacitated to become Tool, Jik and Die artisans.

We are guided by the wise words of Amilcar Cabral who once said, "Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for things in anyone's head, they are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children."

All these structures, which are the provincial Liquor Board, Appeal Tribunal and Local Liquor Authorities, are duly constituted and operational. In the 2024/25 financial year and over the MTEF, the department continues with:

- Education and awareness on the sorghum beer permits which was introduced by the Limpopo Liquor Act of 2009 as amended by the Limpopo Liquor Amendment Act of 2015.
- Education and awareness on the conversion of old liquor licences, licences which were issued in terms of National Liquor Act , 1989 (Act 27 of 1989), to corresponding licences issued in terms of the Limpopo Liquor Act.
- Establishment and ensuring the functioning of the Limpopo Provincial Liquor Council to deal with any regulatory matter concerning the liquor industry and liquor licences in the province.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are on course with the implementation of the Limpopo Business Registration Act, 2003 (Act No. 05 of 2003), and Limpopo Business Regulations of 2015 to encourage legality of the business operations and compliance with the applicable laws.

In line with the Act, the MEC as the Executive Authority for LEDET is responsible to assign and designate municipalities as business registration centres in the province in terms of section 126 of the Constitution. To date, a total of 18 out of 22 local municipalities have been designated as such.

The continuous engagement is taking place with the remaining four municipalities that are not yet designated as business registration centres, such as: Polokwane,

Mogalakwena, Fetakgomo-Tubatse, and Blouberg Local Municipalities. This will assist them to generate their own revenue, Hon Leader of Government Business.

The assignment of municipalities as business registration centres will assist in improving the regulatory environment for businesses in their jurisdiction to maximise economic growth and developmental opportunities.

Hon Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, we are on Environment and Tourism. Despite the prevailing resources constraints, the overall environment sector performance continues to improve, with 854 EIA applications finalised within prescribed timeframes as at the end of the 2023/24 financial year since the 2019/20 financial year.

However, there has been an insignificant decline in development projects finalised in the 2022/23 financial year from 213 in the 2021/22 financial year to 192 in the 2022/23 financial year.

The province has however, maintained its trend in respect of development investments projects estimated at approximately R15 billion to the economy, with a potential to create over 1500 jobs.

Honourable Members, the department completed the development of integrated waste management plans for seven local municipalities namely; Ephraim Mogale, Makhuduthamaga, Lepelle-Nkumpi, Mogalakwena, Thulamela, Musina, and Greater Giyani in the 2023/24 financial year.

This initiative will continue to strengthen the support to local municipalities to meet their service delivery obligations on integrated waste management. Furthermore, to enhance licensing of municipal landfill sites, the department is at the advanced stage of development of Engineers' Designs to the cost of approximately R28 million.

The Mogalakwena, Ephraim Mogale, Lephalale, Molemole, Thulamela and Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipalities are beneficiaries of this programme. All these municipalities will be responsible for the construction phase of the landfill sites.

In the 2023/24 financial year, the department implemented the greenest conservation, landscaping, tree planting and beautification. The following municipalities were rewarded for their participation and contribution to the project:

- Third position – Collins Chabane Local Municipality has been awarded R50 000 and certificate of participation.
- Second position – Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality has been awarded R100 000 and certificate of participation.
- First position – Polokwane Local Municipality has been awarded R250 000 and certificate of participation. [APPLAUSE]

Hon Speaker, the department is also committed to improved ambient air quality management, thus having identified projects geared towards improved functionality of ambient air quality monitoring stations at Phalaborwa, Steelpoort and Musina as required in terms of National Environmental Management Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act 39 of 2004).

The department has committed financial resources to support local authorities in the air quality management programmes. These include recapitalisation of their ambient air quality monitoring stations in Sekhukhune and Mopani District Municipalities.

Additionally, the department is progressing very well with the supply, installation and operationalisation, including the maintenance of the monitoring stations in Capricorn, Vhembe, and Waterberg District Municipalities.

The province is at an advanced stage towards the finalisation of the review of its Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), the process which will be concluded by the end of the 2023/24 financial year, followed by its implementation henceforth.

Honourable Members, the environmental management inspectors (EMIs) continue to ensure the realisation of the constitutional right to an environment that is not harmful to people's health or well-being and to protect the environment.

The department has conducted 2 240 compliance inspections, issued 302 administrative enforcement actions to date, and referred 42 environmental crime investigations to the National Prosecuting Authority for prosecution.

The fight against the increasing poaching of rhinos, lions, pangolins, unsustainable exploitation of fauna and flora, noncompliance to environmental legislation and other environmental crimes remain high on the government agenda.

The department continues to implement compliance and enforcement activities in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies.

Hon Speaker, biodiversity is globally identified as the cornerstone of socioeconomic growth and sustainable development. As one of the mega-biological diverse nations, Limpopo province must establish mechanisms in which biodiversity can be sustainably used to transform the economy and deal with the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Since the 2019/20 financial year to date, the department has created over 900 jobs through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in 25 nature reserves and other service centres across the province.

In addition, the department has created approximately 200 work opportunities in the biodiversity and conservation space in collaboration with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment through the Groen Sebenza programme.

Honourable Members, the 2023/24 financial year saw, the department implementing the revenue generating projects in the Limpopo wildlife resorts within some of the provincial nature reserves.

This is in the form of construction of new 20 bed tourist chalets in the Nylsvley Nature Reserve, new base camp facilities at Wolkberg Nature Reserve, the upgraded access road and chalets at Makutsi Camp in Lekgalameetse Resort.

The department also concluded the construction of new staff accommodation units in the Blouberg Nature Reserve to improve the standards of living for the staff who work tirelessly to protect our wildlife.

The department concluded the implementation of infrastructure maintenance projects through funding from the Department of Tourism at the following:

- Makapan Valley World Heritage Site (boardwalks, cave signage, office block and ablution facilities);
- Nwanedi Nature Reserve (reception area, ablution block and picnic area);
- Modjadji Nature Reserve (water infrastructure, office block and ablution facilities);
- Musina Nature Reserve (picnic area, ablution block, guesthouse to kitchen); and
- Blouberg Nature Reserve (camping site, canvas tents replacement and water infrastructure).

Hon Speaker, we are now coming to Great North Transport (GNT). The Great North Transport remains a critical enabler of economic activity within our province and a sole provider of cheaper and affordable public transport for the people of Limpopo.

In the 2024/25 financial year, the GNT will recapitalise through further acquisition of buses to ensure the availability and reliability of bus passenger transport for the economic participants, at affordable but sustainable prices. Furthermore, the GNT will be embarking on a public-private partnership, which is crucial for ensuring self-sustainability of the company.

The entity will continue with the implementation of the turnaround strategy to cement government's intention to reposition GNT to achieve its mandate to this end. A capital injection of R104 million was allocated to GNT for the acquisition of new fleet during the 2024/25 financial year.

The board and management of the entity continue to monitor the implementation of the turnaround strategy with the aim of ensuring that the utility becomes financially stable and sustainable.

In the 2024/25 financial year, GNT will develop a business case to create empowerment opportunities to local small bus operators to provide commuter services in unserved routes that are contracted to GNT but currently not being serviced.

Hon Speaker, we are now coming to Risima Housing Finance. Risima's partnership with CoGHSTA on the implementation of Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme (FLISP) product is continuing through various regional residential projects in the province. To this effect, there has been great progress on the implementation of FLISP with 147 participants having benefited from this product to a total value of R11 million to date.

In implementing the board's strategic direction, Risima entered into a partnership with other role players in the housing sector, particularly the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (DPWRI) to manage government's residential rental stock.

Risima and the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure have appointed a task team to do the following:

- Drawing a partnership agreement between the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and Risima;
- Performing or conducting a due diligence on the rental stock;
- Developing a sustainable rental portfolio;
- Developing a disposal strategy;
- Developing a Risima affordable special housing financing product; and
- Presenting a comprehensive business case to the Provincial Treasury.

The project will provide all government employees residing in Public Works buildings an opportunity to purchase such properties at an affordable tailor-made financial package, administered by Risima, and thereby encouraging home ownership.

Hon Speaker, we are on Limpopo Connexion. Limpopo Connexion as an ICT subsidiary of LEDA embarked on investment drive to secure an on-board strategic equity partner to expand the broadband network footprint in the entire province.

To date, two potential investment partners have been identified and will be appointed in the 2024/25 financial year, subject to the conclusion of a due diligence that yields positive outcomes.

The due diligence process is currently being conducted on the two potential investor partners. The appointment will, therefore, enable the expansion of the broadband services throughout the province.

Hon Speaker, we are on New Era. Limpopo Economic Development Agency as the main shareholder, recapitalised New Era life at an amount of R15 million, ensuring that its minimum capital ratio is met to ensure a total turnaround of New Era, into a sustainable financial services provider.

As such the turnaround strategy for New Era will be implemented in four phases:

- Appointing a strategic partner and capacitating the company's Limpopo office;
- Enhancing governance, opening five district offices, and implementing FinTech solution;
- Initiating employee benefits capacity, expanding short-term insurance licence, and opening offices in other provinces; and
- Entering the short-term insurance industry and becoming a partner in other financial services.

Honourable Members, Limpopo is endowed with mineral resources, but the fact of the matter is that we are confronted with a criminal phenomenon of illegal mining, otherwise called zama zamas, which is wreaking havoc within the mining communities, especially in the platinum belt of Sekhukhune.

The SAPS, SANDF and the Department of Home Affairs are actively engaged in Operation Vala Umgodi to combat the scourge of illegal mining activities effected by this criminal phenomenon.

The most devastating effect is that the money generated out of this activity is not accounted for, has negative impact on the provincial fiscus because of nonpayment of tax levies, and is mostly used to fund illicit and money laundering activities which pose a serious risk and threat to national security, Hon Radzilani.

We, however, applaud the good work done by the task team responsible for illegal mining which has so far recorded considerable progress in arresting the suspects and seizing the machinery used in the commission of this crime.

This task team comprises the South African Police Service, Department of Defence and the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy and the Department of Home Affairs, as alluded to above. Be that as it may, Limpopo province has given us mineral wealth under her belly to address the challenges we are faced with and create a better future for our people.

With our endowment with various minerals, the entire country is looking at us as a growth point. We are a beacon of hope in a moment of despair. Hon Speaker, we are on Corridor Mining Resources. For the upcoming 2024/25 financial year, Corridor Mining Resources managed to identify two strategic investors to develop the underground mining development for both Tshepong Chrome Mine and Fumani Greenstone Mine.

There will be opencast mining activities at the Tshepong Chrome Mine, which shall result in creating further employment opportunities for the nearest communities and the people of Limpopo province. These two developments will contribute towards the creation of employment and economic development that will empower the communities where the operations are situated.

Hon Speaker, we are on Limpopo Tourism Agency. Tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic whose outbreak was felt across the entire tourism value chain. The latest United Nation's World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) shows that international tourism has almost completely recovered from the unprecedented crisis of COVID-19 with many destinations in Limpopo reaching or even exceeding pre-pandemic arrivals and domestic trips.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is however important to reflect on what the status of the sector was prior the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest statistical results of the 2022 Domestic Tourism Survey indicate that a total of 33,1 million day trips and 23,2 million overnight trips were undertaken in South Africa with a total expenditure of approximately R41,2 billion, with Limpopo province becoming the most visited province.

The province attributes this speedy recovery to the partnerships with the private sector, which create experiences for the visitors. The Limpopo Tourism Agency, in partnership with LEDET, also worked hard around the recently launched Tourism

Equity Fund Strategy to ensure that Limpopo's emerging tourism product owners utilise this opportunity to advance tourism investment within the province.

It is in our conviction that this will accelerate local economic development that results in job creation, eradication of poverty as well as addressing inequality within our society. The agency is also engaging with all partners to utilise the available resources to assist SMMEs to participate meaningfully in the scheme to advance rural and township economy.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is worth noting that Limpopo province is home to the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park incorporating the Limpopo, Mozambique and Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe, providing cross-border excursions.

We pride ourselves on various activities within the Magoebaskloof area along the R71 Road, commonly known as the home of the silver mist with plethora of activities, ranging from hiking within the escarpment area.

It is in this part of the planet that one finds unique waterfalls, unparalleled topography with protea flowers and unique grass land ideal for photography tourism. The entity has made formidable progress in promoting major international flagship events that have been sustained over the past three years.

The LTA's partnership with the Sunshine Tour continues to grow in leaps and bounds to annually present a full lifestyle golf spectacle that showcases Limpopo's tourist attractions to local and international markets.

This has now given birth to another international flagship golf tournament hosted in partnership with Sunshine Tour and Skills Development Corporation (SDC) showcasing two internationally acclaimed golf courses of Zebula and Elements, respectively.

This was made possible because the events are co-sanctioned by both the Sunshine Tour and European Challenge Tour, which in our view is a boost to tourism in the province.

These two international events are covered on the SuperSport channel, reaching more than 35 countries, and providing Limpopo province a much-needed exposure and mileage, which boosts destination Limpopo as a brand.

The entity also assisted more than 553 SMMEs between 2019 to date, with marketing assistance to access the market in partnership with the national Department of Tourism, South African Tourism and both local and district municipalities.

This assistance has gone a long way in sustaining jobs created by the SMMEs as well as revenue generation whilst also contributing to the much-needed increase in tourist arrivals in the province, especially around rural areas. In terms of the projects and programmes under the agency, to date, Limpopo Tourism Agency has implemented 21 domestic campaigns.

The support of the Limpopo-based PSL teams is one of the major highlights which also brought about huge media and tourism transactions. These teams are Polokwane City and Sekhukhune United. We are giving them R1 million each so that they are able to bring the necessary support because they bring tourists and they are raising the flag of the province.

Honourable Members, the Limpopo Gambling Board is the flagship performer in the LEDET family. The board managed to achieve 100% of its performance targets as by the end of the third quarter.

It has also exceeded the revenue target which was adjusted upwards during the Budget Adjustment of the 2023/24 financial year at 82% being 7% above the norm of 75% by the end of the third quarter and it is hoped that the target would be achieved by the end of the financial year as well.

The entity managed to sustain maintained by sustaining clean audit outcome for the 2023/24 financial year. [APPLAUSE] The entity collaborated with the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation in promoting various awareness campaigns about responsible gambling and the treatment of individuals with gambling problems, including their families.

In addition to the 366 licensed gambling operators, 3 new corporate licences have been issued to date with 8 more licences to be issued prior to the end of the 2023/24 financial year. The issued licences contribute towards the promotion of the rural and township economy by creating jobs where the establishments were granted licenses.

Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen, the gambling sector is faced with the surge of illegal gambling sites which continue to pose a big challenge for the entity. This affects the financial performance of the licensed gambling establishments and eventually the levies and fees due to the entity are negatively affected.

This is further fuelled by the public participating in illegal online gambling on the internet. The province is also experiencing the proliferation of illegal gambling activities and the epicentre is the spaza shops, mostly situated in the rural areas, and mostly operated by foreign nationals.

As a mitigation measure, the entity embarks on public awareness campaigns to encourage the public to refrain from participating in illegal gambling and to gamble responsibly at licensed gambling establishments.

The entity is working with the South African Police Service in ensuring that illegal operators are arrested, and the illegal gambling machines are permanently removed from the public. In the current 2023/24 financial year, the entity, in collaboration with SAPS confiscated and destroyed 698 illegal gambling machines and 116 suspects were arrested.

Another challenge is the operations of illegal online interactive gambling sites which are operating without licence and masquerading as internet café. These illegal gambling outlets are usually operating at the premises situated in towns or shopping complexes, using computer monitors of which the location of the server is unknown.

For this mode of gambling, the entity depends largely on the police to collect any evidential material that will assist in closing the illegal gambling operations. The entity was able to raid 6 illegal online gambling sites and confiscate 329 computers.

The entity is conducting awareness campaigns to educate members of the public about illegal gambling and the consequences of participating in such activities, and in the current financial year, 57 campaigns have been conducted.

Honourable Members, the gambling industry is plagued with challenges of illicit exception. The LGB and the Financial Intelligence Centre are reviewing the current MOU to deal with these challenges.

In February 2023, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) issued a report announcing the greylisting of South Africa for failing to implement some anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing measures.

In a quest to address the areas identified by the FATF on strategic deficiencies, the LGB will collaborate with the Financial Intelligence Centre as part of the stakeholders the entity is working with mutually to progressively regulate the industry.

The gambling sector continues to lead the way in being the game changer in terms of job creation. So far, the sector employs 3 148 people. The multiplier effect of this goes a long way if one understands that one employed person in South Africa supports on average 5 family members.

We remain grateful to be associated with the sector because together we are transforming the formerly underdeveloped communities into centres of hope and change.

The Limpopo Gambling Board is currently collaborating with the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation (SARGF) whose role is to provide comprehensive free treatment and counselling services to individuals affected by disordered gambling, including addiction and provide programmes such as public awareness to educate the public but most importantly to educate the punters about the potential harmful effects of problem gambling, including training and wellness. The foundation also provides various research projects which inform its programmes and interventions across the sector.

We are also doing well in our CSI (Corporate Social Investment). The CSI projects by the industry focused on the priority outcomes as outlined in the NDP not limited to the ones mentioned as follows:

- Education: back-to-school campaigns focusing on school uniforms, shoes and science kits;
- Health safety and security: renovation by painting of Limpopo provincial hospitals;
- Economic growth and employment: recent Bamebelela Business Awards by Hollywood Bets that impacted positively on local SMMEs that received a total amount of R750 000 during the prize-giving ceremony; and

- Rural development: boreholes projects for historically disadvantaged communities in the various districts.

The licensees spent a collective amount of R3,562,356.11 by 31 January 2024 and are expected to spend R5,353,472 million by the end of the financial year.

Hon Speaker, we are on good corporate governance. As funds are appropriated by the Provincial Treasury, the expectation is the frugal and prudent utilisation of the public funds.

We are happy to report that during the 2022/23 financial year, the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism has once again managed to obtain clean audit opinion together with its entities, which are the Limpopo Gambling Board (LGB) and Risima Housing Finance. [APPLAUSE] We are doing very well on accounting on the finances. Over and above the oversight we get from the chairperson and the portfolio committee and Scopa, they are the ones that make us shine. We intend to sustain the status quo.

Ladies and gentlemen, for the 2024/25 financial year, LEDET is allocated a total Budget of R1,866,315 billion to implement all its priorities and targets as follows:

- Programme 1: Administration : R379,814 million;
- Programme 2: Economic Development : R978,338 million;
- Programme 3: Environmental Affairs : R398,298 million; and
- Programme 4: Tourism : R109,055 million.

Madam Speaker, included in the above departmental allocation are transfers to public entities as follows:

Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA)	: R834,656 million;
Limpopo Tourism Agency (LTA)	: R68,592 million; and
Limpopo Gambling Board (LGB)	: R82,864 million.

Hon Speaker, as I conclude, the people of Limpopo province have legitimate expectations of improved livelihood and dignity. Therefore, we are collectively indebted to work tirelessly towards deepening efforts to transform the economic patterns of the present in order to realise the set vision for the next five years of the seventh administration and beyond and to ensure that we place service delivery at the centre of transformation and development agenda.

The reality is that things have significantly changed, and there is now an urgent need for us collectively to find meaningful ways within this tight fiscal space, to boost the economy and protect jobs, curb poverty while reducing inequality.

Of course, we are subscribing to the wise words of our former President Thabo Mbeki who once said, "We are on course, steadily the dark clouds of despair are lifting, and giving away to the season of hope, our country which for centuries has bled from thousand wounds is now progressing towards its healing."

Indeed, the obstacles that hindered our economy will soon fade away like a morning dew disappearing into the air. We are the children of great warrior men and women who have never retreated. We are unconquerable and we will emerge victorious in this battle of pushing back the frontiers of poverty and underdevelopment.

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the Premier of Limpopo province, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, for the honour and privilege he bestowed on me as the Member of the Executive Council for the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, and for his sterling leadership and continuous support. As the Premier hands over the baton to the new Premier, we will always remain thankful for and appreciative of the sterling work he has rendered to our province. In the words of Nelson Mandela, when leaving public office, we say ndlela nhle, tsela tshweu. Ditlhokwa di go roballe, Chupu a Marema Dipekwa, Mmina Tlou. Thank you once more, Tlou ye kgolo for being the steward of public trust in our province.

I am also grateful to my colleagues in the Executive Council, especially in the economic cluster, who are committed to ensuring that inclusive socioeconomic transformation and industrialisation in Limpopo province becomes a reality.

Let me further extend my gratitude to the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, led by the chairperson Hon Mapula Mokaba, for the continuous and supportive oversight role that they provide over the department and its agencies.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the organisation that I belong to, the African National Congress, for bestowing me with the privilege to discharge my responsibility in the area of my deployment. I further extend my appreciation to the business fraternity for their desired financial commitments and support.

I would like to thank the Head of Department, Mr Isaiah Matodzi Rathumbu, and his senior management team, CEOs of our agencies and their senior management and all the officials in the department and agencies for their efforts and contributions in serving the people of our province.

I thank my family, especially my wife and my two boys for always being by my side even during the most difficult of times. The support that they provided me during this journey is worth its weight in gold.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC. The Budget Speech for Vote 06: Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism for consideration and to report back to the House. We may now proceed to the next item.

7.2.3 Budget Speech Vote 10: Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

We shall now call upon the MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, Hon Kekana, to come

and present the Budget Speech of the department.

THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

(Address by Ms N G Kekana, MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture)

Speaker of our Provincial Legislature, Hon Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker of the Legislature, Hon Tshitereke Matibe; Premier of our province, Hon Stanley Chupu Mathabatha; colleagues in the Executive Council, Chief Whip of the governing party, Hon Essob Mokgonyana; the Deputy Chief whip, Hon Mochadi; Chair of Chairs, Hon Monyamane; Deputy Chair of Chairs, Hon Che Selane; leaders of the opposition political parties, chairpersons of various portfolio committees, esteemed Members of this House, Provincial Secretary of the governing party, the ANC in absentia, Vhamusanda Reuben Madadzhe; heads of various departments and senior staff members, members of the various statutory and non-statutory bodies of the department, thobela.

Hon Speaker and the esteemed House, the Budget Speech Vote 10 of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is tabled during the month of March, when the country is commemorating Human Rights Month under the theme: “Three Decades of Respect for and Promotion of Human Rights.”

This year’s theme pays tribute to the 30th anniversary of freedom and democracy. The whole month of March is used to reflect on our achievements to promote respect for basic human rights and restore human dignity in line with the Bill of Rights.

Esteemed Members of the House and distinguished guests, as we gather here today to share this crucial Budget to the advancement of our sport, arts and culture in our province, it is imperative to recall the words of Nelson Mandela, who famously said, “To deny people their human rights, is to challenge their very humanity.”

In the spirit of Human Rights Month, let us honour the sacrifices made in the struggle for freedom and dignity, reaffirming our commitment to the principles of equality, justice, and respect for basic human rights.

Under the visionary leadership of our esteemed government, Limpopo has embraced the ethos of democracy as encapsulated in the words of former President Thabo Mbeki, *[sic]* who once stated, “We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender, and other discrimination.”

It is within this framework of liberation and empowerment that we approach the allocation of resources and the formulation of policies aimed at uplifting our communities.

At the heart of our political agenda lies the recognition of our shared humanity and the commitment to building a society where every individual has the opportunity to thrive. As we commemorate three decades of democracy, let us heed the words of Oliver

Tambo, who declared, “The fight for freedom must go on until it is won; until our country is free and happy and peaceful as part of the community of man, we cannot rest.”

Just as the late statesman Nelson Mandela again said, “We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.” The fight for freedom must go on until it is won.

This year's theme, “Three Decades of Respect for and Promotion of Human Rights” serves as a poignant reminder of our duty to uphold the values of freedom, dignity, and equality.

Aligned with our commitment to good governance and transparent leadership, the Budget allocations for the 2024/25 financial year echo the sentiments expressed by Desmond Tutu, who famously remarked, “We must be the change we wish to see in the world.”

With a notable increase in funding for the Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture, we reaffirm our dedication to nurturing talent, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting social cohesion.

These investments are not just financial; they are investments in the future prosperity and well-being of our province. We thank the Provincial Treasury for the increase, and hope for much more in the immediate future, so that more can be done.

Furthermore, our government's policies reflect a deep-seated commitment to social justice, gender equality, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination. In the words of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, “Women belong in all places where decisions are being made.”

Through targeted interventions and collaborative partnerships, we are steadfast in our resolve to create a society where every individual, regardless of gender, race, or background, has the opportunity to thrive.

As we embark on the implementation of the 2024/25 financial year Budget Vote 10 for the Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture, let us heed the words of Mahatma Gandhi, who said, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

Our efforts are guided by the principles of good governance, accountability, and effective service delivery, ensuring that every rand allocated is utilised judiciously to achieve tangible outcomes and meaningful impact.

As the Limpopo Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, we would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the 30 years of freedom and democracy by honouring and celebrating the strides achieved in unearthing and developing our artists and athletes.

In President Cyril Ramaphosa's 2024 State of the Nation Address (SONA), priorities in the realm of sport, arts, and culture emerged as vital pillars for national development and cohesion. Emphasising the transformative power of these sectors, the President outlined initiatives aimed at fostering inclusivity, creativity, and excellence.

From investing in grassroots sports programmes to supporting emerging artists and preserving cultural heritage, the government pledged to create opportunities for all citizens to participate and thrive.

Recognising the intrinsic value of sport, arts, and culture in promoting social cohesion and economic growth, President Ramaphosa underscored the commitment to ensuring their prominence in national policies and programmes, thus reflecting a vision of a vibrant and united society enriched by its diverse cultural embroidery.

Reflecting the ANC's vision, the address outlined comprehensive plans to bolster these sectors, emphasising inclusivity, accessibility, and excellence.

Initiatives were unveiled to invest in the establishment and upgrading of sporting facilities, arts centres, and cultural institutions, ensuring that communities across Limpopo have access to spaces that nurture talent and celebrate diverse cultural expressions.

Furthermore, in alignment with the ANC's emphasis on job creation and skills development, programmes were announced to support the growth of the creative industries, providing opportunities for artists, performers, and athletes to thrive and contribute to the province's economic vitality.

In his State of the Province Address (SOPA), Premier Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, underscored the ANC's commitment to harnessing the transformative power of sport, arts, and culture to build a more prosperous, united, and culturally vibrant Limpopo for all its residents.

BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR THE 2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR

The overall Budget allocation of the department for the 2024/25 financial year has increased from R621,816 million to R827,099 million or 33% increment if you would like, in the 2024/25 financial year as a result of additional and provincial priorities allocations under equitable share and a slight increase on conditional grants.

The Budget comprises equitable share allocation of R596,025 million, which takes 72% of the overall Budget and the remaining 28% to the amount of R231,074 million that is allocated to conditional grants.

Within the overall Budget, Administration has been allocated R200,270 million, Cultural Affairs getting R273,300 million, while Library and Archive Services receives R242,358 million and Sport and Recreation is allocated R111,171 million.

It has been a progressive 30 years in government, and since the department had been independent from the Department of Education in 1999, its Budget has been steadily increasing at an average rate of 14% per year simply because it has its work cut off.

There is more that could still be done. The allocated Budget exponentially increased from the amount of R33 million allocated in the 2001/02 financial year, to R549 million allocated in the 2022/23 financial year, and the 2024/25 financial year is now sitting at R827 million, as I have just mentioned.

The increase in the allocated budgets implies the department is enabled to roll out more social cohesion and nation-building programmes, including mass participation in sporting activities.

Over the past 20 years, the department collected more than R23,2 million in revenues as part of its contribution towards the provincial revenue fund. The revenue collection over the years improved owing to the annual flagship Mapungubwe Arts and Cultural Festival, which is the main source of revenue for the department.

Madam Speaker, let me take you and the House through allocations of each programme. Hon Speaker, we are on programme 01: Administration. The objective of the programme is to conduct the overall management and administrative support to the department. This includes the office of the MEC, office of the HOD, Corporate Services and Financial Management. A total budget allocation of R200,270 has, therefore, been set aside for this programme.

The Administration programme is wholly funded by the equitable share and takes 24% of the overall allocation. The funds have been set aside for the provision of administration services, including tools of trade for the provision of services in all programmes.

The department has once again obtained an unqualified audit opinion with matters for the 2023 audit period. The department is working tirelessly towards obtaining the unqualified audit outcome without matters. We are doing this through the implementation of the audit improvement plan together with the AFS preparation plan and the strengthening of the internal control systems.

Furthermore, for the year under review, the department has managed to pay 99,9% of valid invoices and claims within the prescribed 30-day period. This has contributed positively towards the sustainability of small enterprises, young entrepreneurs, and cooperatives.

In line with the provincial targets, the department is planning to increase procurement spent on black-owned companies to 65%, woman-owned companies to 45%, youth-owned companies to 30% and persons living with disability to 7%, and military veterans at 2%.

During the 2023/24 financial year, the department has committed to strengthening its human capacity through the filling of positions at senior management level. The department is at an advanced stage of filling the posts at key management level, thus maximising service delivery systems.

During the establishment of the department in the 2000/01 financial year, it had 172 filled posts on approved structure with staff at district and head office. As at the end of March 2024, the department's total workforce is constituted by 442 employees who are permanently appointed.

We are not resting as we approach the matter of employment as far as our department is concerned. Currently, we have at least 99 contractual posts that are filled in addition

to the establishment, appointed through the community library services and Mass Participation and Sport Development Grant.

The department is working tirelessly in reducing the number of contract workers and employing more permanent staff.

Through the two grants, the department is able to strengthen its capacity to deliver sport, recreation and library services. We currently have in our employ 2,2% as far as persons with disability are concerned, and we aspire to achieve the 4% target by 2026, and 7% by 2030 as directed by the national government.

We are at an advanced stage to close the gender parity gap as far as senior management posts are concerned. We are currently sitting at 42% of senior managers being women, which we are striving to ensure that we close the gap with the recent employment processes that are underway. Out of the total workforce of the department, 64% are women.

In ensuring that we create more opportunities for young people, the department is sitting at 24,5% youth employment, and aspires to do more in this aspect of recruitment to reach the standard of 30% by this new financial year. I have no doubt that we will reach that target.

Hon Speaker, we are on programme 02: Cultural Affairs. The objective of this programme is to promote arts and culture, conserve and manage the heritage, cultural and historical assets and resources of the province by rendering various services and hosting cultural events, while fostering social cohesion and nation-building.

The programme's objective also expands to the preservation and promotion of the languages spoken in the province, including the recently installed 12th official language, the South African Sign Language, as part of the heritage of its citizens. This programme has a total allocation of R273,300 million for the 2024/25 financial year, and it is funded from both equitable share and EPWP integrated grant.

The Cultural Affairs programme takes 33% of the total Budget allocation. Included in the allocation are costs related to Mapungubwe Arts and Cultural Festival buildups, and the Open-Air Music Festival, Ku Luma Vukanyi, maintenance of museums, Language Services programmes and ringfenced funds for the promotion and development of artists, commemoration of historic days, and the support of creative industry.

At the same time, within the allocation, an amount of R2,049 million is allocated for EPWP integrated grant.

In increasing investment in a large-scale social and economic infrastructure plan, this programme has received a major allocation for the construction of the much-awaited provincial theatre, which takes 73,2%. We are pleased that we are aligned with the priorities set by the President in making sure that we accelerate all forms of economic reforms to make sure that we invest in infrastructure, increase economic growth, create jobs and address the challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty. This

theatre will take three years. In monetary value, the project takes R200 million of the total programme budget.

We envisage to create job opportunities through its construction, and a more vibrant creative industry. This will also redress the unemployment as and when the project is completed. I am saying this precisely because we also have the job opportunities that will be created permanently so. We will have a book shop there.

During the 2023/24 financial year, the department successfully celebrated Freedom Day, Africa Day, and Heritage Day. Through these celebrations, the department was able to reach out to 13 000 persons, of whom 5 000 were for Freedom Day, 3 000 for Africa Day and 5 000 for Heritage Day.

During the celebration of the Heritage Month, the province collaborated with the national Department of Sport Arts and Culture by recognising the living human treasures that contributed immensely to the preservation of culture and heritage through their writing of books to share their stories and memoirs in promoting the African culture.

The living treasures honoured included, amongst others, Patrick Magaisa, a poet and an author in Xitsonga literature and Dr Thomas Hasani Chauke, a renowned Xitsonga musician. These celebrations continued to foster social cohesion and the promotion of national identity amongst the people of Limpopo.

In this commemoration of the national significant days, the department managed to promote local cultural and instrumental artists, crafters and poets who included also the elite artists of the province, Dr Winnie Mashaba, Pleasure tsa Manyalo, Maredi, Urban Matjila, Skomota and others.

The province also collaborated with the national Department of Sport, Arts and Culture in commemorating the National Reconciliation Day in Vhembe District, Thohoyandou, by ensuring that a total of more than 5 000 people are reached and that 350 artists are promoted through performances.

The department will continue to commemorate these historic days during the 2024/25 financial year. These commemorations are a platform for the artists to showcase their talents and unite our people towards a common vision of building a cohesive society which is free from racial and ethnic divisions.

Furthermore, the department is currently planning preparations for this year's Freedom Month celebrations which will be followed by Africa Month in the month of May.

These are the type of events that assist in realising social cohesion as espoused by the preamble of our Constitution. They also remind us of the struggles for liberation and the milestones we have gone through in the building of our democratic dispensation.

The department during the 2023/24 financial year has implemented the new model of Mapungubwe Arts and Cultural Festival with more activities which were spread beyond the month of December 2023.

History was made when we successfully implemented Mapungubwe Choral Festival, and the composer of the Mapungubwe song is here with us, Mapungubwe Open Air Concert, Youth and Divas Festival which was held in a dusty village of Ramotlogi in Sekhukhune, Mapungubwe Video and Film Festival, Exhibition of Crafters, Carnival Walk, Comedy and Theatre Night, and Mapungubwe Rugby Cup that was the ultimate event on 09 March 2024.

The Mapungubwe Arts and Culture programmes commenced in the five districts of the province where a conducive environment was created for 98% of our local artists to promote and showcase their talent through performances and exhibitions. The Mapungubwe programme currently encompasses all genres of the cultural and creative arts of the department and no longer a one-week festival.

In using Mapungubwe Arts and Culture programmes, the department had rolled out the Film and Video Festival by showcasing selected best films from the five districts which attracted an increased number of young people who were also trained in the making of films.

The developed filmmakers who showcased during the Mapungubwe Film and Video represented the five districts in filmmaking and are as follows:

- Makoma Mokgadi from Capricorn District in “Not my Black Card”;
- Musiwa Makombi from Vhembe District in “Ghetto Elim”;
- Matilda Matshwi from Mopani District in “Always and Otherwise”; and
- Thema Joseph from Waterberg District in “Tsharakano”.

We hope that in the coming instalment, artists from Sekhukhune District will also look to form part of the Film and Video Festival, so that all districts could have representation in the industry.

The department applauds the filmmakers in all districts for their passion, talent, and creativity in telling the stories of the rich heritage and culture of the province through films and documentaries. The making of local films is a building platform towards audience and content development for the full usage of the provincial theatre that will be completed by 2026.

The much-envisaged provincial theatre has a huge potential of creating job opportunities in the creative industry, such as script writers, stage managers, costume designers, sound engineers, producers, actors and many others in this sector, which will boost not only the creative economy but also the township economy holistically.

This industry also leads to the establishment of the provincial Limpopo Film Commission in partnership with the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) that will be used to promote and market Limpopo as a global destination for film production and facilitate investment in the film industry for the province and across the province as part of building a better nation and a better world. [APPLAUSE]

The commission will also be responsible to facilitate the exportation and importation of Limpopo films that tell the good stories of its heritage and culture. This responds well to priority 2 of the manifesto of the governing party in ensuring an increase in exports and imports to global and continental markets leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA), BRICS and other international investment platforms.

Madam Speaker, at the same time, the ruling party's chairperson for Sport, Arts and Cultural subcommittee, my predecessor, Hon Tandi Moraka, took a step to engage all artists in the creative industry this past weekend, in relation to the recently adopted Copyright Amendment Bill, and Performers Protection Bill. This will go a long way in the protection of their creative work.

Similarly, the Performers Protection Bill is earmarked to focus specifically on protecting the rights of performers, including actors, musicians, and other entertainers. It seeks to ensure that performers receive fair compensation and recognition for their contributions to artistic productions.

By engaging with artists and stakeholders within the creative industry, Hon Tandi Moraka and the rest of the ANC NEC led by President Cyril Ramaphosa, are demonstrating a commitment to promoting the interests of creators and ensuring that their rights are protected under the law. This engagement was crucial for fostering a supportive and sustainable environment for artistic expression and innovation.

Hon Speaker, during the 2023/24 financial year, the four theatre production houses from the province performed in the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in July 2023, and one of the plays received a standing ovation.

This is done through support provided to the creative industry. The implementation of the theatre, film and video productions is a preparation of audience development. A total of 1 300 artists will be supported with training and capacity building programmes, and 3 000 artists will be promoted through the implementation of government programmes.

As part of the promotion and preservation of our heritage and museums services in the province, the department has completed the state-of-the-art Schoemansdal Museum that has an exhibition centre that will serve as a gallery to exhibit the heritage objects, heritage publishing as well as art artefacts.

Hon Speaker, the museum is one of the provincial museums which are Dzata and Muti wa Vatsonga that are funded and managed by the department. The three provincial museums form part of the nine museums in the province that fall under the jurisdiction of local authorities except the three mentioned, which are provincial museums. The department is at an advanced stage to make the museums to be operational during the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

In this 30 years of democracy, the provincial heritage sites of the province prove to be playing a significant role in preservation of the liberation struggle, which is our history and heritage.

The national Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route project that is being implemented in partnership with the national Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is aimed at commemorating, celebrating, educating, preserving, conserving and providing a durable testament of the country's journey to liberation.

The province has identified Tshitangadzimeni Battle Field, University of Limpopo and Tjate Heritage Site as the provincial resistance liberation routes that will commemorate the province's history of the liberation struggle. To date, the department has completed the feasibility studies and implementation of the liberation routes in collaboration with the National Heritage Council which will be witnessed in the coming year.

On Language Services programme, amongst other things, our department is responsible for the promotion of all our provincial languages. In this regard, we want to take this opportunity to thank the President of our country for having signed the amendment of the Constitution to make the South African Sign Language (SASL) one of the twelve official languages in our country.

As Limpopo, we now have seven official languages, making us the most multilingual province in South Africa as reflected in the statistician general's 2022 report. It is important that multilingualism should be celebrated annually. If you are multilingual, you are never a stranger in your own country.

It is, therefore, important for me to congratulate our provincial ambassadors of multilingualism who at the recent language month event held in Durban, KwaZulu Natal by the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) won awards. They are the following:

Lutendo Mugagadeli (Venda boy Poet) and multi-award-winning, Xitsonga praise poet Masingita Shibambu (Ntombi ya Motsonga).

The department will continue to roll out the multilingualism promotion campaigns. In the 2024/25 financial year, the department has planned to implement 10 campaigns and promote indigenous languages.

Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) is a profound and widespread problem in the country and in the province. This scourge of gender-based violence and femicide is an unavoidable element that threatens the peace and stability of the province which we are striving to achieve through the approved Limpopo social cohesion and nation-building strategy.

We appreciate that the Justice Minister, Ronald Lamola, launched the first ever Sexual Offences Court in Vhembe in the outgoing administration. We will combat this pandemic until we are victors.

In the 2024/25 financial year, the department will increase the GBVF campaigns to 12 and community dialogues or conversations to 25, respectively, through theatrical performances to raise more awareness in remote communities.

Hon Speaker, we are on programme 03: Library and Archives Services.

This programme has been allocated a budget of R243,358 million in the 2024/25 financial year, in contrast to the R223,243 million allocated in the 2023/24 financial year.

The increase of R19,115 million or 8,5% will assist in ensuring an adequate budget is set aside under compensation of employees for librarians and library assistants who have now been appointed on a permanent basis. Library and Archives Services programme has been allocated 29,3% of the Budget as it is funded by both equitable share and conditional grant.

Within the allocations, an amount of R157,664 million is for a conditional grant, which constitute 65% of the total Budget for the programme and an amount of R873 000,00 is allocated for the EPWP social sector grant.

The budget will be directed towards the construction of new libraries, maintenance and repairs of existing libraries, buying of library books, provision of ICT infrastructure, free internet access to libraries, appointment of librarians, security services for all libraries and library general workers and R3 million allocated for EPWP model under equitable share.

In Premier Stanley Mathabatha's 2024 State of the Province Address (SOPA), there was a clear emphasis on elevating the status of sport, arts, and culture, alongside key infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing the province's cultural and intellectual landscape.

This commitment included plans to refurbish and modernise existing infrastructure, such as libraries so as to provide vibrant spaces for artistic expression and community engagement.

I am proud to report that the construction of Mulamula is progressing very well. To date, the construction is at 99,24% and the department is planning to make this long-awaited library to be operational during the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

During the 2024/25 financial year, the department will be continuing with the construction of four library projects at Vleifontein, Tshaulu, Botshabelo and Mampane. By the end of February 2024, Tshaulu was at 20%, Mampane at 50%, Vleifontein at 62% and Botshabelo is at 70%. These libraries are scheduled for completion in the coming financial year.

In this financial year, the department has commenced the planning on the construction of three new libraries at Bhungeni, Matlerekeng and Makhuva. The implementing agent, which is the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (DPWRI), has commenced with the procurement processes on the appointment of the contractors for these library projects, and the construction is expected to commence during the second quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

During the next financial year, additional maintenance will be done to 10 libraries and 09 upgrades to enhance their functionality. During the 2023/24 financial year, the department has procured 37 000 library materials and periodicals to increase the number of books in the libraries. The department has planned to procure another

25 000 library materials in this financial year and increase the number to 30 000 in the MTEF period.

In the coming financial year, the department will embark on rolling out library outreach programmes, which include the literacy programmes in all the five districts of the province. This programme will ensure an increase in library usage and making awareness to the public to use libraries as a safer space, thereby promoting nation-building and social cohesion.

In ensuring that each child is valued, respected, feels safe and secure, the public libraries have provided for learning and reading to the Early Childhood Development Phase through the establishment of the toy library. The toy libraries provide for early learning materials and a play-based early learning sessions for children to access learning and safer spaces for growth and development.

These include braille books and audio recordings of news articles. In the province currently, we have 19 libraries that are providing specialised services for the virtually impaired persons. We leave no one behind as we deliver services.

On Archive Services, I am pleased to report that our provincial archive is currently undergoing maintenance. The University of South Africa (UNISA) has been engaged to form partnership in relation to digitisation project which will commence in the 2024/25 financial year. The digitisation project will create a total of six job opportunities for our skilled young people in archival services to assist in the rollout of the project through the incentive grant of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

Our Oral History Programme is afoot in the process of recording the history of our renowned military veterans, who fought for the liberation and the democracy which we are seeing today.

The recordings of the oral history of our military veterans and traditional authorities, are preserved and archived as part of our rich heritage of the liberation route traversed. The department has planned to record and archive a total of 15 historical events of the military veterans and traditional authorities in the coming year for the preservation and celebration of the unique and diverse provincial history.

Furthermore, eight records and archive training will be conducted to government departments, local municipalities and traditional authorities to ensure compliant and excellent record keeping of the significant records of the province.

Hon Speaker, we are on programme 04: Sport and Recreation. The main objective of this programme is to deliver the sport and recreational programmes in the five districts. The department is implementing the programmes in partnership with the Limpopo Sports Confederation, provincial sport federations, the Limpopo Academy of Sport and other relevant bodies.

The programme has been allocated a total budget of R111,171 million in the 2024/25 financial year. The Sport and Recreation programme takes 13,4% of the total allocation and is funded by both equitable share and a conditional grant.

The allocation included a conditional grant funding of R70,488 million which constitutes 63,4% of the total budget for the programme.

Both equitable share and conditional grant allocations will be used to support active recreation, persons with disability, provincial teams, hubs, schools, clubs, and transfer to sport confederations, including the academy.

During the 2023/24 financial year, the department was able to support 223 tournaments and leagues in all 5 districts. The Limpopo Sports Confederation has recommitted to introduce the annual Limpopo Games, through the staging of the district leagues in 11 prioritised codes.

In terms of the learners participating in district competitions, the department was able to reach 26 250 learners, which is above the set target of 25 000 learners.

The department has also managed to reach 7 249 learners against the set target of 6 000 learners participating in school sport tournaments at the provincial level. At the School Sport National Championships, our learners have made us proud. The under 14 boys and girls received the gold medal in morabaraba and under 14 boys' volleyball received gold medal, respectively. [APPLAUSE]

In overall, the department has improved its performance in the School Sport National Championships, in which it has moved from position 08 to position 04. The department will be hosting the Primary School Sport National Championships on athletics in partnership with the Department of Education from 24 to 26 March 2024. We hope to report excellent performance at the end of this tournament.

On mass participation through the hub system, the department in the past financial year has increased the number of hubs from 69 to 82. The department will continue to strengthen the hub system to increase the participation of the youth from the grassroot level.

In preparation for the Netball World Cup which was hosted in Cape Town, the department was able to host the 100 days celebrations followed by the activities of Netball Fridays.

In addition, Limpopo hosted a successful Netball Trophy Tour from 09 to 13 June 2023, which was led by the president of Netball South Africa and Africa, renowned leader, imbokodo, child of the soil, Cecilia Molokwane. These were the activities leading to the successful Netball World Cup, which took place from 28 July to 06 August 2024.

In the effort to increase participation in active sport, the department participated in a successful Cancer Marathon on 28 October 2023 at Peter Mokaba Stadium in partnership with various stakeholders.

The 2023/24 financial year Annual Sport Awards were for the first time televised on SABC, with 14 athletes, coaches, managers, and federations being awarded in different categories. Among the winners, the Limpopo Baobab Netball Team was among those who received the team of the year award.

On the other hand, renowned sport veteran Ms Ria Ledwaba led the successful inaugural Limpopo Women in Sports Awards. It is here that women were recognised for their achievements in the sporting fraternity.

For the first time in 30 years of democracy, the MEC awards focused indigenous hard-working legends who came from the five districts of Limpopo province.

The MEC honoured the following people during the annual Limpopo Sport Awards: Elizabeth Shikwambani, Judith Tsakani, Mcunu Nee Ngobeni, Malesela Mokonyama, Frans Kekana, Elizabeth Otsweleng, Ledwaba Anna, Coshiwe Matildah Makunyane, Johannes Mosehla, Eric Baloyi, Rofhiwa Manwadu and Gullo Lawrance Marapyane.

As part of celebrating 30 years of democracy during the 2024/25 financial year, the department is planning to celebrate all national days through district fun walks. This is done to build an active citizenry in the fight against social ills, while building a socially cohesive nation and unearthing new talent in the sport and recreation sector.

In the past financial year, the department managed to support 900 schools, hubs and clubs in the province with equipment and attire. In the 2024/25 financial year, to create a conducive environment for participation, the department will further provide 877 schools, hubs and clubs with equipment and attire.

Together with the Limpopo Softball Association and its national federation, Softball South Africa, the province hosted World Baseball Softball Committee (WBSC), Africa senior men softball, World Cup qualifier games in Mahwelereng Stadium, from 29 February to 02 March 2024. The three countries, which are Lesotho, South Africa and Botswana, competed. South Africa and Botswana qualified to represent Africa in USA and Canada, respectively. [APPLAUSE]

Africa's top softball pitcher, Tidima Kekana and Kagiso Aphane, both from Moletlane Texas Softball Club, will be leading the South African national senior men's during WBSC World Cup qualifiers to be held in USA from 17 to 21 September 2024. [APPLAUSE]

The province is further hosting the National Softball Championship at Polokwane Cricket Fields from 20 to 23 March 2024, where eight provinces will be competing in both men and women categories. Truly, Limpopo is the home of softball. Let us meet there to support our provincial team led by the first ever women softball chairperson of the Limpopo Softball Association, Ms Mokgadi Mswazi.

Golf sport has now protruded beyond the boundaries of being a special sport code for rich and famous people, to now rural and semi-urban citizens. The department together with the Limpopo Golf Union and Golf RSA, hosted the GolfSixes League South Africa Limpopo Series from 03 to 10 March 2024 at Polokwane golf course. Six development teams participated, namely:

- Toshiba Tigers;
- Mopani Leopards;
- Ga-Moletji Mambas;
- Zebediela Eagles;

- Polokwane Sharks; and
- Baylis Bumblebees.

We continue to be innovative in approach. The department is promoting nation-building and social cohesion by hosting annual Mapungubwe Marathon on the 02 March 2024 and the first ever Mapungubwe Rugby Games on the 09 March 2024.

About 100 school learners participated in the Mapungubwe Rugby Day along with 4 women teams and 6 community teams. We are truly changing the narratives, after 30 years of democracy truly “Tintswalo” can now participate and compete in all sporting codes, including rugby, cricket and softball at local, district, national and international levels. [APPLAUSE]

As we conclude, we want to echo the sentiments and the support as made by LEDET that indeed, we support our PSL teams from Limpopo, Polokwane City and Sekhukhune United. Your support did not go unnoticed, Hon Monama. It is through them that we continue to enjoy the PSL here in the province when they play their home games.

We continue to be proud of the recent Bafana Bafana heroic play at the Africa Cup of Nations, in particular players from Limpopo such as; Grant Kekana, Evidence Makgopa, Aubrey Modiba, Khuliso Mudau, Veli Mothoa, and Sydney Mobi. We are happy to have so many players plying their trade at the highest level of their profession, embracing the flag of Limpopo and South Africa. [APPLAUSE]

Bafana Bafana are not alone, we have Noko Matlou, Lebogang Ramalepe, Amogelang Motau, Hilda Magaia, and Nomvula Kgoale who continue to hoist the country's flag high in the Banyana Banyana squad. They are also from here in Limpopo. [APPLAUSE]

We cannot end our speech without a special mention to Trevor Nyakane, the Springboks tighthead prop from Phalaborwa, who benefitted from schools and Limpopo Academy of Sport programmes in the province. We are proud of this champion who was at the forefront when the Springboks returned the World Cup home, where it belongs.

Madam Speaker, the Sixth Administration has come, and it has now gone. However, its success bears as a fundamental foundation instrumental in shaping the incoming seventh administration. Without social cohesion and nation-building activities, the public will be dull and ill.

Social ills begin when there is nothing entertaining or recreational available. Therefore, the department is rightfully poised to strike against all ills that hinder us from reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals, and subsequently realising in its full, the National Development Plan.

Let us do more and be more instrumental in achieving our set goals. Let me give appreciation to:

- The statutory and nonstatutory bodies that are key stakeholders in our department;
- The artists in all their different crafts. You truly make our department what it is today;
- The portfolio committee that keeps us on our toes, led by the Hon Johanna Aphiri. Your outstanding works did not go unnoticed;
- The staff of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, led by the ever-dynamic head of department, who has been the cornerstone of our department, Ms Mapula Daphne Ramokgopa. They have definitely pulled up the weight;
- The Premier, Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, Chupu Marema Di Pekwa. I thank you, for entrusting me with the responsibility of leading this department; and
- The ruling party, the African National Congress, that allowed me to be here today.

I want to echo the words of the president of the ruling party, Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa who, during the launch of the manifesto of the ANC, said: "We've achieved the impossible together. Our biggest victories we've won together. Our biggest strides, we've made together. The biggest odds, we've defied together. And so today we can say with certainty: We will do better, we will do more, and we will do it faster. Together."

Lastly, let me convey a sincere gratitude to my husband, Nkeke Kekana, my two children, Putuke and Karabo, and my immediate and extended family who have been the pillars of my strength. Indeed, in sickness and in health, the family has carried me through.

I, therefore, humbly present the 2024/25 financial year Budget Vote 10 of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.

I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thanks very much, honourable MEC. The Budget Speech for Vote 10: Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture for consideration and report back to the House. We may now move to the next item.

8. SNAP DEBATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. The first speaker on the list is Hon Makoma Makhurupetje.

BACKGROUND

Malibongwe!

MS MAKHURUPETJE

Hon Speaker, Rosemarry Molapo; Hon Deputy Speaker, Hon Tshitereke Baldwin Matibe; Hon Premier and MECs present; Chief Whip of the majority party – the African National Congress; Hon Essob Mmanoko Mokgonyana; Members of this august House; esteemed guests of the Legislature today; ladies and gentlemen, good day. Thobela. Avuxeni. Inhlukanhi. Ndi Masiari. Lotjhani.

I am standing here today on behalf of the African National Congress to speak on a crucial topic that is gaining even more attention today than ever before, human rights and Human Rights Day.

Madam Speaker, South Africa will this year commemorate Human Rights Month under the theme: “Three Decades of Respect for and Promotion of Human Rights”. The main event will be held on 21 March 2024 at the George Thabe Stadium, in Sharpeville, Gauteng, while the provincial event will be held at Mapodile Stadium, Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality in Sekhukhune. This year’s theme aims to pay tribute to the 30th anniversary of freedom and democracy.

Hon speaker, March month is a month in which we commemorated International Women’s Day, whereby women around the world were rededicating themselves towards the achievement of total women emancipation. As they were commemorating International Women’s Day, they were shouting, “Imagine a gender equal world. A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. A world that’s diverse, equitable, and inclusive. A world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge women’s equality. Collectively we can all #InspireInclusion.”

That reminded us that our journey to achieve freedom and democracy never started in 1994. 1994 was achieved through blood and sweat led by our freedom fighters like Mme Winnie Madikizela Mandela who said, ‘I am not ashamed of anything I have ever done in the name of fairness and justice for my people.’ Therefore, this debate is dedicated to the life and times of Mme Winnie who indeed did not die but multiplied.

Madam Speaker, it is important for me to remind this august House that on 21 March 1960, a massacre was committed by the apartheid system in Sharpeville. Historically, Human Rights Day is for South Africans to remember the brutal killing of 69 innocent and unarmed civilians who were marching to the police station against anti-black pass laws in order for that criminal element to never repeat again. We must also be reminded that Sharpeville was established in 1943 as a result of forced removal of people from Topville by the apartheid government. Those forced removals began in 1958 with 10 000 Africans which contributed heavily to high unemployment and poverty. Furthermore, a new police station was built, from which the police were given the responsibility to just check passes, deport illegal residents, and raid illegal shebeens.

Madam Speaker, in 1948, the United Nations defined 30 articles of human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It established universal human rights on the basis of humanity, freedom, justice, and peace. Human rights in South Africa are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights. These articles of our Constitution cannot be changed willy-nilly; they can only be changed by a two-thirds majority in Parliament, which means it is difficult for anyone, including the government, to take away the basic rights of a citizen. The Bill

of Rights also comprehensively addresses South Africa's history of oppression, colonialism, slavery, racism, sexism and other forms of human violations. The Bill of Rights embeds the rights of all people in our country in an enduring affirmation of the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

Madam Speaker, while the ANC-led government is working tirelessly to move South Africa forward, to follow in the footsteps of our first democratic President, Nelson Mandela, when he said, "Never and never again shall it be, that this beautiful land will again experience oppression of one by another", we are disgusted by the behaviour of some who sit comfortably in this Legislature, where just in February 2024 a Member of this august had the audacity to go to Groblersdal to support perpetrators of racism who beat and fed our young man to the dogs just because he is black and even promote apartheid flag. Their party is not even ashamed to launch a manifesto that says they want their apartheid back. As the ANC, we are proud of the ANCYL who went all out to condemn the actions of racism in serious terms. We appreciate the justice which refused perpetrators bail. We appreciate the work of our justice system which refused to give the perpetrators bail. I am repeating this because when the Member of this Legislature was asked why she was supporting those people, she said: "No, I am here just to show support so that these people can get bail. There is no racism here." She says all this because she does not know what racism means.

On that note, I want to applaud the African National Congress Youth League, one of our own young man, Tonny, when he said that they believed the ANC Youth League march would ensure people in town know that the ANC is against racism and would help some of those who might be victims of racism to open up. More than this, there could be more cases where people are being harassed in jobs and factories. I am asking myself how the helper of this Member of the Legislature is taken care of at home. As the ANC Women League, we must take keen interest in who the helper is, and how she is being treated in the house of this Member.

We applaud President Ramaphosa for taking Israel to the International Court of Justice for committing genocide in Palestine. Rights for the Palestinian people to exist are also human rights. We would not accept the same situation that is prevalent in Palestine to exist in our country; therefore, there must be peace for the Palestinians to enjoy their human rights. We must also remind the august House and the nation, that it is the African National Congress, the ANC-led government, that ensured that the people in general, enjoy their human rights since the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955. Therefore, as this is the time for elections, I am here as a member of the ANC calling on all South Africans, especially the people of Limpopo, to vote for the right party, the African National Congress, on 29 May 2024 as it is the only organisation that conceptualised human rights, that led the development of the Constitution in 1996 that guarantees respect for and promotion of human rights and continues to defend the gains of democracy. We will never rest until total emancipation is attained. Thank you so much, Hon Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. The next speaker on the list is Hon Wilson.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker. The theme for this year, thirty years into democracy, is “Three Decades of Respect and Promotion of Human Rights”. The Bill of Rights is the cornerstone of our democracy of all people in South Africa and safeguards equality, freedom and human dignity.

Dignity is the recognition of the inherent worth and value of every human being. The South African Human Rights Commission is a Chapter 9 institution governed by section 184 of the Constitution and affirms that water is life. In 2014, the SAHRC found that there is a lack of a human rights-based approach to the delivery of water and sanitation services.

Ten years later, not much has changed. In fact, in Limpopo things got worse. Systematic failures in governance and budgeting, particularly in the implementation of and spending on projects, points to the need for government to evaluate the current models of governance and funding. These failures translate to a lack of access to water and sanitation and by and large, the most basic human rights of the most vulnerable. Efficient: achieving maximum productivity with minimum wasted effort or expense. The water situation in Polokwane has been dire for years. The municipality is currently receiving between 80 to 99ML/day according to reports and is unable to meet the summer peak flow demand of 163ML/day...[INTERJECTION]

[NOISE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Order, order! Can we not drown the speaker!

MS WILSON

The recent Auditor-General’s report highlighted 36% of water losses due to ineffective maintenance, faulty small metres and lack of demand management. Sekhukhune District is a fine example, where we are inundated with complaints from hundreds of residents, who are suddenly getting bills that have more than quadrupled in the last couple of months. Their entire billing system has collapsed, which will lead to litigations at huge costs and affect revenues.

This means that competent and experienced contractors should be appointed to, as prudently as possible, execute the mandate of building pipelines, reservoirs and maintaining infrastructure. We have seen the opposite with the Giyani water project which costs about R3,5 billion and is meant to benefit 55 villages in and around Giyani in Mopani and Vhembe in Limpopo. In September 2023, it was reported that his limping project is still behind 36% due to delays in procurement, poor performance and termination of subcontracts. Our provincial water pipe system is characterised by thousands of leaks through which valuable drinking water is lost. The AG’s red flagging of water losses seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

Maintenance work should be spent on preventative maintenance and upgrades to cope with the increasing demand, but our municipalities are struggling to keep up and keeping the system from collapsing. The lack of sustainability is exacerbated by the

pollution from our defunct waste water plants where the raw sewage that comes in just flows through the plant into rivers and water ecosystems. The 22nd day of March is World Water Day to create awareness for the 2,2 billion people living without access to safe water. We are not a good example.

The Department of Health is faced with contingent liabilities which run into billions of rands as a result of massive medical negligence by staff members. That is not only indicative of the failure to ensure the human rights of the residents to quality healthcare as per the Constitution, but it also results in litigations that have seriously affected the delivery of those rights.

This, honourable House, must lead by example and amplify oversight and monitoring to ensure compliance with legislation and minimum norms and standards. Any contravention of the constitutional rights of any people, is considered criminal and action must be taken, and using the abovementioned apartheid era as an excuse for failures after 30 years means that you have lost the battle already. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Wilson. Hon Maritz, the floor is yours.

MS MARITZ

Hon Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier; esteemed Members of the Executive Council; leader of the opposition parties; Members of the House; and guests, good afternoon.

Annually this debate proves to be the most challenging, despite the majority of the province's dams being over 95% full. A significant portion of the population lacks access to water due to issues such as neglect and corruption, preventing it from reaching households. The provision of safe, affordable, and dependable drinking water and sanitation services is fundamental to upholding basic human rights.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the basic human rights enshrined in our Constitution have not been upheld in Limpopo province for over three decades. Equality remains elusive as minorities continue to face discrimination based on their race. Human dignity is disregarded, evident in the poor treatment of patients in hospitals. The value of life is diminishing, as reflected in the alarming crime rates plaguing our society.

The infringement of our human rights is evident, yet we retain the power to vote and alter our circumstances. Despite the violations, we have the ability to make a difference through the democratic process of voting. By exercising our right to vote, we can bring about positive change and protect our fundamental rights.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it is essential to provide equal opportunities to all individuals, regardless of race, to ensure a brighter future for everyone. The younger generation holds the key to our future, and by offering them the same chances as others, we can create a more inclusive and prosperous society for all. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Maritz. The next speaker is Hon Monama.

THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. Speaker of the Legislature; Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier of our province; Leader of Government Business; fellow honourable Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the majority party; Deputy Chief Whip; Chair of Chairs; chairpersons of committees and honourable Members of this august House; leaders of various opposition parties; guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Hon Deputy Speaker, prior to 1994 human rights were a pie in the sky for the majority, especially the indigenous people. In 1994 Hon Maritz was a member of the National Party, and later she became a member of the DA and now she is a member of the Freedom Front Plus. I wonder how she characterises and can capture the thirty years of democracy in her chameleon type of a life. I am saying this because this is a debate about human rights, and human rights were not there prior to 1994. It is an amiss of truth by Hon Wilson but as the majority, indigenous people, Africans and Blacks, we were subjected to atrocious policies of apartheid which were led by your grandfathers and grandmothers. It can't be her who can now talk about water and sanitation. Those were commodities that were reserved for Whites only. It is only now, after the African National Congress that she can now proudly stand here and say that water is a right and sanitation is not a privilege. Those things were not there in their constitution, but now, because of the Constitution of 1996, they are enshrined there. Our Constitution remains the supreme authority in this country which was not there because of the Group Areas Act, where people were subjected to squalor conditions in their homelands. At least today you have your freedom. You know what you have done, how many people you killed in 1976. You know what happened in 1956 regarding the women march led by Charlotte Maxeke and the current serving leader of the march, Sophia De Bruyn. Those were the things that were happening, and now upon attaining the freedom and power as the African National Congress, we were able to intensify the transformation of the country in terms of one that is representative of all the people. The reason why the MEC, Hon Kekana, was talking about social cohesion is because of the travesty of justice that you had imposed on our country. We are trying to deal with all the languages that you have imposed as a government.

Today, you are happy because the same President Ramaphosa who is the President now is the one who led talks on this Constitution that you can now quote. For 30 years people were denied opportunities. The life of this 30 years is better than the past 300 years under apartheid. Today we are working on a country where black industrialists are contributing to the economic growth and development of the motherland. Today we have black engineers and mathematicians who were not there before. Now they can become anything that they like. All have a right to choose a career not where Blacks were subjected to becoming teachers, nurses and clerks. As the African National Congress, we want to assure your good self that come 30 May, the African National Congress will continue to transform the socioeconomic landscape of our country, empower our people and ensure that they get their social grants, free education, access to health services and all other services that this caring government is rendering unlike what your grandfathers and grandmothers have done to this country. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Monama. We shall now proceed to item 9.

9. NCOP BUSINESS

9.1 Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs: Final Mandate on Housing Consumer Bill [B10B-2021]

Committee chairperson, the floor is yours.

MS LEBEA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker; Members of this august House; and guests in the gallery.

In living up to the hopes and aspirations of this congress movement of making a better life for all, emulating the perspectives of the Freedom Charter that there shall be houses, security and comfort, the Housing Consumer Protection Bill [B10B-2021] was referred to the Limpopo Legislature by the National Council of Provinces and the Limpopo Legislature in turn, referred the Bill to the Portfolio Committee of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements, and Traditional Affairs.

The objects of Housing Consumer Protection Bill [B10B-2021] are as follows:

- The Housing Consumer Protection Bill, 2021 seeks to repeal the Housing Consumer Protection Measures Act, 1998 (Act 95 of 1998).
- The Bill seeks to change the definition of a home to include boarding houses, hostels, residents with institutional facilities such as hospitals, prisons, mixed-used residences (communal and residences), timeshare and share blocks, but excludes a hotel, a shack, and any dwelling unit without its bathroom or kitchen.
- The Bill makes provision for reimbursement of a housing consumer, which may be deducted from an administrative fine paid by the homebuilder, for losses incurred.
- The Bill seeks to ensure adequate protection of housing consumers and effective enforcement regulatory mechanisms of the homebuilding industry by, inter alia, strengthening the protection of housing consumer, introducing effective enforcement mechanisms, and prescribing appropriate penalties or sanctions to deter noncompliance by homebuilders.
- It further seeks to address the economic transformation of the industry through the introduction of provisions relating to the warranty funds surplus which may be utilised towards human settlement development programmes for homebuilders.
- It seeks to provide for the registration of the homebuilders and developers, the establishment of a register of homebuilders, the requirements for registration, suspension of registration, and liability of an unregistered homebuilder or builder.

Hon Speaker, the portfolio committee received a briefing by NCOP permanent delegates and officials on the principles, objectives of the Bill and to consider the provisions of the Bills. After briefing, the portfolio committees resolved to embark on five public hearings.

Informed by the nature of the Bill, the Portfolio Committee on Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs embarked on stakeholder mapping. The portfolio further invited relevant stakeholders to the public hearings.

The portfolio committee having considered the amendments made on the C-list and D-version of the Bill by the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs, Water and Sanitation found that the amendments do not affect the substance and the principle of the Bill.

In conclusion, the committee moves that this report be adopted as a report of the august House and that a final mandate be conferred to the NCOP delegates to vote in favour of the Bill.

I move accordingly, Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Is there any seconder? Hon Selamolela, you are recognised.

MR SELAMOLELA

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. I, Selamolela Selelo Donald, stand here to support the above listed report as presented by Hon Lebea.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much.

9.2 Ratification of Special Delegates to Attend NCOP Plenaries

Hon Chief Whip, you may take the floor.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Hon Deputy Speaker, House Rule 226(3) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the House read together with section 61(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides the designation and appointment of special delegates when the House is not sitting.

In line with these provisions, the following honourable Members were appointed to attend the following virtual NCOP plenaries when the House was not sitting.

- Questions to the Deputy President on 12 March 2024: The following special delegates attended: MEC for Treasury, Hon Sekoati S C; Speaker, Hon Molapo R R; Deputy Speaker, Hon Matibe T B; and Chief Whip, Hon Mokgonyana.

- Consideration of the Select Committee on Finance Report on the Fiscal Framework and Revenue Proposals and Legislation on 13 March 2024. The following special delegates attended: MEC for Treasury, Hon Sekoati S C; Chair of Chairs, Hon Monyamane N S; Hon Lekganyane N M; and Hon Ndou A D J.

Hon Speaker, I hereby move that this august House resolves to ratify the appointment of the abovementioned special delegates in line with the abovementioned provisions.

I so move, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Chief Whip. Is there any seconder? Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. I, Mathe S, second the motion as presented by the Chief Whip. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mathe. We move to item 9.3.

9.3 Ratification of the Conferral of the Final Voting Mandate to NCOP Permanent Delegates

Hon Chief Whip, you may take the podium.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Hon Deputy Speaker, on Tuesday, 12 March 2024 just after the House Sitting, we received a report from the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure on the Expropriation Bill [B23B-2020]. The final voting mandate for the Bill was due on Wednesday, 13 March 2024.

In light of the above, Rule 236 was invoked in order to allow the Hon Speaker to confer a final voting mandate to permanent delegates and to vote in favour of the Bill. I, therefore, move that this august House resolves to ratify this mandate as already conferred in terms of Rule 236.

I so move, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Chief Whip. Is there a seconder? Hon Boshielo, you are recognised.

MS BOSHIELO

Thank you very much, Speaker. I second the motion as presented by the Hon Chief Whip.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Boshielo. We move to item 9.4.

9.4 Designation of Special Delegates to Attend the NCOP Plenaries

Hon Chief Whip, you are recognised.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. The NCOP has scheduled two plenaries which requires provincial special delegates to attend. The first plenary is scheduled for today, 19 March 2024 at 14:00. I, therefore, move that this august House designates Hon Boshielo S P, Hon Mahasela M C, and Hon Monyamane N S to virtually attend as special delegates in terms of House Rule 228(1).

The second plenary is scheduled for 26 March 2024 at 14:00. Again, Hon Speaker, I move that the House designates the following honourable Members to virtually attend this plenary: Hon Mokaba M A, Hon Mathye S V, and Hon Selane C B D in terms of House Rule 226(1).

I so move, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Chief Whip. Is there any seconder? Hon Mdaka, you are recognised.

MR MDAKA

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. I, Falaza Philemon Mdaka, hereby second the motion as presented by the Chief Whip of the majority party.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are there any announcements? Honourable Chairperson of Committees, you are recognised.

THE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. Honourable Members and guests, lunch will be served at the new Peter Mokaba Stadium, and you are invited.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The House is adjourned to Tuesday, 26 March 2024 at the Polokwane Municipal Council Chamber at 10:00. The House is adjourned.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you very much. You may all be seated. Hon Premier, Stanley Chupu Mathabatha; Members of the Executive; Chief Whip of the majority party; Deputy Chief Whip; Chair of Chairs; Deputy Chair of Chairs; Members of this august House; members of the staff; our guests in the gallery, good morning and welcome to our Sitting.

Honourable Members, as we proceed items 2,3 and 5, as I have indicated earlier on in other Sittings, will be deferred until we are done with the Budget Speeches.

[ITEMS 2–5 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITH NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

We will move to item 6.

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

- 6.1 Tabling of the Annual Report of the Department of Health for the Financial Year Ending 2022/23 Together with a Written Explanation for the Nonsubmission of the Report on Time

THE MEC FOR HEALTH

Hon Speaker; Hon Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier; honourable Members of the Executive Council; Hon Chief Whip of the ruling party; honourable Members; our guests, good morning.

I hereby table the Department of Health Annual Report for the 2022/23 financial year. We regret to table this report this very late, and it is unfortunate that the department

finds itself in this position. This was due to the fact that the Auditor-General of South Africa only finalised and submitted the report to the Department of Health by 30 January 2024 at 18:27. Following receipt of the AG's report and the confirmation to print, the tabling of the report was only concluded on 15 March 2024 because of the work that we were doing together with the audit committee. Therefore, the process of finalising this report was extensive and included the input of the audit committee, and we also had to send it back to the Auditor-General, hence the subsequent delays and failure to timeously table the Annual Report to this august House. We have attached all communication and reference to this effect. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. The Annual Report together with a written explanation is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Health and Scopa for further scrutiny and to report back to the House. Thank you very much.

Honourable Members, my apologies. I did not greet my Hon Deputy Speaker. Maybe it is because I was with him before we came back. [LAUGHTER]

Let's proceed to item 7.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1 Second Reading: Presentation of Budget Votes and Schedule of the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B02-2024]

We shall now call upon the Premier, Hon Stanley Chupu Mathabatha, to present the Budget Speech for Vote 1. [APPLAUSE]

BACKGROUND

Malibongwe!

THE PREMIER

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

(Address by Mr C S Mathabatha, Premier)

Hon Speaker, Ms Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tshitereke Matibe; honourable Members of the Legislature; Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the African National Congress; chairpersons of various portfolio committees; esteemed members of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders; leaders of other political parties; members of the media; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, ndi matsheloni.

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today to present the Budget Vote for the Office of the Premier, outlining our strategic initiatives and achievements in the past year. The Office of the Premier plays a crucial role in providing leadership,

coordination, and support to the provincial administration through three key programmes: Corporate Management; Institutional Development and Support; and Planning, Coordination, Monitoring, and Evaluation.

Under Corporate Management, we have made significant strides in financial management, resulting in an unqualified audit opinion for the 2022/23 financial year. I am proud to announce that any matters of emphasis have been resolved. We are committed to reclaiming a clean audit opinion in the upcoming 2023/24 audit cycle. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Director-General, Mr Nape Nchabeleng, the executive management team, and all staff for their dedication to excellence and good governance. During the reporting period, the office successfully spent over 98,5% of its allocated Budget and ensured that 100% of supplier invoices were paid within the prescribed timeframe of 30 days.

We have also made strides in employment equity, with women representing 48% of senior management positions and people living with disabilities, 3,2% exceeding the 2% target stipulated by employment equity legislation. As we strive to build a capable, ethical, and professional state, we have awarded bursaries to employees at all levels to further their studies in the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. Additionally, we have prioritised stabilising relations with organised labour to ensure labour peace in the next administration. To streamline our recruitment processes and improve turnaround times in filling vacancies, we are finalising the development of an electronic recruitment system to be implemented in the 2024/25 financial year. This system will not only save time, but also reduce the financial burden on applicants. For the 2024/25 financial year, the office has been allocated R506,2 million, a 10% increase from the previous year, with R84 million earmarked for provincial priorities.

Our commitment to ensuring a robust, accountable, and efficient public service is unwavering, and it is with this spirit that we approach the challenges and opportunities ahead. At the outset, it is imperative to address the status of the filling of heads of department posts. As we transition into the seventh administration, we are faced with a significant number of vacancies in critical departments, including Health, Agriculture, Education, and Public Works. However, what gives this office hope is that the preparation for the seventh administration is already underway, with a focus on ensuring a smooth transition and the prioritisation of filling these vacant posts.

Our efforts in preparation include capacity building for the Members of the Executive Council, HODs and staff in the MECs' offices, emphasising the importance of a stable relationship between the MECs and HODs to the MECs' offices. To enhance our administrative efficiency, 10 departments have successfully reviewed their organisational structures, with the Department of Social Development nearing the completion of its review process, expected by 30 April 2024. The Office of the Premier and the Limpopo Provincial Treasury are set to review their structures in 2025.

Additionally, we have allocated funds to assess the feasibility of establishing a provincial shared services model, aiming to optimise departmental functionality and free up resources for service delivery. This study is expected to be finalised before the end of the 2024/25 financial year. Our dedication to building the capacity of our public service is demonstrated through the Limpopo SMS Capacity Building Programme. With an investment of over R15 million from government revenue, we have trained

more than 540 SMS members in various workshops and courses. These initiatives, ranging from economic growth strategies to leadership and governance, are crucial for the development of our province. Notably, almost 140 beneficiaries graduated from the Wits School of Business on 20 October 2023, equipped with skills in public leadership, infrastructure planning, and economic development.

Ladies and gentlemen, and honourable Members, as we navigate the path towards economic prosperity in Limpopo, the cornerstone of our strategy lies in the empowerment of our citizenry, particularly the youth, through comprehensive skills development. Guided by the Limpopo Human Capital Investment Strategy, we have embarked on a transformative journey, establishing strategic partnerships with Sector Education and Training Authorities and other key stakeholders. I am proud to announce that, through these collaborations, we have witnessed a phenomenal investment exceeding R1,2 billion from SETAs between 2021 and 2023. This investment has directly benefited over 26 400 young individuals, equipping them with vital skills for our economy or relevant to the needs of our economy. Currently, an additional investment of over R44 million is benefiting more than 860 young people, thanks to the concerted efforts of MerSETA and CETASETA. [APPLAUSE] These programmes, encompassing Apprenticeship, Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning, and other skills development initiatives, are pivotal to our mission.

Looking ahead to the 2024/25 financial year, we anticipate an investment of over R136 million, aimed at further empowering our unemployed youth through apprenticeships, learnerships, and support programmes for SMMEs/Cooperatives, among others. To ensure the effective coordination and implementation of these initiatives, we have established the Limpopo Skills Development Forum and the Limpopo HRD Council, which I have the honour of chairing. Moreover, we are committed to expanding access to higher education in alignment with our provincial development goals. Initiatives such as the establishment of a satellite university in Giyani are underway, spearheaded by the Director-General of our province, as well as the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training. There are further plans to explore the creation of additional higher education institutions across Limpopo; thanks to Minister Nzimande. [APPLAUSE]

In addition, we have also piloted training on strategic leadership for senior traditional leaders which was well received. Having welcomed this feedback, the office is directed to ensure the mainstreaming of this kind of intervention. We, therefore, believe that capable institutions of traditional leadership are critical towards building a developmental state. In our quest for economic sustainability, we have focused on ensuring that our provincial business enterprises, or Schedule 3D entities, are self-sustaining. Following the adoption of Scopa resolutions, we have developed and implemented a turnaround strategy, guided by a multi-stakeholder steering committee chaired by the Director-General. This strategic approach is crucial for reducing dependency on provincial fiscal allocations and promoting economic viability.

Lastly, Hon Speaker, Scopa directed that we should improve greatly on the issue of consequence management. I am happy to report that the Executive Council has adopted the Provincial Consequence Management Framework. The Office of the Premier and Provincial Treasury will ensure its implementation.

Honourable Members, our office has been actively working towards enhancing the quality of life for vulnerable groups, including women, youth, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and military veterans. A notable initiative is the Limpopo Youth Fund, which has supported 64 youth entrepreneurs with over R3,2 million in funding, aiming to combat poverty, unemployment and inequality. The beneficiaries are involved in sectors like agriculture, hospitality, manufacturing, retail and services.

Efforts to support military veterans have also been intensified, with the military veterans' development plan being a focal point in our agenda. A total of 241 military veterans have been registered in the database, 131 have received educational support and 140 have been trained in animal production. Additionally, 33 houses have been constructed for veterans recognising their sacrifices for the country. The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has launched a programme to empower young women in rural areas, particularly through training in the installation, maintenance, and repair of solar panels and lighting systems. This initiative, which emerged during the 2023 South Africa chairing of BRICS, will send 10 youths from the province to India to enhance their skills in solar development, contributing to the resolution of the country's loadshedding challenges. [APPLAUSE]

Addressing corruption and maladministration remains a critical priority area for this office, with the implementation of the national anti-corruption strategy (2020–2030) being a key focus. This strategy includes effective collaboration between departments and law enforcement agencies, the implementation of lifestyle audits to mitigate fraud and corruption, and compliance with the framework's submission timelines. The national anti-corruption hotline has seen improvements, with 153 out of 174 cases which represent 87% resolved and finalised. Although we have established the Provincial Anti-Corruption Forum, I have instructed the Director-General to review the functionality of this forum with an intention of making it fully functional. The review process must be done in consultation with the Public Service Commission.

The province has revitalised and strengthened its international ties through existing memorandums of understanding with regions in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and China, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. Notably, the province has maintained robust person-to-person relations and business delegations, such as attending the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair and reviving relations with Xai-Xai Province in Mozambique. Additionally, educational and technological collaborations with Chinese provinces, including an Exchange Study Programme and the establishment of a Green Technology Confucius Institute, underscore the commitment to international cooperation.

The establishment of Aids councils across all districts and municipalities, in alignment with the South African National Aids Council guidelines, demonstrates effective local governance and community engagement. Furthermore, the province benefits from international and national donor funding, supporting various initiatives like the School Readiness Initiative by the Roger Federer Foundation and community care centres funded by the German Development Bank. The Water Research Commission's collaboration on the Giyani Local Scale Climate Resilience Programme exemplifies the integration of climate adaptive responses for water utilisation, showcasing a holistic approach to provincial development and international collaboration.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we embark on the journey of crafting the Limpopo Development Plan for the seventh term of administration, I am pleased to announce that the administrative process has commenced, with a clear roadmap in place to guide us through this crucial endeavour. The development process, set to begin in April 2024 and conclude in February 2025, will be overseen by a provincial task team led by the Director-General. In parallel, the Office of the Premier is spearheading the development of the Limpopo Renewable Energy Strategy, aimed at promoting the deployment of renewable energy technologies and services. With two phases already completed and stakeholder engagement sessions yielding valuable insights, we are on track to adopt the strategy by July 2024.

The implementation of the District Development Model in response to the President's directive has been a priority for our administration. With the Intergovernmental Relations Framework in place and progress monitored through action plans, we are committed to joint planning and service provision across districts. We had a successful Presidential Imbizo in Sekhukhune that assisted in remapping our resolve and focus to effectively coordinate the three spheres of government for effective service provision. Out of that, a subsequent district alerted us to the gaps and areas we need to concentrate on as we move to Mopani and Vhembe in the new financial year.

Furthermore, recognising the challenges in water provision, I have engaged the Minister for Water and Sanitation to implement an integrated programme to deal with water challenges in Limpopo. I, therefore, direct the forthcoming administration to give this matter a strategic priority. Additionally, water provision from Zimbabwe to support water requirements for the Vhembe District, including the Musina-Makhado SEZ underscores our commitment to sustainable development.

In conclusion, our journey towards a more efficient, accountable, and service-oriented public administration is ongoing. The initiatives outlined today are a testament to our commitment to the people of Limpopo. Together, with your support, we will continue to build a province that is prosperous, inclusive, and reflective of the aspirations of all its citizens.

Madam Speaker, it is my honour to table before this august House, the 2024/25 Budget Vote for the Office of the Premier for appropriation. Ndza khensa . [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Premier. The Budget Speech, together with its supporting documents, is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration for consideration and to report back to the House. Let us proceed to item 7.1.2. We shall now call upon the MEC for Public Works Roads and Infrastructure. MEC, Hon Makamu, the floor is yours.

THE MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

(Address by Ms C N Rakgoale, MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure)

Speaker, Hon Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tshitereke Matibe; Premier, Hon Chupu Stanely Mathabatha; colleagues in the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the majority party, the ANC, Hon Essob Mokgonyana and Deputy Chief Whip, Hon Monicca Mochadi; leaders of the opposition parties; Chair of Chairs, Hon Monyamane and Deputy Chair of Chairs, Che Selane, and happy birthday to you; Chairperson of our portfolio committee, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje and other portfolio committee members; Members of the Provincial Legislature; Director-General of the province, Mr Nape Nchabeleng; Auditor-General of South Africa; board members of the Roads Agency Limpopo as led by Mr Matome Ralebipi; Acting Head of Department, Mr Phukuntsi, who was celebrating his birthday yesterday also, happy belated birthday; Chief Executive Officer of RAL, Mr Gabriel Maluleke; Chairpersons and CEOs of other state-owned entities; Head of Department of our provincial government; members of the media, ke re madume. Thobela. Ndi matsheloni. Avhusheni.

It is my honour and privilege that I stand before you today to present the last Budget Vote of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in this sixth democratic administration. This Budget Vote comes a few weeks after the presentation of the State of the Nation Address by President Cyril Ramaphosa and the State of the Province Address by Premier Chupu Stan Mathabatha. Standing in front of this august House representing the ANC, I am honoured that through our collective efforts, we have pushed back the apartheid years that saw infrastructure development limited to mainly so-called white areas of the old South Africa. As the ANC, we are very clear that our focus is to create inclusive communities and an inclusive economy well supported by modern infrastructure driven by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure.

The ANC of Luthuli, Tambo, Mandela, Maphoto and other stalwarts of the liberation movement has taught us that the projects and programmes we implement must not be piecemeal. They taught us to ensure there is an integrated overall development strategy to ensure legitimacy of our work in communities. Let me simplify why we are here so that some don't miss the point we are making through this Budget Vote. I am saying this because the impact of our commitments here today will be felt for many years to come. I must emphasise that we are talking about hard infrastructure, training and skills development through our projects and programmes.

Infrastructure development is essential for the survival of people here in our province. It supports every facet of our people's livelihood, be it in agriculture, tourism, mining, retail and financial services. It is the lifeblood and the oxygen of our economy without which we will stagnate and diminish our growth prospects. This means from the well-being and survival of our people in the rural villages, townships and towns to the collaboration between individuals to achieve communal goals. For example, healthcare, viz., clinics and hospitals; and educational services, viz., schools, TVET colleges, etc., are essential to our people's survival and productivity. Roads and bridges make economic activities within and between provinces possible. The state of our provincial infrastructure indeed powers the provincial economy in many ways. With quality infrastructure, we are giving our people an advantage to have a better and improved quality of life. We are about critical infrastructure which includes roads, bridges as well as facilities like hospitals. Without connectivity viewed from a national security point, we are dead in the water because the impact on the community on being without such facilities will be dire. The ANC-led government has led the way in

ensuring economic prosperity of our people. We build schools, libraries, clinics, hospitals, recreational facilities, courts, cultural institutions – ke ra le yona mešate ya magoši a rena.

We are doing this to create and maintain connections as well as to encourage the development of social capital, the transfer of skills and creation of strong communities. As we present this Budget Vote, we take comfort in knowing that our work directly impacts on the relevant strategic objective of the National Democratic Revolution, which is to deepen democracy, expand our people's wellbeing and to create a better life for all in an environment of economic growth and social cohesion.

Hon Speaker, allow me to highlight some of the milestones that have been achieved by the department in the space of infrastructure development.

In the 2019/20 financial year, when the Sixth Administration came into office, we commenced earnestly with implementing the Medium-Term Strategic Framework which set seven priorities of the current administration. Amongst them being economic transformation and job creation, skills development and social cohesion. These speak directly to programmes and projects that the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure had to support in order for the priorities to be realised.

The past five-year period, which started in the 2019/20 financial year to 2023/24 financial year, the department delivered socioeconomic infrastructure facilities that the province has been able to utilise to render services to our people. These facilities have not only been able to accommodate teaching and learning, including skills transfer and healthcare services, they have also been able to contribute to economic transformation agenda of government, towards building a better life for all. In the process of implementing these infrastructure projects, black-owned businesses, especially small, micro and medium enterprises, were able to benefit and grow from contracts awarded as part of the broader government empowerment scheme in the sector.

This empowerment of SMMEs was a deliberate policy decision of this government that a minimum of 30% of the contract value should be subcontracted to competent and capable small businesses. Today, we have seen the positive spin-offs of that decision. In this category, we are forthright in discounting the negative and destructive tendencies of the so-called construction mafias. The construction mafias must be eliminated, working together with law enforcement agencies. We only have space for legitimate businesspeople, not criminal gangs masquerading as business people. We implore communities to be on high alert and report such incidents wherever they rear their ugly head.

Hon Speaker, allow me to go into details on what we have been able to do in the different programmes of the department and its entity Roads Agency Limpopo.

With regard to Education, the department has been hard at work delivering quality school infrastructure. We believe our learners deserve to be taught in completed, functional and safe school infrastructure facilities that are conducive for teaching and learning. We are working tirelessly with the Department of Education to implement school projects across the five districts. In the 2019/20 financial year, the department

completed 12 storm-damaged schools across the province. The schools in Vhembe are Nwaridi Secondary School, Muvimbi Primary School, Frank Mukhaswakule Primary School and Mphagane Primary School. In Mopani, they are Kheto Nxumayo Agricultural School, Tirhani Primary School, Zava Secondary School, Mahuntsi Primary School, Mohlatlego Machaba and Malebalong Primary Schools. In Waterberg, it was the D G Tsebe Secondary School and Mashigoana Primary School in Capricorn District.

In the 2022/23 financial year, the department completed construction of five school infrastructure projects which are as follows: Alldays Primary School in Senwabarwana in the Capricorn District, Gidela Secondary School in Blinkwater in Mopani District, Marude Primary School in Thohoyandou, Vhembe District, Leduma Mahume and Mahlagaume Primary Schools in Maserumule Park and Bothashoek village, respectively, under Sekhukhune District.

In the 2023/24 financial year, we began construction of 27 school projects across the province. Seven of these school projects have been completed. Sixteen new projects will be completed in the 2024/25 financial year and four will be completed in the 2025/26 financial year.

With regard to library and traditional council infrastructure, let me indicate that the department also restored dignity to the members of royal houses in the province by implementing traditional council office projects as part of upholding the province's commitment to support and honour traditional leaders as they enhance the work of government at a local level. We were able to complete the following offices in Vhembe District: Mudavula, Rambuda, Mphaphuli and Masia Traditional Council offices. In Sekhukhune, we completed the Ditlou Machidi and the Mogashoa Ditlhakaneng Traditional Council offices. In Capricorn district, we completed the Dikgale Traditional Council office.

We are in the process of completing the Davhana, Bakwena ba Matsepe, Manoke and Majeje Traditional Council offices as committed in the 2023/24 financial year. A new contractor has been appointed to continue with work on the Bakone traditional council office which will be completed in the 2024/25 financial year. The Department will be focusing on the refurbishment of the Makuya, Litho Ndzuza and Mampane Traditional Council offices in the 2024/25 financial year. For the people of Capricorn and Mopani Districts, the department delivered the Seleteng Library in Lepelle-Nkumpi, Mavalani and Runnymede Libraries in Mopani District, respectively. In the 2023/24 financial year, the department has been constructing libraries in Tshaulu, Mampane, Vleifontein and Botshabelo, which are at different stages of completion. Three more libraries will be constructed in the 2024/25 financial year, and they are at Ha-Makhuva, Bungeni and Matlekereng villages.

With regard to the transport infrastructure, let me highlight that the department has been moving well in the implementation of the Limpopo Traffic College project, with accommodation blocks A and B completed on behalf of the Department of Transport. This Traffic Training College is in Vhembe District in Tshilamba. Construction of block C is underway along with the construction of a new canteen. We can confirm that construction work is underway at the Thohoyandou and Seshego K53 traffic stations and progressing well. It was also our responsibility to ensure that infrastructure to

support agriculture sector was made available and to this end, we delivered the Molemole and Bela-Bela Agricultural Centres in Capricorn and Waterberg Districts. This was done to bring services closer to the people.

The Department further ensured that Schoemansdal Museum in Vhembe is restored to its former glory as part of preserving the province's heritage sites. Other infrastructure projects refurbished are the Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve in Mopani, Letaba A6 Female Surgical Ward in Mopani, 40 Paul Kruger Street office building in Capricorn, Giyani Chamber Hall in Mopani, Thohoyandou Government Complex in Vhembe and Lebowakgomo Legislature in Capricorn District. Working together with the Provincial Treasury and the Office of the Premier, we have invested time and resources in the development and improvement of our long-term planning framework for provincial infrastructure.

It is true that the cost containment and budget cuts slowed our performance in the 2023/24 financial year. Despite this challenge, we take pride in affirming that our dedication and sustained investment in enhancing the planning and execution of infrastructure enabled us to mitigate the effects of these measures. We are also in the process of institutionalising improved business processes to enhance our project and contract management.

As a custodian of the assets of the Limpopo provincial government, we have a crucial role to play in the management of the assets that enable us to fulfil our mandate of serving the people of Limpopo in an efficient, responsible and transparent way. In the past, we have leveraged these infrastructure assets to promote social economic development, and we are aware of the need to uphold the highest standards of accountability and stewardship of these assets of our province in the process. We are, therefore, placing emphasis on the development of guiding policies and strategies to maintain the right level of provincial assets to stimulate growth, mobilise investment, and empower the people of Limpopo.

The Limpopo Department of Public Works' development of strategies on acquisition and disposal of assets will ensure that the province has access to properties essential for service delivery at fair, market-related and economical prices. The entrenchment of maintenance strategies will increase efficiency and reliability of services within the public sector; and development of acquisition and disposal strategies will maintain the right level of space for provincial departments to support the achievement of the Limpopo Development Plan. It is our responsibility to ensure that government departments are housed in conducive working environment and that the buildings we house employees in are properly maintained. Coupled with our responsibility to ensure we reduce rental of property expenditure, we concluded the procurement of the sale and transfer of 27 Hans Van Rensburg office building. It is important to note that in the Sixth Administration, this government was able to procure the Limpopo Gambling Board as well as the Limpopo Tourism Authority buildings.

The department will in 2024/25 financial year continue to acquire office accommodation to further reduce rental costs. For this, we have set aside R100 million. The department is currently refurbishing the LEDET Suid Street building in Polokwane at an earmarked allocation of R20 million in the 2024/25 financial year; this is also an effort to ensure government services are rendered from occupational health

and safety compliant buildings. Our district offices in consultation with municipalities will continue to ensure that municipal rates and taxes are paid. An amount of R150 million is set aside for this exercise, as it is very important for government to lead by example and pay for its consumption of municipal services just like everyone else residing in serviced areas.

The province of Limpopo will soon be a scouting around for talent. Today I stand proud to announce that the contractor has established site and commenced with the construction of the provincial theatre. The theatre will comprise the main theatre building with 600 seating capacity and the secondary theatre with 200 seating capacity including several supporting amenities such as restaurants and bars, coffee shop, bookshops and poetry spaces. This is a commitment to the Arts in Action. Another thing that makes me proud is that this 800-seater facility will be delivered by a “Tintswalo” who President Cyril Ramaphosa spoke about in his State of the Nation Address. This is the empowerment that the ANC-led government has been able to do. Our children are indeed enjoying the fruits borne out of the struggle for liberation and equality.

We intend to continue investing in young people through the programmes and projects of the department. We have begun engaging with TVET colleges to source artisan candidates for placing in government facilities in order for them to develop practical skills. One of the areas we want to expose these young people from TVET colleges to is the departmental mechanical workshops that we intend to resuscitate. We have started with a pilot project at Capricorn Mechanical Workshop and associated cost centres. In addition, we are mobilising Modimolle Mechanical Workshop and Cost Centre as a quick-win. Thus far, engagements have been held with Capricorn TVET College to initiate a partnership. Districts have also been engaged to participate in the process and initiative. Site visits have been conducted at Capricorn Mechanical Workshop, Modimolle Workshop and Cost Centre, and Vhembe Mechanical Workshop.

There are also internal engagements within the department to mobilise resources to implement the plan, including Expanded Public Works Programme and provincial infrastructure delivery management. I am excited by this project because it will address issues of unemployment and poverty by aligning the TVET colleges which require functional workshops for their students. The plan is to revive the underutilised and resource these mechanical workshops and cost centres. The project will also contribute to building the state capacity through skills development and transfer. Through the National Youth Service, under the Expanded Public Works Programme, we have trained young people and recently had a ceremony to hand over tools of trade to ensure they are active and productive once they exit the programme.

Our commitment to young people and growing the pool of professionals in the sector has led us to focus on Candidacy Development Programme. The Candidacy Development Programme is a Structured Engineering Professionals Development Programme in place to build a pool of engineering professionals' skills for the department and built environment sector at large. The disciplines covered in the programme are engineering focusing on civil, electrical and mechanical engineering. We are also focusing on quantity surveying, construction project management, architecture, valuers and town planning, amongst others. The programme's main

objectives are to augment current internal capacity to deliver projects, increase professional registration through a structured programme and to build a pool of registered professionals for Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure. The programme is maintained via the bursary programme of the department in the main, whilst there are plans to broaden the feeder streams beyond the Bursary Programme. A draft policy is in place to guide and ensure the objectives of the programme are met. Currently, the programme is hosting 23 candidates, whilst an additional five will join in the course of the 2024/25 financial year, all from the Bursary Programme of the department.

We have laid the ground for the Limpopo Contractor Development Programme. We have entered the second phase of Limpopo Contractor Development Programme known as Vuk'uphile Programme, of which the first phase was completed in 2022. By 01 April 2024, we will be enrolling 36 young, aspiring and emerging contractors who are currently at CIDB level 2. Our objective is to develop and enhance their capacity, for them to reach higher CIDB, at least level 5 or level 6. This programme will allow young people to participate in panel of contractors that require higher CIDB levels such as 6, for them to participate in the mainstream economy of our province. An amount of R78 million within our Roads Infrastructure Management is earmarked for this purpose. This programme is earmarked for 36 months with intensive training programmes that will educate our young generation to manage and sustain their business initiatives. As the MEC responsible, I am happy to announce that an alignment has been made.

With roads infrastructure, allow me to move to another economic stimulus of government, roads infrastructure. The province is different from how it used to look like in 1994. When migrant workers, whose home base is Limpopo, return to the province, some get lost approaching Polokwane because of the improved road infrastructure network that meanders and has relieved the city centre from dealing with high volume of traffic during peak seasons. The improvement in the road infrastructure network can be seen and felt across the province. In the past five years, we have completed 149 road works projects comprising upgrades from gravel to tar, preventative maintenance and attending to flood-damaged bridges and roads. The highest concentration was on preventative maintenance which accounts for 64%, which is about 95 projects. Upgrading works is 20%, i.e., 30 projects of the total projects, and repairs on roads damaged by floods is 16%, i.e., 24 projects.

The construction of road D4109 from Mamatonya to road D885 in the Capricorn District is underway. We have created employment in all road infrastructure projects where construction has begun. We have been hard at work to ensure that we reduce the number of unpaved roads in the province by forming strategic public-private partnerships with progressive mines. In the Waterberg District, RAL has entered into a memorandum of agreement with Northam Platinum, securing R41 million in funding, entirely provided by Northam Platinum. This initiative aims to enhance a bridge and upgrade a three-kilometre stretch of road D2357 connecting to road R511. Having commenced in November 2023, the project is presently at 32% completion stage. The target is to complete it around August 2024.

In the Mopani District, the Phalaborwa Mining Company also partnered with RAL and jointly funded to the tune of R205 million for the construction of the D4424 road from

Lulekani Post office to Matikoxikaya and the rehabilitation of road D3786 from Maseke to Mashishimale connecting the R40 to R71. [APPLAUSE] These two roads have a total length of approximately 40 km. The project will commence during March 2024, and is scheduled for completion in September 2025. It is also through public-private partnership that the Steelpoort bridge in GaMalekane situated on road D2219 connecting to the R555 in the Sekhukhune District was made possible. Eight mines in the area joined efforts to be part of the solution in attending to road infrastructure challenges. The project is progressing well and on track for completion during November 2024. [APPLAUSE] More hands are on deck when it comes to attending to road infrastructure challenges in the province. Through fruitful engagements with the national Department of Transport, an agreement was reached that 19 critical road networks in the province will be maintained through SANRAL.

Furthermore, intergovernmental relations are active in this government, and this can be seen through the work being done by the national Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, the South African National Defence Force and the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure with the 17 planned “Welisizwe” bridges. The process to construct these bridges is underway. Four are in construction phase, while 13 will be done in the next financial year. All bridges will be constructed by the SANDF in Limpopo province. The department, through RAL, used collaborative service delivery approach and signed a memorandum of agreement with 11 municipalities in order to provide essential construction, engineering skills and expertise lacking in municipalities and further rehabilitate damaged streets and roads in towns to enhance driving experience for residents.

The upgrade of road D4180 from Atok Mine to GaSelepe is in the final stages of design. Work will commence on this crucial road after the design is completed and a contractor appointed. Road D4260 from Malope to Phokwane already has the contractor appointed and construction has started. This upgrade will significantly enhance transportation in the area. Regarding roads D4090, D4093, D4094, and D4096, the Malemate roads, the contractor has been appointed, and work has commenced on this project. The scope of works and preliminary design reports for roads D4199 from Apel to GaNkoana and D4190 have been approved. The consulting engineer is currently working on the detailed design report for these roads.

Concerns by some communities has seen them approaching Chapter 9 institutions such as the Public Protector and the Public Service Commission, as well as the Legislature’s Petitions Committee. Following these developments, the department had reprioritised some of its planned programmes and look into the following roads and ensure that work begins in the 2024/25 financial year. Roads Agency Limpopo will start a process of appointing contractors to implement three-kilometre upgrades. Once more Hon MEC for Provincial Treasury, you must appreciate the support in this regard. We know sometimes we would expect you to do impossible things, but we want to appreciate your support at all times. Clap hands for the MEC for Provincial Treasury, please because I am the beneficiary. [APPLAUSE] We will be implementing the first phase of the upgrading on the D1589 from De Vrede joining D3308 to Ratshatsha Hospital in Eldorado village. The MEC will agree that after buying new ambulances, , we need to try our best so that both hospitals are well equipped. However, we must also give him our full attention. This is a ring road which after completion will reach

Ga-Dankie to join D1589 in the Capricorn District, D3556 Tiberius to Diphitshi in Waterberg and D3727 Mulima through Tshitale to Morebeng in Vhembe District.

We will also give attention to D3377 Limburg to Matlala road as its designs are at completion stage. This will be done in the 2024/25 financial year. The department understands that these interventions might be a drop in the ocean, but it will make a huge impact. The department has been hard at work, and currently Roads Agency Limpopo has 139 road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, of which 52 have been completed and 18 under practical completion. The implementation of remainder of the projects is ongoing. The department is attending to the unpaved road network to ensure that it is drivable.

In October 2023, 25 graders, one excavator and 17 light delivery vehicles were procured in order to augment the number of plants in our districts. A ke re the MEC for Provincial Treasury does not talk about it, but here he must also appreciate because when we approached his office and said we want to resuscitate the cost centres so that the work of rehabilitation of roads from a departmental point of view becomes easier, indeed, he listened, and we are seeing progress in that regard. During the period under review, the department also planned to regravell 110 km of gravel roads and to this end, we have achieved that target. The department planned to do 552 m² of blacktop patching for the year under review and that target was also achieved. Three thousand four hundred and six jobs were created.

In the 2024/25 financial year, the department will continue with a target of 325 000 m² of black top patching. The department will further procure more yellow fleet with the earmarked R100 million allocated by Treasury. All this is being done to connect people and businesses and in turn stimulate the economy of the province. We have said and continue to say, we will reach all corners of the Limpopo province, however, just not at the same time. People of Limpopo, as you can see, the wheels of delivery are in motion.

All the work that needs to be done in this department is dependent on capable warm bodies attached to an organisational structure in place. To this end, we are implementing the recruitment plan to ensure vacant positions are filled in order to service the province better. This is one department where natural attrition is high, and it becomes important to move with speed in this regard. We have since been able to fill all executive management positions and are currently in the process of recruiting in line with the structure. We are focused on ensuring that the capacity we get, is able to contribute to the drive towards implementing the clean audit strategy and eventually move forward to a better audit outcome.

In terms of financial performance, the department has been improving expenditure over the years, having moved from overall 89% expenditure in the 2019/20 financial year and 97% in the 2022/23 financial year. In the 2023/24 financial year, we anticipate to spent 99% of the allocated budget, we are confident that expenditure in the 2024/25 financial year will continue to be on an upward trajectory. The allocation for the department of Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure for the 2024/25 financial year is R5,272 billion. [APPLAUSE]

The allocation is distributed as follows:

- Programme 1: Administration : R458 million;
- Programme 2: Infrastructure Operations : R1,053 billion;
- Programme 3: EPWP : R74 million; and
- Programme 4: Road Infrastructure : R3,647 billion

The Department will be transferring R2,5 billion to the Roads Agency Limpopo. The allocation of R2,557 billion is comprised of an equitable share of R1,1 billion and the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant of R1,4 billion. The entity is responsible for upgrading, rehabilitation and preventative maintenance of provincial roads. Before I wrap up, let me say this, although we have marked up some major successes, we have also recognised a number of challenges in our efforts so far. One issue that has emerged is the question of the fiscal responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of new infrastructure, and the measures that need to be in place to ensure that work skills developed during construction are carried over into the maintenance period. How can I forget the important issue of ensuring that facilities, such as schools and clinics in rural areas become, and are directly linked to broader development initiatives such as electrification, water and sanitation, rural access roads, telecommunications and so on?

A critical element of the provision of infrastructure is to ensure that these projects and programmes translate into social transformation. It appears that we have proceeded quite far in our efforts to address the backlogs, but it is clear that more still needs to be done. Without doubt, in many areas we have begun to reap the benefits of earlier economic decisions and a greater resource base for further infrastructure expenditure is now possible. As this department, our focus is on improving the implementation of our programmes, and improving the functioning and performance of our entity and facilities that are provided.

As I conclude, I would like to thank the Premier of the province, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, who entrusted me with the responsibility to serve in his administration. Thank you Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa for your guidance and leadership. To my colleagues in the Executive, thank you for walking this journey with me. To the chairperson of the portfolio committee, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje and the chairperson of Scopa, Hon Donald Selamolela, thank you for inputting constructively to the work we do and taking us to task, as you represented the people we serve.

To the Acting HOD, Mr Motlhanke Phukuntsi, thank you for agreeing to report to Public Works Roads and Infrastructure on a daily basis and providing that much-needed strategic support. To the chairperson of the RAL board, Mr Matome Ralebipi and the CEO Mr Gabriel Maluleke, together we travelled this province with one objective and that was to deliver road infrastructure to the people. Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to the mission at hand. Continue to do well in this space.

To the entire Public Works family, ke a leboga. The work that we did together speaks volumes, and I thank you for being part of this journey. To the support staff in my office and protectors, we went, we saw, and I believe we conquered, it has been a pleasure to have you walk by my side. To my family, thank you for understanding my absence in your life, for allowing me to do the work for the people and for supporting me in my highs and my lows. I really appreciate you.

In conclusion, indeed, there is no ignoring or even denying that work has been done by this government, under the leadership of Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa. Those who rationalise, ignore and even deny are merely protecting their core belief, driven by a desire to drive their own narrative for their own benefit. I hereby table the 2024/25 financial year, Budget Vote 09. I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, MEC, Hon Rakgoale. The Budget Speech together with its supporting documents are to be brought back to the House. We shall now proceed to Item 7.1.3 and call upon the Hon MEC for Health, Dr Ramathuba to come and present the Budget Speech for the Department of Health.

THE MEC FOR HEALTH

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

(Address by Dr P C Ramathuba, MEC for Health)

Hon Speaker; Hon Deputy Speaker, Tshitereke Matibe; Hon Premier, Chupu Mathabatha; colleagues in the Executive Council; Hon Chief Whip and Hon Deputy Chair of Chairs, and happy birthday; chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health, Hon Simon Mathe; honourable Members of this august House; members of the opposition parties; Director-General of the province and all our heads of departments who are here today; our traditional leaders; our traditional health practitioners; leaders of the religious community; all our invited guests; ladies and gentlemen, ndi Matsheloni. Avuxeni. Thobela. Goeie more. Silotjhile. Good morning.

Once upon a time in this province, as Hon Phala likes saying, we had four Departments of Health, i.e., Venda, Lebowa, Gazankulu and Northern Transvaal, with their own ministers of Health. This meant that 30 years ago, a Northern Sotho speaking young man from Motetema who got involved in a motor vehicle accident in Groblersdal town, and despite the hospital being a stone's throw away, would have to be transported to Tsimanyane Hospital, now known as Matlala Hospital, which is 50 km away. At times this young man would die before arrival. While post-mortem results always indicated the cause of death as polytrauma, the reality is that the colour of his skin was central to the cause of his death. Thirty years later, the same young man could easily be admitted at Groblersdal Hospital, and be given the most appropriate level of care irrespective of his skin colour, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

In acknowledging that development as a continuous process, 9 years ago it would have taken up to 6 hours to respond on the accident scene, however, because change is possible, with the latest additional fleet of 566 ambulances on top of the 50 ambulances we have been procuring annually, it takes less than 30 minutes for an ambulance to respond in this province to the scene for urban setting and less than 60 minutes for rural setting. Should our young man sustain injuries categorising him as priority 1, meaning, he might be having a head injury, what would happen today is that our Alpha1 or Alpha 2 will be activated to airlift him to the nearest appropriate facility. Hence we say, change is possible.

Ten years ago, had our young man suffered that head injury, he would have had to be transported either to Mankweng Hospital or at times to George Mukhari Hospital, which is outside the province, just for a CT scan. We pride ourselves that today this same young man with a head injury in Groblersdal, o no betha short left to St Rita's Hospital which is 86 km for a CT scan. That is because, honourable Members, change is possible. Honourable Members, a se ra fetša, ngwaga wo, molwetši wo wa bo rena, o tla kgona goya kgauswi kudu, kua Philadelphia Hospital, which is just 32 km away. Ka lebaka la gore re tšere sephetho sa go rekela selete sa Sekhukhune gore ba be le tšhe pedi, Hon Monama. Se sengwe se St Rita's Hospital mola se sengwe se le kua Philadelphia. Mošomo wo o mobotse o netefaditšwe ke Tona ya Maphelo, Ngaka Mathume Joseph Phaahla, who during the State of the Nation debate in Parliament remarked: "Late in 2022, I joined the MEC for Health in Limpopo and the Premier in unveiling modern equipment at a rural hospital, St Rita's, where I worked as a medical officer together with Minister Motsoaledi who was part-time but spending more time there than at his practice. The equipment included a CT scan, modern digital X-ray and mammogram. All this equipment is backed up by picture archiving and communication system which allows doctors to receive the radiological images on their phones or laptops and the radiologist sitting anywhere in the world can interpret the images and feedback to the doctors on the patient's bedside. In this way we are using technology to reduce lack of access to specialised skills." Now, honourable Members, what inspires us? What drives us? What keeps us going? We are driven by the judicious words of a medical doctor by profession, our seventh president of the African National Congress, Dr A B Xuma, who as early as 1941 observed the challenges facing the health system of this country and tabled his diagnosis when delivering his presidential address of 14 December, 1941 and said, "Africans in South Africa have the highest infant mortality rate, highest mortality and morbidity rates than any other section."

In the past five years, and indeed in the past 30 years of our democracy, we have laboured tirelessly to change the face of healthcare services in the province. The government has increased its capacity to respond meaningfully to the health needs of the people of Limpopo. Through accessible, quality, and comprehensive healthcare, millions of our people are cared for in many of our facilities. Buoyed by the sacrifices of our forebears, we used the past 30 years of our freedom and democracy to lift our people out of hopelessness, bring healthcare services closer to where they live, and expand access in the process.

Primary healthcare services remain the bedrock of our healthcare system. The dream of President Xuma to reduce maternal and infant mortality can only be realised when we have strong primary healthcare services, hence the past financial year was declared and pronounced in this august House as "a year of primary healthcare". The aim was to continue the effort to reengineer the PHC platform. The department embarked on an active recruitment drive of professional nurses to make good on the commitment made to extend the service hours of clinics. To date, a total of 638 professional nurses' posts were advertised, just for this financial year, of which 558 are filled and they have already resumed their duties. [APPLAUSE] Through these appointments, the department managed to increase the number of facilities that are rendering a 24-hour service.

Today, we pride ourselves as a province because a total of 217 primary healthcare facilities have been activated to render a 24-hour service. This number will continue to increase every month. For instance, just to mention a few, a total of 40 clinics are going to be activated to render a 24-hour service, not because we are going for elections, but because it is the right thing to do. [APPLAUSE] Mogalakwena Municipality will see Mokamule Clinic and Skuruwe Clinic, rendering a 24-hour service. Greater Giyani will see Basani Clinic, Mhlaba Wellim Clinic and Moeshe Clinic having a 24-hour service, just to mention a few. [APPLAUSE] In Fetakgomo-Tubatse, we are going to have Mphanama Clinic, Mmutlane Clinic and many others. In Collins Chabane Municipality, we are going to have Manabela, Helderwater Clinic; Makhado, Vyeboom Clinic and Madala Clinic, just to mention a few. [APPLAUSE] In Blouberg, we are going to see De Vrede, Endermal, Alldays, Dendron and many more clinics rendering a 24-hour service. In Lepelle Nkupi, we are going to have GaChuene Clinic rendering a 24-hour service. I can go on and on. That will be proudly brought to you by the African Congress-led government. The government that loves its people. [APPLAUSE]

Honourable Members, our target for ideal clinics for the current financial year is 20%. We have already managed to surpass this target, and we are at 40%, which gives us a total number of 194 clinics. We are acknowledging that progress has been made. However, we are not satisfied, because we want all our clinics to meet the IDP status because for us to fully implement the National Health Insurance, we need to ensure that our clinics achieve the ideal clinic status. Our President-General, Dr A B Xuma, further instructed us to pursue full extension of public health and preventative health measures to all South Africans, in particular those who were previously marginalised.

The success of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation was realised in 2023 when we reported a prolonged measles outbreak in the province, with a total of 506 confirmed measles cases but zero deaths. [APPLAUSE] The measles vaccination campaign which we unleashed, as the ANC-led government, was able to reach 1 007 651 children. We can assure all of you that measles is indeed under control. [APPLAUSE]

Despite the outbreak of cholera in our neighbouring countries, especially within the SADC region and some provinces in our country, as of today, Limpopo, despite being on the boarder, was able to register only 8 laboratory-confirmed cholera cases. We are further comforted by the fact that whilst we have seen mortality rate going up in other parts of the SADC region and our country, as a province, we have recorded zero mortality with regard to cholera outbreak. [APPLAUSE] This was made possible because not only did the Hon MEC for Provincial Treasury give us the resources to fight cholera, but the Mayors were also holding hands together with us. Do you remember the virtual meetings we had day and night to make sure that we contain cholera and it doesn't kill our people? Indeed, no one in Limpopo died because of cholera. [APPLAUSE]

Through various preventative measures, including barrier methods and others, we have managed to appreciate a reduction in HIV positivity rate. Our message is still the same. Honourable Members, let us teach abstinence. Only when you are ready and mature, will you engage in sexual activity. In that case, honourable Members, let's be faithful. Ge go pala, let's condomise. Honourable members, the ANC-led government, the government of the people, has made positive strides towards fighting TB. In 2019,

we recorded 11 795 TB cases and 67% treatment success rate. Over the years, we have seen a decline year in and year out of the number of TB cases. We have seen a decline in loss to follow up and we have seen a decline in mortality rate. In 2023, we only registered 8 482 new cases of TB, and we have seen 74% of treatment success rate. When I graduated, we used to take 24 months to keep the patients in a TB hospital. However, we believe that this percentage is going to decrease because this ANC-led government has brought to you those drugs, from 24 months of treating the drug-resistant TB to only six months. Aowa, mmušo wa African National Congress o a šoma. [APPLAUSE]

Every country's health system is measured through its improvement in terms of maternal and infant mortality rates. It is precisely for this reason that our forebears who gathered at Kliptown in 1955 at the seminal Congress of the People proclaimed in the Freedom Charter: "Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children." Thirty years ago, when the African National Congress received an overwhelming mandate to govern South Africa, as part of implementing Dr Xuma's dream and the Freedom Charter, our first democratically elected President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, in his first State of the Nation Address, was decisive, long before the Millenium Development Goals 2015. He declared free health for all pregnant women and their unborn children until the age of six. Bo-Tintswalo started in detail because their mothers were given free healthcare and when they were born, they were given immunisation for free. It is worth noting that the ANC-led government started taking care of Bo-Tintswalo since conception. Actually, as we speak, even those mothers and fathers who are failing to conceive, Limpopo has got fertility specialists who give them services for free. [APPLAUSE] Yes, we are assisting those who can't conceive to conceive.

There was a time in this country when, in terms of maternal deaths, we were seen as a province of "bo re boile fela". Today, according to the latest report of National Committee on Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths, we are amongst the top three best-performing provinces in the country. [APPLAUSE] This is a clear indication of an improved healthcare system as per international standards which in simple terms means that if you have very low maternal deaths, it means you have reliable ambulance services. It means you have more of your clinics operating 24 hours. It means the availability of medicine has improved. It means you have got a capable staff as well as an increased number of advanced midwives including obstetricians. However, we are still worried about the Capricorn District, ga bo Hon Johanna Aphiri where maternal mortality is still being recorded in the province as very high. In response to this, the department has introduced a dedicated team called the Limpopo Obstetrics Response Team. They are going to respond to all preventable maternal deaths with more focus on Capricorn District because all what we are saying is, no woman must die because she wants to give birth.

With regard to children under five pneumonia case fatality rate, we have been able to reduce it to 1,8% against our annual target of 2,5%. The department continues to work with communities that encourage early healthcare-seeking behaviours and to educate communities on the danger signs in children, while also working with healthcare professionals to improve case management by implementing standardised treatment guidelines. It is of particular concern that despite government spending over R26 million nationwide per month on social grants, including child support grant, we still

see an increasing number of children succumbing to severe malnutrition, the majority of whom present in our facilities late. This is a clear indication that the child support grant is mostly not used for the intended purpose. The saying that: “it takes a village to raise a child” rings true and, therefore, we must call upon all of us in this august House to protect and defend these children within our communities. Government has done its part. It is up to us as communities and leaders to teach our communities to protect our children.

For us to address both maternal and infant mortality, the department committed in this august House through honourable Members last year that we are going to implement maternal and child centre of excellence in 10 of our hospitals and the Limpopo maternal health standards in all facilities to improve the quality care and outcomes of pregnant women. Whilst we have seen the results being there, we must also celebrate that 7 out of 10 hospitals have completed the infrastructure aspect of these projects and have attained the MCCE status. The three remaining facilities for renovation are, for obvious reasons, Tshilidzini, Letaba and Elim Hospitals. These facilities will be completed by the 2024/25 financial year. The remaining three hospitals must also attain the MCCE status within this financial year, working with the national Department of Health.

Nine years ago, our patients were served food which was not nutritious and presentable. During our commitment, we indicated that food forms an integral part of the journey towards overhauling the entire nutrition services in our facilities. We are proud to report to this august House that since the launch of the 8-day menu 5 years ago, we continue to serve our patients with nutritious and presentable food in our 41 revamped food service units. All these units are managed by qualified professional food service aids because no one, unless you have studied for it, can cook a patient's food. In our hospitals, some patients refuse to be discharged because of the menu that is served. [APPLAUSE]

Our premature babies are also at risk of developmental delays, and most of them with poor school performance; hence, their nutrition also forms part of their disease prevention and management. That is why the department initiated breast milk banks an approach which was meant to promote breastfeeding for the first six months, because Grade 12 results start during the first six months. The research is there; babies who have been breastfed exclusively for the first six months perform very well at school. That is why as the department, for those premature babies who could not suck for whatever reason or any baby who could not get breast milk, we made history in this province when we established our first-ever breast milk bank in Mankweng in 2016.

Since then, we have established a second breast milk bank in Sekhukhune. The aim is to make sure that one day Sekhukhune leads this province in terms of Grade 12 results. [APPLAUSE] It is my pleasure to announce that the bid for a breast milk bank will be established this year before end of June. Letaba Hospital in Mopani and Mokopane Hospital in Waterberg will receive breast milk banks. Vhembe will be the last one for obvious reasons. These other regions will be receiving breast milk banks. Dr Xuma, our president-general must be smiling in his grave when he sees that just in the past six months from just these two facilities, more than 350 premature babies benefitted from these two existing breast milk banks. We also want to take this

opportunity to thank all the donor lactating mothers and call upon all mothers with capacity to donate breast milk to do the right thing. Let's do more, together. [APPLAUSE]

Who ever thought that a rural province such as Limpopo would have magnetic resonance imaging? It is a machine that sees deep inside a person and that can diagnose almost anything and everything. Yet here we are, change is possible Hon Speaker. During the past year, the department undertook to procure two magnetic resonance imaging units for Mankweng and Pietersburg Hospitals. The department was able to deliver on both these units, with training and commissioning currently underway. Therefore, the waiting time shall be reduced from four months to less than two months and shall allow continuity of service in case one machine breaks down, thus making access to healthcare to be continuous. It is worth mentioning that Mankweng Hospital in its 36 years of existence has never had an MRI scan. We have made it possible through the ANC-led government. This is in line with the decentralisation approach towards specialised healthcare services.

Access to cancer treatment is a basic human right and, unfortunately, it is so expensive that our people cannot afford it. As the department, we have committed in this august House that we will invest in life-changing high-technology equipment towards diagnostic and therapeutic care. We are proud to report to you honourable Members that we delivered on our commitment of installing a gamma camera in nuclear medicine. Furthermore, a brachytherapy unit was installed in the radiation oncology unit. This is a combined investment of R17 million. This is in addition to the renovations and expansion of the existing oncology unit at the Pietersburg Hospital. The investment in this area demonstrates the total commitment of our ANC-led government of the day to improve not only access to healthcare but also the quality of care for patients suffering from different forms of cancer.

The department has already procured the second LINAC machine which will be delivered in the coming financial year. It would be funded through the National Tertiary Services Grant (NTSG) to increase the capacity of the radiation oncology unit to treat more patients speedily before cancer spreads to the other parts of the body. The current situation of having only one LINAC machine simply means longer waiting times for patients for the much-needed life-saving intervention which will stop cancers from progressing. It is worth mentioning that the province of Limpopo has never had a machine that is called positron emission tomography CT scan. Even though the province has specialists with skills to treat such patients, we are forced to refer all patients requiring PET CT scan to Gauteng.

The most painful situation that we have to deal with on a daily basis is when patients travel all the way just to be turned back without treatment for whatever reasons. Moreover, we are only allocated four patients per week, but in essence they won't even be able to see you. This is understandable given the fact that Gauteng has its own huge burden. This is about to be news of the past because as a department we have our own PET CT scan of the total value of R52,262,141.71 inclusive of its preventative maintenance plan. The infrastructural alterations are underway and by the end of May, PET CT scan would have arrived, and honourable Members can go and see it. Days of patients who used to travel from as far as Majeje village in Phalaborwa, from Matshakatini village in Musina, from Leolo in Makhuduthamaga and GaSeleka in

Lephalale for at least two days via Pietersburg to Gauteng to get the PET CT scan and be told that they can't be attended to are over. Change is indeed possible. [APPLAUSE]

Three years ago, in this august House, we celebrated our first-ever in-house radiation oncologist produced jointly by the University of Limpopo and Limpopo Department of Health. Since then, more specialists in this field continue to be produced. We are once more, proud to announce that the availability of these equipment coincides with the first-ever accreditation by the Health Professions Council of South Africa. Two weeks ago, we had a meeting with them for the postgraduate specialist training in nuclear medicine. These are the specialists who will be operating the equipment. Since attaining this licence to train by the end of 2023, we have already appointed our first ever trainee specialist doctor in this field right here in Limpopo. She is also in our midst: Dr Sambo. She is going to be the first-ever in-house produced nuclear medicine specialist. [APPLAUSE] Can you stand up so that the House can see you. Dr Vuyelwa Sambo would not have been able to specialise if we did not have this. As I have already indicated, she will be the first homegrown nuclear medicine specialist. Manana Xipikara, a hi se heta. Ha ha ya emahlweni no kombisa ku tinyikela ka hina ku tiyisisa leswaku vanhu lava hanyaka na vutsoniwa va kuma switirhisiwa leswi faneleke ku va pfuna ku antswisa mahanyelo ya vona ya siku na siku. Switirhisiwa swo fana na; 107 hearing aids, issued about 1 303 spectacles, 300 wheelchairs and 107 Madiba buggies for children with severe forms of disability. However, we are still planning to procure 199 hearing aids in the coming financial year as long as the ANC is still in charge. We are just reminding them. They must still know.

Hon Speaker, change is possible. Nine years ago, this province had very few medical specialists, and this was worse in the surgical disciplines like in orthopaedics, where we had zero HPCSA registered specialists. Today we have a total of eleven orthopaedic surgeons from zero. A zwi fheleli afho fhedzi muthomphei, zwa zwino ro fhiwa thendelo ya u fundedza madokotela a vho rine uri vha kone u vha madokotela a zwipentshele zwa marambo. Thahelero hei ya madokotela yo vha l tshi ita uri mitevhe ya vho lindelaho miaro l vha ndapfusa sa izwo ro vha ro tea u vha rumela ngei kha zwibadela zwa tshikhuwani, zwa tou nga ndi vhathu vhoyaho u shambila sa vha ya ho u shambila mishumo. Zwe zwa thoma sa madze, musi muphurofesa vho Steven Matshidze vha tshi da uri thusanga kotare u ita miaro iyi zwo fhedzisela namusi zwo ri bebela thandela ine mulanga vundu vho Mathabatha kha tshiphitshi tshavho vha tshi l talusa vha ri: "Rural Health Matters has contributed significantly towards reducing the backlog of surgery, taking quality healthcare to the people." [APPLAUSE]

To date, we have seen different specialities rotating every month across rural hospitals performing operations that no one ever thought could be done in rural hospitals. Nine years ago, who could have imagined the first robotic-assisted knee operation being performed in our province, in a rural hospital like Botlokwa? [APPLAUSE] As of today, rural health matters project has benefitted more than 8 000 patients across the province. We have seen eyesight being restored. We have seen crutches being thrown away when mobility was restored. We have seen wheelchairs returned back to the department. We have seen the confidence of a girl child being restored after a life-changing breast reduction procedure. We have seen prayer women going back to church after a life-changing urogynaecological procedure. This woman could not sing, nor laugh because of fear of spontaneous loss of urine control in church. We have

seen a child with cleft palate whose mother was accused of witchcraft undergoing a life-changing operation free of charge, as declared by President Nelson Mandela. [APPLAUSE]

Many people believe that cataracts are for senior citizens, unfortunately in recent days we continued to witness young people losing their jobs, dropping out of school and slipping into depression due to loss of eyesight as a result of cataracts. A 20-year-old Letaba TVET College student had to drop out of college because she had lost her eyesight as a result of cataract which was so bad that it attacked both her eyes and rendered her completely blind. The story of Sara Malebati was so painful. I met her two weeks ago on Saturday, 16 March 2024. At that time, she could not see me but could only hear my voice, and I committed that her eyesight would be restored. Today I was welcomed by her at the door. I could not recognise her. She is my special guest. She had no assistant as her eyesight had been fully restored. [APPLAUSE] She is with her mother. Sarah will be resuming with her studies in Business Management.

Let us all wish Sarah well in her academic journey since she is indeed a living testimony that change is possible. That is why as a department we felt the need to commemorate Human Rights Month through a campaign called Operation Bula Mahlo, Pfula matihlo, Vulani Mato. This would not have been possible without committed, dedicated and passionate clinicians who understand our vision and who are also in our midst today. We have Dr Phakamisa Khayaletu Mkabile, one of our few specialist ophthalmologists who does not mind and is willing to traverse our rural hospitals in pursuit of restoring eyesight. Dr Phakamisa is seated there. She can “phakama” so that we see her. [APPLAUSE]

A 38-year-old, Thabo Collen Ngoepe, who used to make a living as a taxi driver lost his job after losing eyesight because of a cataract. He is also with us today to witness that the ANC-led government cares about its people because he is one of the 371 patients whose eyesight was restored just this past three weeks, as we commemorate Human Rights Day. He is Cde Thabo; I was taking a picture with him; he could see me now that his eyesight is restored. He will be going back to his job to drive. [APPLAUSE]

So you can see that cataract is not only for the grannies. It affects the young people as well. Honourable Members, rural health, as the Premier indicated, does matter the most. Mahlogonolo Mabogwane is a teenager who had ameloblastoma which forced him to drop out of school whilst doing Grade 9. However, with the leadership of Dr Dikgale, she led the team that operated on him, and he went back to write his Grade 9 exams last year. He was operated on in the beginning of last year. He went back to school and did his Grade 9. He has passed because we restored his confidence, and he will be moving to Grade 10. [APPLAUSE] At least with this one, we can show you a picture before and the pictures after.

Honourable Members, let us remind ourselves of what our President A B Xuma instructed us again during his address when he said we should work for “the training of Africans in medicine, surgery and public health”. He prophesied in 1941. However, inspired by him, South Africans witnessed the first-ever post-1994 medical school in our province against all odds. The first cohort of 60 students to qualify as medical doctors from this medical school is currently doing community service.

Many thought this progressive initiative would never see the light of day. As we speak, in our recent meeting two weeks ago, the Department of Health, the University of Limpopo and the Health Professions Council of South Africa, with the assistance of the MEC for Provincial Treasury to give us more money to appoint specialists, agreed on a recommendation to increase the annual first-year intake from 60 to 80 students. [APPLAUSE] This simply means that Kgabo from GaMoletji will not be forced to travel to as far as Cape Town, Bloemfontein, or Durban in a quest to study medicine. They will just “shortleft” to the University of Limpopo, Mankweng ga bo Johanna Aphiri to become a medical doctor. [APPLAUSE] This undergraduate medical training programme could not have been possible without the HPCSA registered specialists. It is for this reason that as the department we will continue to embark on an active recruitment and retention process.

In our midst we are blessed to have Prof Nyaweleni Tshifularo. He is the first-ever black paediatric surgeon in the country. He has produced many other paediatric surgeons. Prof Tshifularo who spent most of his years in Gauteng, is one of those academic specialists, those academic researchers and those surgeons who we have to celebrate. He has decided today, to join the winning team that is dedicated to making change, and that change is indeed possible. In May 2023, when the Health Professions Council of South Africa visited us and evaluated our postgraduate training, the outcome was made possible by the presence of Prof Tshifularo, where it was recommended that there should be full accreditation of 10 clinical departments and conditional accreditation of 8 clinical departments. We are going to have about 18 different types of specialists who have never been there before. This has never happened, but it's going to happen now going forward because of the presence of Prof Tshifularo and many more like Prof Boshomane for nuclear medicine. Prof Boshomane is also one of our new recruits who is with us today, who has studied overseas. Both of them are sons of the soil. We have just asked them to come back, and with their medical school background, they made it possible for us to receive accreditation to train and produce our own paediatric surgeons here in Limpopo province.

Dr Precious Moraswi-Mabotja a young hardworking medical doctor, a young mother of two children aged two and a wife, would have been forced to leave the province and her family in pursuit of this much sought-after speciality, but today, she is one of the first two paediatric surgeon trainees of Prof Tshifularo. They will be the first two to graduate in paediatric surgeon in the province.

Dr Precious Mothokwa is another, born and bred in Hwibi, qualified from Sefako Makgatho University is also with us today. The two of them had the opportunity to specialise in paediatric surgery at the University of Limpopo. Any operations for children will be in safe hands. Dr Moraswi and Dr Mothokwa together with your professor, you can stand up so that honourable Members know their children are in safe hands. [APPLAUSE] Dr Boshomane, can you also rise so that honourable Members can see you. [APPLAUSE] Those with cancer problems, talk to him. He is the man who took away our beautiful million to buy that machine. [LAUGHTER]

Honourable Members, the construction of the much-awaited Limpopo Central Hospital is in full swing, and its estimated completion date was pronounced as 2028. We are also happy to learn that the construction of the medical campus, you can't have a hospital without a medical campus, has been approved by the National Treasury and

the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology. Polokwane will never be the same. [APPLAUSE] In this regard, we must always acknowledge and appreciate the contribution that the University of Limpopo together with the Limpopo Department of Health and the Limpopo provincial government have made. Today they are both represented by Dr Abbey Ngoepe and Prof Tebogo Mothiba, the Executive Dean of the faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Limpopo. [APPLAUSE] We make sure honourable MEC for Provincial Treasury that we bring evidence ka gore le re re rata go bolela dilo tša go se be gona.

The COVID-19 pandemic confirmed what we already knew that there is no alternative to healthcare infrastructure if we want to deliver quality healthcare services. The R851 million allocation towards infrastructure is almost at 100% expenditure. As a result of our current excellent spending on infrastructure grant, the department received an additional R70 million grant from the national Department of Health as an incentive for good performance. You all know where that grant is coming from. I don't have to mention it.

Over and above projects that MEC Rakgoale has presented in this House and have been handed over for implementation by implementing agencies, we have managed to complete some of the following projects in-house. It will please you to know that the Nursing College is back in operation. Our students are now in class. Phase 1 and 2 of students' accommodation have been completed in Giyani Campus and more will be done to develop the college to a modern and vibrant institution that would deliver in the best ways possible.

As part of augmenting our water supply in our facilities, we can proudly announce that we have completed the installation and full operation of the Pietersburg Hospital – bulk water storage tanks project. There won't be any water shortage in Polokwane Hospital, even when they close water supply. Additionally, in terms of water and sanitation projects, focus was on our primary healthcare facilities, where we have been able to repair 32 PHC facilities' boreholes and also 389 enviro loos also receiving attention in terms of maintenance and repairs. We have also commenced with maintenance and repairs of 359 Lilliput and reverse osmosis plants at various primary healthcare centres.

To mitigate against the current loadshedding, the department has embarked on a sustainable and reliable electricity supply mechanism. To this end, we have completed the upgrades and the bulk fuel storage at Musina and Evuxakeni Hospitals. We also made sure that these things operate 24 hours. When you come to hospitals, we are going to ask for proof of residence. We emphasise the importance of obtaining that accurate and important information so that we can be able to follow you up. We want to know your place. We also want to know your residential address. We also want to see relevant documents such as your ID or your passport. If you are a refugee, give us the refugee certificate. Show us your permit. Show us your appointment card and show us all that information. We are not going to fight with you.

The Budget break down for Health, Vote 07, goes as follows: The 2024/25 overall Budget for Health has increased by 3,6% from the 2023/24 Main Appropriation and increased by 0,1% from the Adjusted Appropriation. Within this allocation, equitable

share grows by 3,5% from the Main Appropriation, whereas conditional grants decrease by 4,1%. Equitable share decreases by 1,0% from the 2023/24 adjusted allocation, whereas conditional grants increase by 5,8 % from the 2023/24 adjusted allocation. In monetary terms, the total budget increases from the budget of R23,8 billion in 2023/24 to R24,6 billion in 2024/25. The total allocation increases by an average of 4,9% over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. I am, therefore, indeed honoured and privileged to table to this august House the Budget for Health, Vote 7, for the year 2024/25 to the value of R24,6 billion, which consists of R20,3 billion equitable share, R4,1 billion conditional grants and R220,6 million own revenues.

The Budget has been allocated to fund the following key priorities of the department, which will be distributed to all of you.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Premier, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, for having trusted me with such enormous responsibilities of leading a department as complex as the Department of Health. I want to thank him for his unfailing support and his wisdom and guidance throughout the years as we navigate in the department. Also, I must appreciate my colleagues, not singling anyone of them out.

I want to thank all of you for supporting us in our work because health cuts across all the departments. I am also grateful for the confidence and support that we get, and we continue to receive from the Premier in making sure that we deliver quality healthcare services in our facilities and utilise our budget allocation responsibly. I want to say thank you a million times. To the Portfolio Committee on Health led by Hon Mathe, your monitoring and oversight, coupled with your constructive criticism, which is also understandably so aimed at improving quality healthcare for our people, have made us better people. Thank you for the advice that continues to make us better people; it is really appreciated. [APPLAUSE]

We must also thank Hon Selamolela, with that painful tone, the chairperson of Scopa. [APPLAUSE] We really appreciate your support. We must also thank Members of this august House for your unwavering support. We are committed towards making sure that the people of Limpopo live long and healthy lives. Let me also take this opportunity and thank our Acting HOD, Dr Ntodeni Ndwamato and her generals, her entire team, from the men and women in blue at our facility gates to the men and women in black at the mortuary; and your senior management team, for giving us their full energy as we march to our destination of a long and healthy life for the people of Limpopo.

I would have done an injustice if I don't thank the team in the MEC's office. This is a team that doesn't sleep. This is the team that criss-crosses the province. This is the team that goes beyond the call of duty. Whenever you see the MEC looking presentable, Hon Speaker, it is the team that ensures that the MEC bathes and bathes accordingly. [LAUGHTER]

To my surviving parent, my mother, where would I be if it was not because of you. Thank you for your continuous support. Despite the fact that you have raised us, you continue to help us to raise our children and to give us the motherly support that I can never purchase anywhere. I am still her infant who survives on her breast milk. To my siblings who continue to be deputy mothers to my daughters, I say thank you very much. To my daughters, I want to appreciate that you finally begin to understand. One

of them is celebrating her 18th birthday today and I am dedicating this speech to her so that she can understand when her mother must be shared with the people of Limpopo. [APPLAUSE] I am confident that we have laid a solid foundation for even more progress in the year ahead and beyond.

In closing, I would like to borrow from the sitting President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, who said in his closing remarks at the signing of the Presidential Health Compact in 2019, at the Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital, Ga-Rankuwa, Tshwane: “Our mission is to reform healthcare, to make it better suited to the needs of an ever-growing population, is part of a global movement towards equitable healthcare access that was given new impetus when the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted in 2015.” He went on to say, “Access to quality healthcare is not just about a healthy body and a healthy mind. It is about a healthy society in which all people can pursue their interests and achieve their potential.”

To the African National Congress, to all my comrades sitting there, Mom V, Sesi Makoma and all of you here, I want to say thank you. To all my sisters, Caroline Mahasela, who are harsh when I am looking right and praise me when I am doing good. To all of you here, I am saying thank you very much. The ANC remains committed to its mission; indeed, Hon Speaker, change is possible. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, MEC, Hon Ramathuba. The Budget Speech together with the supporting documents is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Health for consideration and to report back to this House. We will now move to item 08.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hon Deputy Speaker, you are recognised.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Lunch will be served at the Bolivia Lodge. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The House is adjourned to Thursday, 28 March 2024 at 10:00 at the Polokwane Municipal Council Chamber. Thank you very much.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
POLOKWANE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHAMBER
THURSDAY, 28 MARCH 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/ MEDITATIONS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity for a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you very much, you may all be seated. Hon Premier, Mr Chupu Stanley Mathabatha; Members of the Executive Council; honourable Members of the Legislature; Hon Speaker, Ms Rosemarry Molapo; Hon Chief Whip and the Hon Deputy Chief Whip; Hon Chair of Chairs and Hon Deputy Chair of Chairs; Hon Leader of the Opposition; our guests and officials in the gallery, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity and welcome you all.

As we proceed, honourable Members, items 2, 3, 4 and 5 on the Order Paper are still deferred until Members of the Executive Council have finished presenting their Budget Speeches.

[ITEMS 2–5 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

Are there any tablings of committee reports, other reports, and papers? There are none.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1. Second Reading: Presentation of Budget Votes and Schedule of the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B02-2024]

I will now take this opportunity to call upon the honourable MEC for Social Development to come and present the Budget Speech for Vote 12.

THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

(Address by Ms N A Ndalane, MEC for Social Development)

Hon Speaker and Deputy Speaker, Hon Premier, esteemed Members of the Executive Council, Chief Whip of the ruling party, leaders of opposition parties, chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, chairperson of the portfolio committee, honourable Members of the Legislature, members of the media, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, people of Limpopo, a very good morning to you all.

It is with great humility and a sense of duty that I stand before you today in this esteemed assembly to present the Budget Vote for the Department of Social Development. Gathered here this morning, we must remember that our actions today will shape the future of those who face daily battles against poverty, gender-based violence, substance abuse and the myriad challenges confronting individuals living with disabilities and those in dysfunctional families. The weight of responsibility is heavy upon us as we strive to create a more inclusive and supportive society for all. Let us not forget that the true measure of our society is how we care for the most vulnerable members of our community.

Hon Speaker, having expressed the above it is significant to indicate that we are guided by the fundamental objective of our governing party, the African National Congress, which aims to achieve a better life for all. Our department is central to achieving this objective because our key mandate is in sync with the ANC's fundamental goal. The prevailing economic hardships have become an added burden to the poor and all vulnerable groups in our society. Delivering the State of the Nation Address, President Cyril Ramaphosa lauded social security services of the democratic order for their significant reduction of poverty in our country.

Our policies and programmes have, over 30 years, lifted millions of people out of dire poverty. The President highlighted that in 1993, South Africa faced a significant poverty challenge, with 71,1% of its population living in poverty. By 2010, this rate had dropped to 60,9%, and it continued to decrease, reaching 55,5% in 2020, as reported by the World Bank. This without a doubt demonstrates the positive impact social security programmes and interventions of the ANC have on our collective fight against poverty and starvation in our land.

Hon Speaker, our department is anchored by men and women who provide social welfare services. I am referring to our capable social welfare practitioners whose tireless and often unappreciated work remains the glue that binds our social fabric. I would like to take this opportunity to extend special appreciation to our social welfare practitioners for continuing to bind our society together by providing much-needed services to the people of our province. A week ago, we held a Social Work Symposium at the University of Venda to celebrate World Social Work Month and to capacitate our social welfare practitioners with the necessary technical and academic skills. The symposium was well-timed, considering that our social welfare practitioners need to be technically astute given the dynamic challenges they face daily.

Regarding older persons, the department acknowledges the importance of providing appropriate conditions for them. This includes services in residential facilities and facilitating access to community-based care and other support services. A total of 542 older persons will access residential facilities, while 13,900 will access community-based care and support services for the 2024/25 financial year. A week ago, our province participated in the National Golden Games in Mpumalanga, aimed at promoting independence and self-reliance among older persons and promoting healthy lifestyles. Our team achieved a bronze medal, securing position three overall, a massive achievement. Congratulations to Team Limpopo.

Hon Deputy Speaker, regarding persons with disability, one of our fundamental responsibilities is to provide support and care services to people living with disability. These vulnerable members of our society may be differently abled, but as a caring government, we recognise their rights and our duty to support them. A total of 294 people living with disability will be provided access to residential facilities, while 3,510 will access protective workshops in the 2024/25 financial year.

I will now discuss services to families. A family is the basic unit of society. For stability and a functional society, we need functional families. Therefore, the department provides child and family care and support services to communities in partnership with stakeholders and civil society. To date, 35,184 family members participated in family preservation services, while 15,364 participated in the parenting skills programme, and 154 were reunited with their families.

Fifty-eight thousand, nine hundred and seventy-four (58,974) family members will be reached through family preservation services during the 2024/25 financial year. Meanwhile, 29,780 family members will be reached through the parenting skills programme, and 160 family members will be reunified with their families.

Hon Speaker, regarding childcare and protection services, the department has the responsibility to provide care and protection under the Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005). A total of 1,735 children were placed in foster care centres, while 36,571 children have valid foster care orders. The number of reported cases of abuse to date is 520. These children continue to receive psychosocial services rendered by social workers and designated child protection organisations. The Childcare and Protection Services programme has spent millions in implementing the NAWONGO Court Judgment. The subsidy amount for children in child and youth care centres has been increased from R3,500 to R4,000 per child per month. Currently, 668 children are placed in child and youth care centres, with 15 centres in total, five of which are government run.

Hon Deputy Speaker, regarding community-based care services for children, the community-based prevention and early intervention services serve as a response mechanism to address the needs of orphans and vulnerable children. Therefore, 31,390 have accessed this critically important service, while in the 2024/25 financial year, 33,200 children will access the community-based prevention and early intervention services. The department will further strengthen the RISIHA programme in all registered drop-in centres.

Hon Speaker, regarding social crime, the department is implementing an anti-gangsterism strategy, which includes addressing bullying in schools and communities intending to create safer spaces for children. This strategy has shown effectiveness through collaboration with the Justice Crime Prevention Security Cluster departments, resulting in diverting several children in conflict with the law and minor criminal offences away from secure care centres. Currently, 16,735 individuals have been reached through social crime prevention programmes, and 537 individuals in conflict with the law have completed diversion programmes. In the 2024/25 financial year, the department plans to reach 18,500 individuals on social crime prevention.

The two centres, Polokwane Welfare Centre and Mavambe Secure Care Centre, have been effectively operating since the department took over from Bosasa. Together, these centres can accommodate 125 children. Currently, 85 children in conflict with the law have access to these two centres.

On the Victim Empowerment Programme, gender-based violence continues to burden our society, with women and children being frequent victims of this scourge. According to United Nations Women, our country has one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world, with one in five women in relationships having experienced physical violence by a partner. The department has established gender-based violence and femicide committees through partnerships with the Office of the Premier and the Networking HIV and Aids Community of Southern Africa in five districts.

To date, 7,953 crime victims have accessed support, and an additional 36 GBVF victims accessed shelter. The department plans to reach 11,230 victims of violence and crime in the 2024/25 financial year.

Substance abuse, particularly among young men and women, is becoming an increasing threat to our youth's future. The department is engaged in aggressive awareness campaigns to reach as many young people as possible. To date, we have conducted 60,214 awareness campaigns in this regard. Similarly, we have assisted 318 service users in accessing treatment for substance use disorder.

In the 2024/2025 financial year, we aim to reach 49,280 people through our campaigns and remain optimistic about making a significant impact in combating substance abuse. In our efforts to provide rehabilitation to substance users, the department operates the state-of-the-art Seshego Treatment Centre, which is nearing its full capacity. Throughout the year, we have encouraged families with individuals addicted to drugs to use this facility at the state's expense. Outpatient services are provided in partnership with the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence.

Hon Speaker, on poverty alleviation and sustainable development, poverty remains one of the key concerns for us as a department. Daily, we witness this reality, with many poverty-stricken individuals relying on us to rescue them out of their misery. In the 2023/24 financial year, we allocated R19 million towards poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods.

Of this amount, R4,9 million was allocated to cooperatives to reduce poverty and create jobs. A total of 1, 103 individuals benefited from these initiatives, particularly

through job opportunities. Additionally, 3,290 poverty-stricken households accessed food through the department's food security programmes. For the 2024/25 financial year, we aim to increase the number of households accessing food through DSD programmes to 7, 200.

In the 2023/24 financial year, 19,280 people accessed food through the department's centre-based feeding programmes. For the 2024/25 financial year, we project that 16,750 people will access food through these programmes.

Hon Speaker, on entrepreneurship development, our young people continue to be on the receiving end with many confronted by unemployment, leading to poverty and desperate circumstances. During the 2023/24 financial year, the department was allocated R14 million for youth and women development. Out of this allocation, R5,9 million was channelled towards funding nine youth non-profit organisations in our various districts. An amount of R1,1 million was directed to the training and development of the youth. We further enrolled 6,617 youth in entrepreneurship programmes in collaboration with our stakeholders.

The memorandum of understanding between us and Vaal University of Technology on cell phone repairs has been finalised. Through this collaboration, 26 youths were offered cell phone repair training, which is accredited by the Media Information and Communications Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority. The National Youth Development Agency will support these cohorts with business development training upon exit.

The previously trained youth received continuous support from the Vaal University of Technology for six months and were assisted in registering their businesses. The department will allow 600 youth to participate in skills development programmes, and an additional 6 000 youth shall participate in entrepreneurship development programmes.

On women's development, during the year under review, R5,2 million was allocated towards women's empowerment, of which R3,8 million benefited women through the funding of six women cooperatives. This funding will enable women to fully participate in income-generating projects.

Furthermore, the department directed R1,4 million towards training and development of women in programmes such as project management, business ventures, and women in small business. About 15 796 women participated in empowerment programmes during this period. For the 2024/25 financial year, the department is plans to continue empowering 17 000 women in programmes such as GBV Awareness, Women in Agriculture, Business Management, Business Start-up, Emerging Young Women in Agriculture, and Parenting programmes.

Hon Speaker, on equity targets and job creation, the department maintains the need to foster equity within its workforce. However, in the past two financial years, the department suffered a great loss of senior managers due to greener pastures and retirement. This has greatly affected equity in women employed at the senior management level. To counter this unfortunate reality, in the 2023/24 financial year, we advertised seven senior management-level positions, and through this process,

we are on the verge of closing the gap and providing much-needed stability at this level of management.

The department will offer 60 leadership and internship opportunities in the 2024/25 financial year to the youth through the Health and Welfare SETA funding. Hon Speaker, regarding tools of trade, the social service professionals have over the years worked under difficult circumstances hindered by inadequate provision of tools of trade. Tools of trade such as motor vehicles, and computer equipment have been in short supply in the past. To remedy the situation and bring stability to this profession, we have set aside an amount of R10 282 million to provide tools of trade to this critically important sector of our department.

Hon Speaker, the National Development Agency, is an agency of government that reports to Parliament through the Department of Social Development. This agency plays a critical role in the total eradication of poverty in our society.

For projects approved for funding during the 2023/2024 financial year, the agency has distributed a total amount of R2,143,185,87 to various civil society organisations in the province to enable them to implement their activities. The funding is earmarked for the procurement of key agricultural inputs such as tractors, ploughs, building storage facilities, seeds, fertilisers, and insecticides.

Regarding the monitoring of CSOs, one critical component of the project management cycle is monitoring of the implementation of planned activities. During the funding period by the NDA, which normally takes a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 36 months, the NDA conducts regular monitoring exercises to ascertain whether the civil society organisations are implementing their projects in line with the service level agreements they sign.

An amount of R1,912,821,17 has been approved for supporting community creches in the province. The province also received a commitment from the national Department of Social Development totalling an amount of R2,920,000,00 to fund two civil society organisations on food security and income-generating programmes.

Hon Speaker, I therefore present the 2024/2025 Budget allocations as follows:

Programme 1: Administration	R392,475 million;
Programme 2: Social Welfare Services	R525,671 million;
Programme 3: Children and Families	R687,165 million;
Programme 4: Restorative Services	R233,436 million; and
Programme 5: Development Research	R237,934 million.

Hon Speaker, the total Budget for the Department of Social Development for the 2024/25 financial year is R2,076,681 billion.

Hon Speaker, I would like to express a great ton of gratitude to our glorious movement, the African National Congress for granting me an opportunity to serve our people at this level. It is the privilege I take with the greatest of humility and never for once do I take it for granted.

In the same vein, I would be failing in my duty if I did not afford our Premier, Stanley Chupu Mathabatha, appreciation for providing me with the opportunity to serve as a Member of the Executive Council under his capable leadership. Your leadership and support have been instrumental in guiding our collective efforts towards a more compassionate and inclusive society.

Many thanks to my colleagues in the Executive for your teamwork and spirited fight against poverty and underdevelopment. I would be making a cardinal mistake if I did not express gratitude to the portfolio committee for your guidance and constructive engagements, which sharpened our resolve to provide services to our people. The staff of our department, led by the capable acting Head of the Department, Ms Dudu Setlatjile, without doubt, deserves appreciation for your determination to deliver services to our people despite the many challenges you face on a daily basis.

In conclusion, let us remember that the true measure of a society's greatness lies not in its economic prosperity alone, but in how we care for the least fortunate among us. Let us stand united in our resolve to build a future where every individual, regardless of their circumstances, has the chance to thrive. Together, let us sow the seeds of compassion and empowerment, cultivating a nation where no one is left behind.

I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC. The Budget Speech, together with the supporting documents is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Social Development for consideration and report back to the House.

We shall now call upon the Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature, Hon Molapo R R, to present the Budget Speech of the Limpopo Legislature. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE

(Address by Ms R R Molapo, Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature)

Deputy Speaker, Hon Matibe; Hon Premier of the Limpopo province, Mr Stanley Chupu Mathabatha; leadership of traditional leaders; Members of the Executive Council; Leader of Government Business; Chief Whip, Hon Mokgonyana; Deputy Chief Whip of the House; the leadership of the African National Congress and leaders of other political formations represented here; Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Committees; honourable Members of this House; Director-General and Head of Department in Limpopo, Acting Secretary to the Limpopo Legislature, Dr Nkuna; senior management and officials of the Limpopo Legislature; officials of other government departments present; distinguished guests; media houses; the people of Limpopo who are following the proceedings on radio and social media platforms, receive my warm greetings. Ke a le dumedisha. Ndi Matsheloni. Avuxeni. Lotjhani.

Honourable Members, it is indeed with a sense of gratitude and humility that I am afforded the opportunity to stand before this august House to present the Budget Vote for the Limpopo Legislature.

The 2024/25 Budget Speech is delivered as we celebrate 30 years of our democracy in South Africa and observe Human Rights Month. In his State of the Nation Address the President of the country, His Excellency Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, spoke eloquently about the milestone traversed by the democratically elected government of South Africa in its 30 years of democracy and freedom.

He said, “Over the last three decades, we have been on a journey, striving together to achieve a new society – a national democratic society. We have cast off the power of apartheid and built a democratic state based on the will of the people. We have established strong institutions to protect the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all people.”

Building on the foundation laid by the President, our Premier, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, in his last State of the Province Address, also provided a historical account of the achievements of this ANC-led government in Limpopo over these past 30 years of democratic governance. He gave a seamless narrative of where we come from and where we are today as a province. In his own words, he said, “What is more profound is that our being here marks 30 years of democracy in South Africa. It has been an illustrious 30 years of responding to the needs and expectations of the people of Limpopo – altering their economic conditions, upgrading them socially, affirming their belonging to this beautiful province and country.”

Honourable Members, as the legislative arm of the state, we have also, along with other government structures, made significant strides, which included, amongst others, repealing the apartheid laws. I may not be in a position to detail the journey we traversed as the legislative arm from the humble beginnings in 1994 when Cde Tintswalo George Mashamba, the veteran of the movement, was designated as the Speaker of the first Legislature of the then Northern Province, to where the Legislature is today. A lot has been accomplished since then by other Speakers who came thereafter. I think it is appropriate that this august House salutes and acknowledges the sterling work that my predecessors did while they are still alive. Please join me as I pay tribute to the following former honourable Speakers of this Legislature:

- Former Hon Tintswalo Godwin George Mashamba, who served as Speaker in 1994.
- Former Hon Papati Robert Malavi, who served as Speaker from 1995-2004.
- Former Hon Dean Dr Tshenuwani Simon Farisani, who served as Speaker from 2004-2009.
- Hon Adv Kgolane Alfred Rudolph Phala who served as Speaker from 2009-2013.
- Former Hon Kwena Elias Nong, who served as Speaker from 2013-2014.
- Hon Matodzi Merriam Ramadwa, who served as Speaker from 2014-2015.
- Hon Polly Shela Boshielo who served as Speaker from 2015-2019.
- Hon Mavhungu Maureen Lerule-Ramakhanya who served as Speaker from 2019-2020. [APPLAUSE]

These Speakers have contributed in many ways towards laying a solid foundation for this institution, and we are very proud of each one of them. They have, in their respective tenures, executed their duties and ensured that the Legislature became the vanguard and the voice of the people, dedicated to continually fulfilling its core mandates of oversight, law-making and public participation. When I took over as Speaker in 2020, I was able to see far because I was standing on the shoulders of giants who came before me. [APPLAUSE]

These Hon Speakers have ensured that the Limpopo Legislature remained steadfast and focused in conducting its core business of oversight, law-making and public participation. They fulfilled their functions diligently, inspired by the philosophy of John Locke, who stated that the influence and power held by the Legislature is unique in the sense that, “The Legislature does not have power to transfer its powers – it cannot give the right to make laws to anyone else, since the people’s majority have placed the power with the Legislature.” It is this view that has seen Members of the Legislature tirelessly working during the past six terms to serve the people of Limpopo.

Honourable Members, in the past 30 years of democracy, we have been able to create a people-centred and a people-driven parliament in the real sense of the word. We have ensured that our communities participate actively in the law-making processes of the Legislature through public hearings, petitions and constituency outreach programmes which were held across the length and breadth of the province. Targeting relevant stakeholders to improve the quality of inputs, the Legislature in the 2023/24 financial year underwent a rigorous and intensive consultation process, organising 42 public hearings for 18 Bills received from the National Council of Provinces.

The Public Participation Unit is charged with engaging citizens in the democratic process, ensuring their voices are heard. Its mandate includes, among others, the facilitation of mechanisms that encourage active citizen involvement in legislative matters organisation of forums, hearings, and consultations to gather public input on legislative issues; promotion of transparency and accessibility in legislative decision-making processes; and collaboration with communities and stakeholders to enhance the inclusivity of public participation initiatives. In line with these constitutional requirements for effective public participation, the Legislature has successfully engaged with communities in relation to processing the Bills.

The Standing Committee on Public Participation and Petitions further conducted educational outreach programmes in several areas to ensure that the citizens of Limpopo are informed about the mandate of the Legislature and the petition processes.

Honourable Members, allow me to indicate that as part of public participation, petitions received by the Legislature from members of the public serve as a testament to the confidence that our communities have in the work entrusted to us as their elected public representatives. In this financial year, 2024/25, the committee has processed and adjudicated more than 60 petitions. The committee has managed to deal with all the backlogs from previous years.

The Legislature, through the Standing Committee on Public Participation and Petitions Committee, provided intervention and resolved challenges facing communities in our province. The Standing Committee on Public Participation and Petitions has been hard at work to adjudicate over petitions and address all backlogs. Our communities deserve quality and better services. It is for that reason that the Legislature has pledged to keep all service delivery institutions on their toes. We appreciate the excellent work done by the chairperson of the Public Participation and Petitions Committee, Hon Mdaka, and the other committee Members. [APPLAUSE]

Oversight is one of the key responsibilities that the Legislature must perform in line with its constitutional provisions. The Legislature maintains oversight on the exercise of executive authority in the province, including the implementation of legislation and any provincial organ of the state. It also approves the Budgets for provincial government departments and seeks an explanation of how the government spent their previous Budgets and how they will spend their Budgets. The Legislature has concluded a series of insightful oversight visits to a number of projects across the province. Most of these projects are integral to driving economic growth in the Limpopo Province, with the potential to create jobs across the value chain.

Honourable Members, the continuous improvement of matric results in the province has seen Limpopo as the most improved province in the country in the 2023 academic year, moving away from being consistently last, from the decline that we have witnessed in the past years. The department has improved National Senior Certificate results from 38% in 1996 to 79,5% in 2023. The province's matric pass rate is now approximating the planned target of 80%, and this honourable House must applaud this achievement. [APPLAUSE]

This achievement is accountable, among others, to the commitment and dedication displayed by the chairperson and members of the Portfolio Committee on Education. [APPLAUSE] The members of this committee, as was the case with all other committees of the Legislature, were not sleeping on duty. They remained focused throughout the term to ensure that the department delivers quality public education to our children, hence these results.

Our Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism has been constantly exercising oversight over the department initiatives to implement projects such as the Musina-Makhado SEZ, the Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ, the Lebowakgomo Abattoir, as well as the Science and Technology Park, amongst others. [APPLAUSE]

In its efforts to enhance oversight, the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment, and Tourism embarked on a study tour to the Eastern Cape Legislature and specifically to East London, especially the special economic zones in East London. Through the study tour, various experiences were shared, and lessons were learned. We believe that through the established partnership, appropriate lessons and practices will be customised and applied to implement special economic zones in Limpopo.

Honourable Members, our Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, through interactions with LEDET, has emphasised the need

for compliance with various laws and regulations in the sectors, including business, liquor, and the environment. As the oversight body, we commend the initiatives undertaken by LEDET to curb alcohol abuse in our province, especially the recent landmark decision that liquor establishments are to close at midnight. This initiative has resulted in the passing of the “Midnight Law” under the Limpopo Liquor Act, which took effect from 01 August 2023. The Legislature will continue to support initiatives undertaken by our departments through oversight and enacting legislation that will contribute to the wellness of our people in the province. Thank you, chairperson of the committee, Hon Mokaba, and the members of the committee.

Honourable Members, the Limpopo Legislature, through the Standing Committee on Quality of Life, Status of Women, Youth, and People with Disability hosted a first-of-its-kind Men’s Parliament in November 2023 under the theme: ‘The Term of Advancing Men’s issues through Men’s Parliament.’ The interaction with various men’s formations strived to educate participants on the importance of men’s organisations and further strengthen established organisations to sustain their operations. Importantly, the Men’s Parliament discussed critical matters such as addressing alcohol, substance abuse, and gender-based violence to advance functional and healthy communities.

Furthermore, the role of men in combating the spread of HIV and Aids and other health related matters was also at the centre of the debate during the Men’s Parliament. Similarly, attention was also paid to issues that affect women through a Women’s Parliament, which debated the role of innovative technology in promoting gender equality and meeting the health and developmental needs of women and girls. It is our objective as a Legislature to build functional communities with a healthy citizenry that will effectively participate in our legislative processes. We also take this opportunity to salute the chairperson of the committee, Hon Boshielo, and members of the committee. [APPLAUSE]

Honourable Members, the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA performs an oversight function on projects and programmes implemented by the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs. Furthermore, the Section 71 Report tabled by the MEC for CoGHSTA has been scrutinised and followed up by the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA to enhance service delivery and ensure improvements in the performance of our municipalities. We are also pleased that our provincial government continues to reach out to our traditional leaders.

The construction of traditional council offices by the Department of Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure is one of the most successful projects of the department. The department has built more than 30 traditional council offices throughout the province. These traditional council offices are vital centres in rural communities because government services such as home affairs and social development can be accessed in these offices. The offices also provide dignity and respect for our traditional council leaders, as stated by the Premier in SOPA 2024. We thank you, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA, Hon Lebea and members of the committee. [APPLAUSE]

The Portfolio Committee on Transport and Community Safety undertook site visits to police stations, border posts, drivers, learners and testing centres, and road networks.

These oversight visits by our committees are critical in ensuring that our citizens receive quality services from government institutions in line with the principles of Batho Pele.

The constant working relationship between the portfolio committee, communities, and the South African Police Service has assisted in reducing crime incidents in the province. We have maintained our status as the province of peace, and we want stronger and more active community policing forums to deal with drugs and substance abuse in general. Our Portfolio Committee on Transport and Community Safety has always been in the field not only to exercise oversight, but to support the initiatives of the department to prevent crime and reduce road fatalities, especially during major holidays in our country. Drawing from this progressive approach, we encourage our committees to pursue a developmental approach towards oversight. Thank you very much, chairperson. We appreciate the good work that you are doing. [APPLAUSE]

Honourable Members, the Portfolio Committee on Social Development provides oversight on the Department of Social Development to ensure that quality social services are delivered to our people. According to the reports received from the Portfolio Committee on Social Development, many of our people are continuing to receive psycho-social support services provided by social workers. Furthermore, vigorous campaigns on gender-based violence and femicide are now leading to more cases being reported and victims accessing support services. By effectively overseeing the actions of government, the Legislature ensures that our citizens can live better and quality lives. We thank the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development, Hon Matlou and the committee members. [APPLAUSE]

The Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury has in the past five years played a critical role in its oversight by holding the executive authority accountable for the achievement of planned targets, proper and adequate spending, and ensuring that public funds are used for the purposes intended. Working together with the Provincial Treasury, the committee has contributed positively to the stability of the financial environment in the province.

The Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury has exercised oversight to ensure proper monitoring of the conditional grants in departments, public entities, and municipalities, infrastructure spending, and support to public entities. The initiatives by this portfolio committee have been developmental, thus contributing positively to a healthy financial environment that has characterised our province over the years.

The Legislature as the representative and the voice of the people, will continue to guard the public purse on their behalf through effective oversight. In our engagement with the Budget Votes and APPs tabled in this House, our committees will prioritise programmes and projects that will enhance service delivery, alleviate poverty, strengthen social capital, build safe and healthy communities and stimulate economic growth in our province. Developmental oversight is what we are striving for as a Legislature for the betterment of the lives of the people of Limpopo. We thank the chairperson of the committee in absentia, Hon Rudolph Phala, and the committee members. [APPLAUSE]

Our Portfolio Committee on Health has supported and continues to support the department's initiatives or commitment to roll out its programmes, including the National Health Insurance. This giant step in the history of our democracy is well-articulated by Nelson Mandela when he said, "Health cannot be a question of income, it is a fundamental human right." The Bill received overwhelming support in all five districts of Limpopo where public hearings were held in the past few years. The Legislature remains the voice and vanguard of the people to ensure that pro-poor legislation is passed and implemented to the benefit of the disadvantaged in our communities. We thank the chairperson, Hon Mathe, and the committee members for your sterling work. [APPLAUSE]

Honourable Members, through the efforts of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and the oversight role of our Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture, this province has done exceptionally well in promoting sports throughout the years.

The Limpopo Legislature views sports not only as a means of recreation but also as a source of social cohesion that is vital in building healthy, safe and united communities. As an institution, we have made provision for our Members and staff to engage in various sporting codes and participate in the National Inter-Legislative Games held annually. We applaud you, committee chairperson, Hon Aphiri and committee members. [APPLAUSE]

The Office of the Premier provides strategic direction to provincial departments. This includes overseeing and coordinating the functions of the provincial administration, managing performance, and evaluating service delivery and governance in the province, among other responsibilities. We have observed the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration interacting with this office to achieve an efficient, effective, and development-oriented public service. This alignment is an essential element of a capable and developmental state as envisioned in the National Development Plan. Thank you very much, chairperson, Hon Manthata-Mahasela and committee members. [APPLAUSE]

Our Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) has been hard at work to enforce accountability and sound financial governance in our provincial administration. Scopa successfully held 18 public hearings to process audit reports for the 2022/23 financial year. Departments were summoned to appear and account for their actions. This commendable work by Scopa plays a critical role in ensuring effective accountability and preventing irregularities in our provincial administration. Honourable Members, in fact, our Scopa is one of the most effective in the country. We appreciate them and thank you, chairperson, Hon Selamolela, and the Scopa members. [APPLAUSE]

Honourable Members, in our 2022/23 Budget Speech, I addressed the challenge of the ageing and outdated chamber system that needed replacement. This challenge resulted in the Legislature relocating its Sittings to the Polokwane Municipality Chamber while addressing the existing technological and infrastructural challenges in the House. In the spirit of intergovernmental relations, the municipality has always been a good host since our arrival. We have now become accustomed to this Chamber. Let me report to this House that the Legislature has finalised the installation of a new chamber system compatible with the latest technology. Some final touches on the Chamber are still in progress to make it ready for use.

Let me take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the Executive Mayor of Polokwane Local Municipality, Cllr John Mpe, and the Municipal Manager for making their facilities available for use by the Legislature. The Legislature will continue relying on the Polokwane Local Municipality for the use of these facilities for the coming weeks to afford the august House to wind up its business before releasing Members to focus on campaigning for the much-anticipated national and provincial elections.

The Legislature is collaborating with the Department of Public Works to ensure that the following projects are completed:

- The refurbishment of the legislative Chamber is on course. The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure has put in place a catchup plan to ensure the project's completion and the handover of the refurbished legislative chamber to the Legislature in the next couple of weeks.
- The demarcation of the Legislature's precinct is almost complete following the erection of a demarcation fence to secure it in line with the National Key Point Act.

In collaboration with the Department of Public Works, the Legislature will finalise the following outstanding projects in the coming financial year: refurbishment of the White House at the Parliamentary Village, the access route to the Legislature, and landscaping.

Honourable Members, since 2013, the provincial government has made significant progress towards building a capable, ethical, and developmental state. All provincial departments continue to improve their audit outcomes. Our committees have diligently worked with the respective departments through effective oversight to ensure continuous improvement in our province's performance trajectory.

Let me put it on record that the Legislature has reclaimed its rightful space by achieving a clean audit opinion. [APPLAUSE] This achievement was not a walk in the park as it demanded hard work, commitment and dedication to creating efficiency and effectiveness in our internal controls. We will continue to strive for excellence to sustain this performance. Our resolve is to allocate resources in a manner that enhances good performance and supports our core mandate of oversight, law-making and public participation.

Honourable Members, the total Budget allocation for the Limpopo Legislature in the 2024/25 financial year is R549,5 million of the equitable share. This Budget shows an 11,6% increase compared to the previous year's allocation of R492,4 million.

The Budget as presented will cover employee costs, goods and services, capital expenditure and support to political parties. The Budget is allocated across the three programmes of the Legislature as follows:

Programme 1: Administration

This programme has been allocated R173,2 million in the 2024/25 financial year to provide strategic leadership and administrative support to the entire Legislature. Most infrastructure and ICT costs will be incurred under this programme.

Programme 2: Facilities for Members and Political Party Support

Facilities for Members and Political Parties have been allocated R244 million in the 2024/25 financial year to provide compensation to Members and support to political parties.

This allocation includes a direct charge of R74,6 million for the remuneration of Members and R169,6 million as required by section 34(5) of the Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act. An amount of R123,4 million will be transferred to political parties for constituency allowance and political party support. [APPLAUSE]

Programme 3: Parliamentary Services

Parliamentary Services has been allocated a total of R132,1 million in the 2024/25 financial year to provide services related to oversight, public participation and law-making.

Honourable Members, as the sixth term draws to an end and the preparations for the ushering in of the new term are in progress, may I draw your attention to the words of Dr Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana in his address to the National Assembly on the 12 June 1965: "Countrymen, the task ahead is great indeed, and heavy is the responsibility; and yet it is a noble and glorious challenge – a challenge which calls for the courage to dream, the courage to believe, the courage to dare, the courage to do, the courage to envision, the courage to fight, the courage to work, the courage to achieve – to achieve the highest excellencies and the fullest greatness of man. Dare we ask for more in life?"

The Sixth Legislature has done its part; however, we are aware that more still has to be done. Drawing from the lessons of Nelson Mandela, we will not rest until we have fully reversed the socioeconomic challenges caused by the apartheid system: "After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb". The ANC government can take pride in itself and say, we took the road less travelled. That has made all the difference. Looking back, even in the light of the challenges ahead of us, the fact remains that South Africa is better than it was before 1994. [APPLAUSE]

Drawing from the history and oversight experiences of our committees, it is clear that the damage inflicted on the African people by the colonial and apartheid system cannot be resolved by blaming and subjecting those who fought for freedom to an unfair trial, but by working together with them to build a better South Africa.

Honourable Members, as I conclude this Budget Speech, let me take this opportunity to thank the Hon Premier, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, for providing excellent leadership for the provincial government. Hon Premier, like the biblical Moses, you have led the people of Limpopo to the land of milk and honey.

Indeed, Hon Premier, you were correct when you said: “The road to success is a journey, not a sprint.” Indeed, the journey we have traversed thus far was not easy. This journey, as the Hon Premier alluded to, is far from over. With this journey ahead of us, though filled with challenges, our resolve is to remain stronger than ever. With your foresightedness and determination, the people of Limpopo are today enjoying the fruits of your sweat. With your continued support, wherever you will be deployed, we remain confident that we will achieve even greater milestones in the years to come. To you, Premier, and the Executive Council, you have been an exciting team to work with.

Allow me to appreciate our Deputy Speaker, Hon Matibe, as an angel sent by God to me. [APPLAUSE] Hon Matibe, I thank you for your commitment and steadfast support. We stood side by side through thick and thin, working together very well to ensure that the Legislature fulfils its core mandates.

Honourable Members of the Legislature, you have illuminated this House with your profound deliberations mixed with humour that sometimes lightened even the most taxing and stressful moments in this House.

I acknowledge the work of the Portfolio Committee on Oversight Review Mechanism, led by Hon Lekganyane, for your oversight role and support to the work of the Legislature. Thank you very much, honourable chair.

Let me also express my appreciation to the portfolio committees and standing committees of the Legislature, and all Members of the Legislature for their support and commitment in serving the people of Limpopo.

I would like to thank the Acting Secretary to the Limpopo Legislature, Dr Isaac Nkuna, and the management. Your commitment to serving the institution with dedication and determination is highly acknowledged and appreciated. [APPLAUSE]

I want to extend my appreciation to the African National Congress for the responsibility entrusted to me to serve the people of Limpopo. My organisation, the ANC, provided the much-needed guidance and reminded all of us, as deployees in the Legislature about the mandate and the pledge we have made to the people of Limpopo. I remain loyal and obedient to my organisation, the ANC. I thank myself for that.

Lastly, I would also like to sincerely express my gratitude to my family, my husband, Seegi, and my three children, Marumo, Nogane and Hunadi, for the support they have provided me and continue to provide throughout my life. [APPLAUSE] My family has always been my pillar of strength, comforting me and unselfishly supporting me in serving the people of Limpopo. For that, I am grateful.

Honourable Members, it is my honour and privilege to table the Limpopo Legislature 2024/25 Budget Vote 2 to this House.

Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. The Budget Speech together with the supporting documents is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Oversight Review Mechanism for consideration and report back to the House.

We shall now call upon the MEC for CoGHSTA, Hon Makamu B, to present the Budget Speech for the Department of CoGHSTA. [APPLAUSE]

THE MEC FOR COGHSTA

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

(Address by Mr B R Makamu, MEC for CoGHSTA)

Hon Speaker and Deputy Speaker; Premier of our province, Hon Stanley Chupu Mathabatha; Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip of the Legislature; colleagues in the Executive Council; chairperson and members of the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA; honourable Members of the provincial Legislature; Your Worship, Executive Mayors and Mayors of our local municipalities; leadership of SALGA in the province; chairperson and deputy chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders and the entire Executive Committee; provincial leadership of Contralesa; our esteemed Majesties, and Royal Highnesses present here; leadership of the IEC and other Chapter Nine and Ten Institutions present; the leadership of the ruling party, the glorious movement, the African National Congress and alliance partners; stalwarts and veterans of our struggle; leaders of opposition parties; representatives of NHBRC, RISIMA and HDA; chairperson of the Housing Tribunal and MEC Advisory Panel; CoGHSTA staff led by the HOD, Dr M Malahlela; members of the media present; guests and stakeholders of the departments; comrades; ladies and gentlemen.

Hon Speaker, let me take this opportunity to also acknowledge members of the public who are watching and listening to us through different broadcasting channels. We present this Budget Vote today to advance their interests.

I stand before this august House to present the fiscal plan for Budget Vote 11 for the 2024/25 financial year. This is my fifth Budget Statement since I was appointed MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements, and Traditional Affairs. With appreciation, we therefore wish to thank the Premier of the province, Hon Stanley Chupu Mathabatha “Mahlatji’a Hlabirwa”, for the continued trust in us to lead CoGHSTA.

Today, allow me to guide you through the journey of the ANC-led government, which began with a single step 30 years ago. This journey, marked by footprints on land, in the air, and on water, stands in stark contrast to H.G. Wells' tale of footprints without feet. I affirm that the ANC-led government has always advanced with footsteps, visible both day and night.

Hon Speaker, the journey of good governance, marked by tangible footprints, is unending. As the Ghanaian author Ernest Agyemang Yeboah eloquently stated, good governance "Is a journey to make a renewing impact that changes lives, gives meaning to life and living, and turns the vision of the masses into realities." This journey demands true focus, humour, and wisdom to bring about genuine change and liberation for the masses.

Of paramount importance, the 2024/25 Budget Vote comes at a time when, as of February 2022, there are more than six million people in Limpopo. As a department, it is imperative that we advance people's interests by facilitating the development of integrated human settlements, upgrading informal settlements, providing affordable rental housing and offering affordable housing finance in line with our departmental strategic plan and sector priorities.

Hon Speaker, I would like you to consider that the department has four programmes as follows:

- Programme 01: Administration;
- Programme 02: Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements;
- Programme 03: Cooperative Governance; and
- Programme 04: Traditional Affairs.

In the past fiscal year, our Administration has remained steadfast in its commitment to progress. Through unwavering dedication, we have diligently pursued the implementation of our revamped organisational structure, bolstering the capabilities of our human settlements and traditional affairs divisions through the filling of key positions. Our efforts have yielded results, as evidenced by the consistent attainment of an unqualified audit opinion. We stand firm in our resolve to ensure accountability and effectiveness in all facets of governance, driving towards a brighter, more resilient future for all.

On programme 2, Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements, the visible footprints remain engraved in our departmental mission of being an effective agent of change that delivers integrated and sustainable human settlements. The Budget Vote requires us to become more responsive and efficient so that we continue to deliver quality services to the Limpopo citizenry.

The NDP (National Development Plan) expresses the need for a systematic response to South Africa's increasing urbanisation and entrenched spatial patterns that exacerbate social inequality and economic inefficiency. The provision of adequate housing and basic services ensures that the quality of life of citizens is improved, thereby upholding the inherent dignity and worth of every individual as the country forges towards the egalitarian and rights-based society that we all aspire to live in.

In the Medium-Term Strategic Framework period from 2019-2024, the department delivered 29,409 housing units across all integrated human settlements programmes. This achievement is our continued commitment to restoring the dignity of the vulnerable members of our communities.

On the other hand, we also acknowledge the inconvenience caused by old, blocked housing projects. To ensure that all qualifying households get access to shelter, we will progressively address all blocked housing projects in line with ministerial directives. To this effect, the department, with the support of the NHBRC (National Home Builders Registration Council), is continuing with unblocking 350 housing units with a budget of R41,5 million in the 2024/25 financial year. [APPLAUSE]

In addition, we have responded to the ministerial priority to eradicate mud houses. In the 2023/24 financial year, we planned to replace 500 mud houses with low-cost houses at a cost of R69 million. I'm happy that as of 29 February 2024, we have managed to replace 428 mud houses across the province. [APPLAUSE]

The housing sector introduced the accreditation of municipalities as an instrument to ensure the progressive capacitation of municipalities in order for them to perform the delegated function without compromising delivery capacity. We are elated to congratulate Polokwane Local Municipality for being the first municipality in the province to be granted Level 02 Housing Accreditation.

The signing of the Accreditation Implementation Protocol is an agreement between the department and the municipality that will henceforth strengthen the implementation and bring accelerated quality service delivery. It will also empower the municipality to undertake several roles and responsibilities in the human settlements value-chain, such as beneficiary management, technical planning, and delivery of specific housing programmes. The department will gazette and transfer a total of R73,5 million to Polokwane Local Municipality for construction of 404 units.

The department will further continue to provide post accreditation support to Polokwane Local Municipality, together with the other six municipalities accredited at Level 01, namely Makhado, Musina, Thulamela, Lephalale, Bela-Bela and Greater Tzaneen.

As a government, we are not out of the woods yet. We are aware of the journey that is still ahead of us. In terms of our commitment in the 2023/24 financial year's overall performance, our annual planned target was to deliver 7,291 housing units. As of 29 February 2024, the department had delivered 6,968 housing units, which translates to 95,6%, and we anticipate achieving the target by the end of this financial year.

Our seventh term of administration is at the doorstep, and the 2024-2029 Medium-Term presents yet another opportunity to consolidate initiatives that the department has put in place to ensure that our people are provided with decent and habitable shelters. The ANC-led government's dream of delivering services to the people never disappeared into shadows. This is a church that chose to walk in the light for people with its footprints visible. Our journey to deliver houses as per our pact continues in the 2024/25 financial year, where our annual target is to deliver 4,555 low-cost housing units valued at R687 million.

Most of the units, about 3 836, will be built on rural or communal land, considering the rural nature of the province, while the remainder will be implemented under various housing programmes. To ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are prioritised,

we further impress upon our municipalities to prioritise the elderly, women, child-headed households, and people living with disability when allocating housing units.

Hon Speaker, we are happy to announce that our Military Veterans Housing programme is gaining momentum. Despite teething challenges, the programme is on track, and we continue to explore various ways to expedite the delivery of houses to the military veterans. [APPLAUSE]

Since the inception of the programme, 160 housing units have been completed. In the 2023/24 financial year, the department planned to construct 100 housing units; however, we did not reach the target. We have completed 23 housing units, of which 15 were handed over in Seshego, Extension 78, recently, and 08 are dispersed across the province.

About 73 housing units, which were not completed, will be rolled over to the 2024/25 financial year. The implementation of the programme was delayed by various challenges such as the unavailability of sites in urban areas, scattered units and disputes on the size of the house. To mitigate these challenges, the department engaged municipalities to allocate serviced sites in urban areas. The size of the housing units was increased from 50m² to 60m², and contractors for low-cost houses were appointed to construct the military veteran housing units. I must indicate that we are now building those houses. [APPLAUSE]

In the 2024/25 financial year, the department has planned to construct 132 housing units for military veterans at a cost of R16,5 million across the five districts, in both urban and rural settlements. Let me take this opportunity to appreciate the support and partnership with the Limpopo Military Veterans Provincial Working Committee to ensure that the programme is successfully executed.

Hon Speaker, it is a good story to tell that the department has made significant progress on the asbestos roof removal and replacement project. When I presented the 2022/23 Budget Speech, I announced that we targeted to replace 1,500 asbestos roofs at a cost of R42 million in Seshego under Polokwane Local Municipality. In the 2022/23 financial year, we managed to replace 1,000 asbestos roofs with corrugated iron. In 2023/24 financial year, 500 asbestos roofs were also replaced as part of phase one, making the target of 1 500. Phase two of the removal and replacement of 755 asbestos roofs costing us R8,7 million has commenced in Seshego.

The programme is ongoing, and we have planned to expand the removal and replacement of the 10 500 asbestos roofs programme to other districts. This a multi-year programme. The enumeration and auditing have been completed across five districts. We will never diminish our efforts until all asbestos roofs are replaced, and our people live in safe environments.

This administration is serious about addressing the challenges facing the social stratum called the “missing middle” as presented in the 2023/24 Budget Vote. Our provincial housing finance agency, Risima, has the responsibility to implement housing solutions for our middle-income group through First Home Finance formerly known as FLISP.

Since the inception of the programme, 287 subsidies were disbursed at a cost of R23 million, including the 40 subsidies disbursed in this current financial year. For the 2024/24 financial year, we have planned to disburse 70 subsidies under this programme. The department is currently on a marketing drive to raise awareness to communities through broadcasting channels. Through our outreach programmes, we will, in the 2024/25 financial year, intensify our marketing approach for more publicity by forging road shows to familiarise our people with the process of securing affordable housing finance.

Hon Speaker, Community Residential Units are one of the key focus programmes the department continues to roll out through the construction of three multi-year projects within Lephalale-Marapong, Makhado–Tshikota and Greater Tzaneen-Talana.

Regarding the Marapong project, we acknowledge the delay in completing the Marapong CRU projects due to technical challenges, particularly during the early stages. We have, however, made significant progress on this project.

An acceleration plan has been developed and we have tightened our monitoring systems to ensure the completion this project. Progress to date shows that 387 units are roofed, which translates to 69% of the total project. Expenditure to date is R214 million, with a remaining balance of R92 million for completion. This project will be completed in the 2024/25 financial year.

Altoostyd in Lephalale remains one of the catalytic projects prioritised in the Limpopo Development Plan. As per our commitment before this august House, we have put systems in place for planning and ensuring conclusion of all technical planning processes a year before implementation. To this effect, we have concluded a pipeline of multi-year bulk infrastructure projects. Not only will this improve our performance, but it will strengthen integrated planning, budgeting, and implementation with water service authorities, in line with the spirit of the District Development Model.

The department, in collaboration with the municipalities and water service authorities, has assessed 26 bulk infrastructure projects for water and sewerage, and planning has been concluded for most of these projects. Accordingly, construction of bulk infrastructure will commence for five projects: in Musina at Nancefield and Masisi, in Molemole at Mogwadi, in Greater Tzaneen at Dan Village, and in Lepelle-Nkumpi in Lebowa kgomo.

In our Budget Speech, we extend gratitude to human settlement contractors who not only excel in service delivery but also demonstrate exceptional kindness by donating fully furnished homes to destitute families, which showcases their Good Samaritan spirit. Some of the contractors are here, and we thank them. [APPLAUSE]

Our legacy of milestones and visible footprints remains. As we transition to the Seventh Administration, we are ready to tackle several challenges before us, including providing basic services such as water and sanitation, particularly for marginalised groups living on the peripheries of cities and other urban communities.

As a department, we believe that our service delivery targets will be underpinned by principles such as resourcing economic development initiatives in our municipalities

whilst protecting social services, strengthening departmental capacity to implement infrastructure projects and deliver services across all 27 municipalities, and encouraging good local governance and transparency to realise value.

We are all assured that municipalities provide immediate intervention in terms of service provision because they are at the coalface of our communities. We understand well that none of us acting alone can achieve success. We must, therefore, act together as a united people to build this province for the rebirth of a new dawn in the 2024/25 financial year and beyond.

According to Stats SA Census 2022, service delivery has increased in the following areas between 2011 and 2022:

- Access to electricity increased by 8,2%, from 87,3% to 95,5%.
- Refuse removal increased by 10,2%, from 21,8% to 32,0%.
- Households with access to sanitation increased by 19,7%, from 38% to 57,7%.

The provision of water, however, has decreased by 6,5%, from 86% to 79,5%. This decline is mainly caused by ageing infrastructure and population growth affecting sustainable and reliable water supply. We, therefore, encourage our water service authorities to allocate more resources for the repair and refurbishment of water services infrastructure.

The MIG (Municipal Infrastructure Grant) spending is gradually increasing from the decline we indicated during the speech in 2023. As of the end of February 2024, out of the provincial allocation of R3,284 billion for the 2023/24 financial year, R 2,025 billion has been spent, translating to 61,6%. This expenditure is higher than the 43% spent in the same period of the 2022/23 financial year.

Allow me to congratulate municipalities with good spending patterns, who have already spent above 90% of their allocations. These are Greater Giyani at 92,6%, Modimolle-Mookgophong at 92,7%, Molemole at 93,1%, and Maruleng 100%.

Equally, I would like to call on all municipalities that are not performing well and are still below 50% in spending this grant, to improve their spending in the remaining months of the financial year. These municipalities are Ba-Phalaborwa at 48,6%, Mopani at 48,4%, Lepelle-Nkumpi at 45%, Sekhukhune District at 31,3%, and Thabazimbi at 20,1%.

Let me call upon the management of these municipalities to work on their recovery plans and utilise the direct support offered by CoGHSTA, MISA (Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency), Provincial Treasury, the Office of the Premier and other partners. Underspensing impacts negatively on the provision of infrastructure for basic services. Therefore, a failure to spend these allocated budgets implies we are depriving our people of the much-needed public goods and services.

Hon Speaker, the province has noted with appreciation the improvement of our municipal audit outcomes over the years. We extend our appreciation to the five municipalities that have improved: Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality, Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality, Musina Local Municipality, Lepelle-Nkumpi Local

Municipality, and Mopani District Municipality. Let me, in particular, acknowledge Mopani District Municipality for moving from a disclaimer audit opinion to a qualified audit opinion. May we give them a round of applause. [APPLAUSE]

Out of the 27 municipalities, 18 auditees have received unqualified audit opinions with matters of emphasis, 08 auditees received qualified audit opinions, and 01 auditee received an adverse opinion. Material misstatements in financial statements remain a challenge, resulting in the poor quality of submitted Annual Financial Statements (AFS). This calls on the municipalities to finalise the annual financial statements in time to allow for a detailed review of the AFS with supporting documents.

To improve outcomes, municipalities should implement a corrective action plan to address the root causes, regularly engage with external auditors to obtain an understanding of the findings and ensure MPAC (Municipal Public Accounts Committee) monitors the progress of implementation and investigate all UIF&WE. Municipalities must comply with all legislative prescripts. The AG raised concerns over a hefty reliance on consultants by municipalities. To address this, the Premier has directed municipalities to reduce their consultant spending by 60%.

As the department, we further undertake to work together with the Provincial Treasury to continue improving audit outcomes and sound financial management in municipalities. We also thank the MEC for Provincial Treasury, “Hlabirwa’a Hlabirwa”, for continuous support and collaboration in maintaining the momentum for improving municipal performance.

Hon Speaker, the implementation of the District Development Model continues to be a priority for this government. The districts remain central to the coordination of all the service delivery programmes and activities in each district. To this effect, all the districts presented the implementation of DDM at the recent Premier’s Intergovernmental Forum held on 13 March 2024. The districts highlighted various challenges and interventions that need to be addressed going forward.

All government spheres and sectors should continue to entrench and participate in the DDM implementation for improved integrated planning, budgeting, delivery of services, monitoring, and evaluation in each district. Hon Speaker, the Limpopo province is one of the provinces prone to natural disasters. The Provincial Disaster Management Centre continues to support municipalities on disaster management. The intensity of disasters has increased, requiring the province and municipalities to build the capacity to mitigate and respond to disasters.

This requires all stakeholders to work together to prevent disasters and respond on time. We call upon our traditional leaders and municipalities to strengthen land use management and ensure that households are not located on riverbanks or areas which are prone to floods. We further call on municipalities to mainstream disaster risk reduction in their planning and infrastructure provisioning processes. I would also like to appreciate our various private sector partners, NGOs, and civil society that continue to offer relief to households during disasters.

The footprints of our service delivery are endless and will never fade. Our pact with Kings and Queens, Vandhavezitha na tindhuna has a bond for ages. The department

acknowledges and supports the critical role of traditional leadership institutions across the province and their contribution to the developmental agenda. We, therefore, remain resolute and unshaken in our commitment to strengthen and support the institution of traditional leadership.

Through the support of this initiative by the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, a total of 25 new offices have been constructed from the 2014/15 financial year to date, and 18 offices have been refurbished. Our cultural heritage and governance structures were also strengthened with the delivery of traditional council offices, including the recently completed Raphahlelo, Bakone ba Matlala, Davhana and Bakwena ba Matsepe Traditional Councils.

During the Budget Vote in the 2023/24 financial year, the department committed to building 10 traditional council offices. As a result of budget pressures, the department was unable to build all the offices. The available Budget for 2024/25 can only provide for 5 offices as follows: construction of three new offices for Makuya, Ba Shai Ditlou and Mapela, and the refurbishment of two offices, Litho-Ndzundza and Mampane Traditional Council Offices.

Over three years, from the 2021/22 financial year to the 2023/24 financial year, a total of 82 traditional councils have been provided with state-of-the-art office furniture across the province. For the 2024/25 financial year, 20 traditional councils will be provided with office furniture. As alluded to by our Premier, Hon Mathabatha, the institution of traditional leadership has received substantial support. We continue to allocate vehicles to qualifying senior traditional leaders to enable them to perform their work. [APPLAUSE]

During the 2023/2024 financial year, a total of 163 vehicles have been procured, with 95 handed over already. The remaining will be delivered in the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year. The Limpopo government prides itself on how it runs successful initiation schools. We want to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to our traditional leaders for running distinctive initiation schools. We wish the 2024 initiation season great success, characterised by zero deaths. [APPLAUSE] Working together with traditional leaders, as the custodians of our culture and heritage, the provincial government will clamp down on illegal initiation schools. In the 2023 initiation season, we admitted 68,145 initiates in various schools. The province unfortunately recorded three deaths during the season. The challenge faced was the increase of illegal initiation schools.

In the 2024 initiation school season, we will uphold the successes of initiation schools through rules and regulations adhered to in full by all stakeholders, observation and implementation of decisions taken, extensive monitoring by both members of staff and senior traditional leaders, compulsory workshops with all senior traditional leaders and traditional surgeons, collaboration and cooperation with other Department of Health and SAPS, and regular Initiation School Conferences and Indabas.

Nevertheless, this culture is also characterised by challenges such as the admission of underage children at initiation schools. The mushrooming of illegal schools was prevalent in the Sekhukhune District. Consent forms are not duly signed by some

parents or legal guardians; and there are overcrowding of initiates in some initiation schools.

To mitigate these challenges henceforth, we will ensure that rules and regulations are adhered to by both the traditional leaders, traditional surgeons and caregivers. Awareness campaigns will be conducted in all districts.

Hon Speaker, with the Minister's approval, we've begun constituting and reconstituting traditional councils as per new guidelines. This aligns with updated laws, ensuring effective governance in our traditional communities. It marks a significant step towards inclusive decision-making and preserving cultural heritage.

During the 2024/25 presentation of SOPA, our Premier, Hon Chupu Mathabatha urged that traditional authorities should find a lasting solution to matters of succession and dispute resolution on their own. He said, "As the government, we would like to stay clear from being entangled in disputes arising from traditional leadership succession. It is not our role to identify senior traditional leaders for recognition. Our role is limited to fulfilling our legislative recognition after the royal families and royal councils have themselves determined who their senior traditional leader is."

As a government, we have established an investigative committee in line with section 59 of the TKLA (Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, 2019) to investigate traditional leadership claims and disputes. The investigative committee is given 60 days to attend to the disputes and provide a report to the Premier with recommendations. We are saddened by the passing of nine beloved senior traditional leaders in the 2023/24 financial year. May their souls rest in peace!

In the 2023/24 financial year, the Premier of the province, Hon Chupu Mathabatha, approved the recognition of four new senior traditional leaders. We salute them.

Hon Speaker, the Budget I am tabling today is composed of four components; Administration, which is mainly support, Human Settlements, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. In the 2024/25 financial year, the total Budget available for the Department of CoGHSTA as allocated is R2,473,151 billion, a slight decrease from the previous year's Budget of R2,796,5 billion, which is a decrease of 10%.

The departmental Budget allocation per programme is as follows:

- Administration : R391 million;
- Human Settlements : R1,2 billion;
- Cooperative Governance : R314 million; and
- Traditional Affairs : R526 million

As I conclude, Hon Speaker, we must continue to improve on the work that we do and be accountable to the public that has entrusted us with a responsibility to lead. Farewell to the sixth term of government administration. It was a unique one, as the government had to use its resources to respond to numerous economic shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, electricity crisis, recurrent disasters, and labour unrest. We must, however, continue to demonstrate fortitude and resilience at all

material times and consolidate our stories of good progress, using this budget to advance the interests of the people we serve.

At all costs, let us exercise good governance and transparency to realise value in our service delivery journey, leaving visible footprints. Lastly, as I bid farewell to my Cde, Premier Mathabatha, I wish to thank him for his leadership and the support from all Exco Members during his tenure. Further appreciation goes to the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Hon Selamolela, the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA, and other oversight committees like the Petitions Committee of the Legislature. To Team CoGHSTA, under the stewardship of HOD, Dr Malahlela, I am genuinely thankful for your dedication, commitment and precision in improving the department's performance. To my support staff and protectors, I am genuinely indebted to you for your unwavering support. To my wife and my family, thank you for the undivided support you gave during this entire term.

Hon Speaker, once again it is my pleasure to present Budget Vote 11 of the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs for the year 2024/25.

Khanimamba. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC. The Budget Speech together with the supporting documents, is referred to the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA for consideration and reporting back to the House.

8. MOTION FOR GOING TO RECESS

Over to you, Hon Chief Whip.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker and honourable Members. I wish to announce that after consultation with the Programming Committee today, it was decided that when this House rises today, it will go into recess. Committees will continue their work, with the option of conducting meetings virtually. Therefore, we are on recess until further notice. Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Chief Whip. Is there any seconder? Hon Selamolela, you are recognised.

MR SELAMOLELA

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. I, Donald Selamolela from the African National Congress, stand here to second the motion for the House to rise as presented by the

Chief Whip. I would also like to take this moment and wish all honourable Members and the people of the province a safe Easter. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Selamolela.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are there any announcements? Hon Deputy Chair of Chairs, you are recognised.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. It is with great pleasure that we invite all honourable Members to lunch, which is organised by CoGHSTA. It is through their courtesy that all honourable Members, including our guests, should join them. The lunch will be served at Bolivia Lodge.

10. ADJOURNMENT

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Deputy Chair of Chairs. The House is adjourned until further notice. Thank you.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
POLOKWANE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHAMBER
FRIDAY, 17 MAY 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you very much. You may all be seated. Honourable Members, Members of the Executive Council, members of the opposition, staff members, and all people in the gallery, good morning and welcome to our Sitting. Let's proceed with our programme.

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Are there any motions without notice in terms of House Rule 145? Hon Aphiri, you are recognised.

MS APHIRI

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. A very good morning to yourself and to all honourable Members in this House.

THE PASSING OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE BILL INTO LAW
(Motion without Notice)

Madam Speaker, I rise on behalf of the African National Congress for this House to note that:

- The ANC welcomes the signing of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill into law by His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa.
- The Bill directs the transformation of South Africa's healthcare system to achieve universal coverage for health services and through this, overcomes critical socioeconomic imbalances and inequalities of the past.
- The passing of the NHI Bill is the key milestone to ensuring that all people in the country have free access to a clinic, a doctor or a hospital, be it public or private, closer to where they live or work. All users will be able to access healthcare services without paying anything at the point of care, regardless of the socioeconomic status.

- The NHI aims to make healthcare more accessible to all South Africans. Individuals will be able to access NHI contracted general practitioners at clinics or hospitals closest to them, whether in the public or private sectors.
- Seven out of ten households rely on public health facilities. That is why the ANC is tackling the high cost of living through universal quality healthcare for all.
- As I conclude, we welcome the signing of this Bill into law, simply because its benefit amongst others, include providing healthcare for all, improving quality of services, reducing burden to disease, financial risk protection, economic development and growth, integration of healthcare system, just to mention but a the few.

I so move.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Aphiri. Is there any seconder to the motion? Hon Makhurupetje, you are recognised.

MS MAKHURUPETJE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Makoma Grace Makhurupetje, stand here to second the motion. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Hon Premier, good morning and welcome to our Sitting. Do we have any other motions without notice? Hon Boshielo, you are recognised.

MS BOSHIELO

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MAKONDE CLINIC (Motion without Notice)

Hon Speaker, I rise on behalf of the African National Congress for this House to note that:

The ANC welcomes the official opening and the handing over of the Makonde Clinic at Thulamela Local Municipality in the Vhembe District, as part of strengthening primary healthcare by the Limpopo Department of Health MEC, Dr Phophi Ramathuba.

- This historic moment is taking place today, 17 May 2024 at Makonde sports ground. Makonde clinic was established in 1987, and it is situated at Makonde village, under Thulamela Local Municipality in the Vhembe District. It serves five communities including amongst others, Makonde, Khubvi, Ha Luvhimbi, Maṭangari and Tshivhilwi.

- The clinic which serves 24-hour healthcare services will be able to provide comprehensive primary healthcare package, providing amongst other services like: health acute stream that we deals with minor ailments for children and adults, mother and child stream that deals with family planning, mother pregnancy, labour, neonatal and postnatal, and the chronic stream that deals with noncommunicable diseases of lifestyles including mental health and oncological screening.
- Primary healthcare plays a vital role as it ensures that people receive quality comprehensive care, ranging from promotion and prevention to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care.
- Primary healthcare further presents crucial role in promoting health equality by ensuring that essential healthcare services are accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status, geographic location or other factors. It helps to reduce shortages in health outcomes and ensures that everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy life.
- As the ANC-led government, we applaud this, because primary healthcare is the cornerstone of a well functioning health system, providing essential services that promote health, prevent illness and address the diverse needs of individuals and the community at large. We are marching very fast towards the NHI, Hon Speaker.

I so move.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Boshielo. Is there any seconder to the motion? Hon Mochadi, you are recognised.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you, Madam Speaker and greetings in the Name of Jesus. I, Sekutu Monicca Mochadi, rise to second the motion as presented by Hon Boshielo. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Do we have any further motions without notice? Hon Mahasela, you are recognised.

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

ANC'S CONGRATULATORY REMARKS TO THOVHELE MARGARET MAKUYA TSHIFULARO FOR BEING INAUGURATED AS A KING OF HAMAKUYA VILLAGE

(Motion without Notice)

- Hon Speaker, I rise on behalf of the African National Congress for this august House to note that:
- The ANC welcomes the inauguration of Thovhele Muthige Tshifularo Margaret Makuya, as a true senior traditional leader of Hamakuya village by the honourable MEC Makamu.
- Hon Speaker, the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs in Limpopo under honourable MEC Basikopo Rodgers Makamu will, today on 17 May 2024, formerly inaugurate Thovhele Muthige Tshifularo Margaret Makuya, of Makuya village which is in the Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Tshifularo Margaret Makuya, is the eldest daughter of Thovhele Karel Nngigideni Makuya, of the Makuya traditional authority. As a custodian of culture heritage, the soon to be inaugurated Thovhele Makuya pledges to utilise a wealth of experience and profound understanding of Venda traditions to promote unity, cultivating harmony and address the urgent needs of the community.
- As the ANC, we welcome this inauguration. More so, because the empowerment of women is not a gesture of kindness or compassion, but a viable component of communities ensuring its persistence and levelling the ground work of its success.
- The main objective of inauguration is to destroy the system of exploitation and build a new society which releases the potential of human beings. This is the context within which women emancipation arises. In order for the public mindset to be changed regarding women in leadership, it requires us to work towards transformation of attitudes at societal levels and confront sexism and patriarchy.
- We wish Mme Thovhele Muthige Tshifularo Margaret Makuya well as she continues to discharge her responsibilities of leading the people of HaMakuya village with dedication.

I so move. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mahasela. Is there any seconder to the motion? Hon Mochadi, you are recognised.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I, Sekutu Monicca Mochadi, rise to second the motion as presented by Hon Mahasela. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Do we have any further motions without notice? May we allow the Deputy Speaker to come and present the motion?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE BIDS FAREWEL TO MR NKOANA (Motion without Notice)

I stand here on behalf of the Presiding Officers of the Limpopo Legislature to move a motion without notice for this august House to note that:

- Today's session marks the last Sitting of the sixth term of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature.
- It also marks the last Sitting of one of the longest serving and dedicated officials of this august House, Mr Matsobane Jackson Nkoana, the manager for House Proceedings. He served the Legislature for an uninterrupted 45 years of service. [APPLAUSE]
- He is part of the cohort that was assembled to constitute the administrative structures of the then Northern Transvaal Provincial Legislature with the dawn of constitutional democracy.
- Mr Nkoana served under the tutelage of the following Speakers since 1994 to date: Hon Tintswalo Godwin George Mashamba, Hon Malavhi Robert Manganye, Hon Tshenuwani Simon Farisani, Hon Kgolane Rudolph Phala, Hon Kwenia Elias Nong, Hon Matodzi Mirriam Ramadwa, Hon Polly Shela Boshielo, Hon Mavhungu Maureen Lerule-Ramakhanya, and Hon Reneiloe Rosemarry Molapo.
- His administration excellence played a pivotal role in the development and continued reviewal of the Standing Rules and Orders that guide the operation of this august House, and also managing the business transacted by this august House.
- Mr Nkoana has also been instrumental in developing capacity in the municipalities by conducting workshops to municipal Councillors on their Standing Rules and Orders in line with the decision of the Provincial Speakers' Forum.
- He also has been esteemed as a chairperson of Table Staff Forum, a substructure of South African Legislative Sector Association. He is a renowned figure within the legislative sector.
- As Mr Nkoana goes into his deserved retirement, the Limpopo Legislature takes this opportunity to profoundly thank him for his immeasurable contribution to the development of this institution.

- The Legislature looks forward to his further advice should a need arise as we will be ushering in the Seventh Administration of the provincial Legislature.

I so move, Hon Speaker. I think, he deserves a standing ovation. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. Is there any seconder to the motion? Hon Chief Whip, you are recognised.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. I, Mmanoko Essob Mokgonyana, rise to second the motion as presented by the Deputy Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Let's proceed to the next item.

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Are there any notices of motions in terms of House Rule 146? There are none.

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Are there any Members' Statements in terms of Rule 200? Hon Managa, you are recognised.

DR MANAGA

Ndo livhuwa, Mulangadzulo u fhiwa hetshi tshifhinga. Kha vha ri ndi dzhie hetshi tshifhinga ndi netshedze mulaedza wa Members' Statement une nda vha nawo u bva kha lihora lihanedzi la tshiofisi la Economic Freedom Fighters fhanu kha Buthano la Vhusimamilayo la Limpopo.

SHORTAGE OF WATER IN MARULENG VILLAGE UNDER LEPELLE-NKUMPI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (Members' Statement)

Hon Speaker, the current government lacks political will to resolve societal challenges in our communities. Lack of political will and static capacity characterises the ANC-led government which continues to inflict more misery to our people, especially in terms of lack of services.

Maruleng village which falls under Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, is one of the areas hardest hit by water shortages. Furthermore, the village also has high levels of poverty which further exacerbate their problems.

BACKGROUND

[NOISE]

Am I protected, Speaker?

BACKGROUND

No...you are alone.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Makhurupetje, you are recognised.

MS MAKHURUPETJE

Madam Speaker, is she ready to take a question?

THE SPEAKER

Hon Managa, there is a question that you need to answer.

DR MANAGA

I am not ready to answer any question.

THE SPEAKER

You may proceed, Hon Managa.

DR MANAGA

Two projects have been undertaken previously to provide infrastructure in the form of bulk water pipes and a reservoir. Despite this infrastructure installation in the area, there is no single drop of water coming from taps. Why is there no water in Maruleng when two water projects were rolled out? What happened to the money meant for the provision of water to the people? The level of corruption under this government has reached proportional and shocking levels.

The Economic Freedom Fighters, which is the government in waiting, will solve all these matters by providing water to the people of Maruleng and open cases against the contractors, politicians and officials who stole the money meant to provide water to our people.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable Members. Are there any other Members' Statements? There are none. Before we can proceed to the next item, may I please check from Members of the Executive Council if they want to respond to the Members' Statement?

THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we take note of the issues that were raised with caution. This will assist us in ensuring that the issues are addressed.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC.

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

Are there any Executive Statements? There are none. We may now proceed to the next item.

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

6.1 Tabling of the Public Service Commission Report on section 196(4)(e) of the Constitution of 2023/23 financial year.

Hon Members, in term of section 196(4)(b) of Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, I hereby table the Public Service Commission Reports in compliance with section 196(4)(e) of the 2022/23 financial year. The report is further referred to the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration for consideration and report back to the house. Thank you very much.

6.2 Tabling of 2022/23 MFMA (Municipal Financial Management Act) section 131 report of the assessment of the AFS (Annual Financial Statements) for municipalities in the province. The report is supposed to be tabled by the MEC. Oh! Thank you very much.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Thank you, Hon Speaker: Hon Deputy Speaker; Premier of our province, Hon Chupu Mathabatha; honourable Members of this august house; Chief Whip of the majority party; ladies and gentlemen. It is a great honour and pleasure to table before this august house of the Limpopo Legislature the 2022/23 Municipal Finance Management Act, section 131 report on the assessment of the annual financial statement for municipalities in the province.

In terms of Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, section 131, subsection 2(a)(b), the report contained details of performance of municipalities as per MFMA No 56 of 2003 and identifies municipalities which duly performed, particularly in attaining unqualified audit outcomes.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Sekoati. The report is referred to Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA for consideration and report back to the house.

7. NCOP BUSINESS

7.1 Motion for the Ratification of the Appointment of the Special Delegates who Attended NCOP Plenaries

Hon Chief Whip, the floor is yours.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker and good morning once again.

Hon Speaker, House Rule 226(3) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the House, read together with section 61(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, provides for the designation and appointment of Special Delegates when the House is not sitting.

In line with these provisions, the following honourable Members were appointed to attend virtual plenaries when the House was not sitting:

- To consider the following reports of the National Council on gender-based violence and femicide, the Youth Development Agency Bill, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) Amendment Bill, and the Expropriation Bill. The date for this meeting was 19 March 2024. The delegates in attendance were the MEC for CoGHSTA, Hon P R Makamu, Hon S P Boshielo, Hon Mahasela and Hon Monama.
- To consider the following reports on the Mineral Resources and Energy Bill, the Electoral Amendment Bill, and the Second Revenue Collection Amendment Bill. This meeting took place on 26 March 2024. The delegates in attendance were the MEC of LEDET, Hon Monama, Hon Mokaba and Hon Mathye
- The report of the Select Committee on Transport, Public Service and Administration, Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, as well as the Committee for Ethics and Members' Interests.
- The report from the Rules Committee of Social Development; National Small Enterprise Amendment Bill; Climate Change Bill; Housing Consumer Protection Bill. Delegates who attended this virtual meeting were the MEC of LEDET, Hon Monama, Hon Mokaba, Hon Mathye and Hon Lebea
- Rendering reports on the Gold and Foreign Exchange Amendment Bill, Municipal Demarcation Authority Bill, Preservation of Agricultural Land Bill, , and the Statistics South Africa Bill. The meeting took place on 24 April 2024. Delegates in attendance were the MEC for Treasury, Hon Sekoati, Hon Lekganyane, Hon Lebea and Hon Maseko
- Special virtual NCOP Sitzings for Technology, Sport, Arts and Culture; 14 May 2024. Delegates in attendance were the MEC for Education, Hon Lerule-Ramakhanya, Hon S V Mathye and Hon MEC Manthata-Mahasela

- Plenary report and evaluation of the Road Safety Bill, Sports Amendment Bill, National Water Resources Infrastructure Bill, Transport Laws Amendment Bill, Public Procurement Bill and the Provision of Land and Assistance Bill. This meeting was held on the 16 May and was attended by: Hon S V Mathye, Hon Aphiri and Hon Mochadi

Hon Speaker, I move that this House ratifies the appointment of the above-mentioned special delegates in line with the above provisions. I move accordingly.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Chief Whip of the majority party. Is there any seconder?

MR SELAMOLELA

Baie dankie, Agbare Speaker. Ek, Donald Selamolela, van die African National Congress support the motion.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Selamolela. Let's move to item 7.2 Motion for ratifications for the conferred by final voting mandates to the NCOP permanent delegates by the Hon Chief Whip of the majority party.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, during the period when the House was in recess, the NCOP required the provinces to confer final voting mandates on several Bills that were referred to the provinces. In light of the above, Rule 236 was invoked to allow the Hon Speaker to confer the final voting mandates to vote in favour of the following Bills:

- Housing Consumer Protection Bill.
- National Small Enterprise Amendment Bill.
- Upstream Petroleum Resource Development Bill.
- Division of Revenue Bill.
- Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill.
- Public Procurement Bill.
- Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Bill.
- Railway Safety Bill.
- Plant Health Phytosanitary Bill.
- Transport and Appeal Tribunal Amendment Bill.
- Marine Pollution and Prevention of Pollution from Ship Amendment Bill.

I, therefore, move that this House resolves to ratify these final mandates conferred in terms of Rule 236. I Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Chief Whip. Is there any seconder? I notice Hon Monyamane.

THE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you very much Chair, I rise to second the motion as raised by the Chief Whip.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much.

8. CLOSING REMARKS ON REFLECTIONS ON THE SIXTH PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS

We shall now refer to our Speakers' List. Unfortunately on the list Hon Maharaj was supposed to be the first one to present but he is not here. So, we will move to the Hon Chief Whip of the majority party. [APPLAUSE]

THE CHIEF WHIP

Speaker, Hon Rosemarry Molapo; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tshitereke Matibe; Premier, Hon Chupu Stanley Mathabatha; Members of the Executive Committee; honourable Members of this august House; ladies and gentlemen, receive our revolutionary greetings in the name of our African National Congress.

Hon Speaker, words cannot begin to express our gratitude to the people of Limpopo, who have bestowed on us, the ultimate obligation to preside over their government for the past 5 years. However, , words are all we have to voice our kindest regards on this sombre occasion of the dissolution of the Sixth Provincial Legislature, since the democratic dispensation.

As this important chapter of South Africa's political life draws to a close and this curtain falling, we are crossing the Rubicon with a sense of pride, for our immeasurable contribution in the advancement and promotion of democracy and social justice. We are thriving on the crest wave of success that was instituted by our forebearers, whose pre-occupation was the development of the African people. Hon Speaker, a clear picture of what we have achieved as a political organisation, is best narrated by summarising the last 30 years where the ANC was the leader of this government. We have built a country that our people have always imagined . Albert Einstein reminds us that: "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand."

The ANC-led government has chartered on an uncharted terrain and has rolled out unprecedented services to the people of this country in the last 30 years. Despite the glaring challenges that are a result of many years of disenfranchisement and colonial rule in this country , the ANC-led government has outdone itself in building and equal society where everyone has equal rights. Our journey, as the government of the day, has seen us going out of our way, to ensure that our people receive world-class

education, are given the best form of shelter and are accorded unmatched healthcare services.

As observed by the Premier Chupu Mathabatha, during his State of the Province Address earlier this year, we have drastically reduced the number of mud houses in the Limpopo Province. We count amongst the best provinces in the Republic that have provided decent housing to its citizens.

This, we achieved because we had built the requisite state capacity as the provincial government to discharge this all-important function of building a capable state. We have built an inclusive education system, that caters for the needs of the poor from infancy to tertiary education, at little or no cost to the citizenry. Today, around 1,2 million students are able to access their tertiary education, through the colossal National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). In their majority, these students who are on NSFAS, have most certainly benefited from the ANC-led government's pro-poor programmes like social grants and the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

Hon Speaker, the introduction of the NSNP and the 'no-fee schools', have not only revolutionised the education sector in this country, but it immensely improved its literacy levels. We are the victims of our own successes. We have educated the nation today; hence, we are now faced with the daunting task of creating the much-needed jobs for the very same people we have educated at no cost. As part of our elections manifesto, ahead of the May 29 general elections, we have outlined our numerous plans to create the much-needed jobs for the people of South Africa, and we are certain that this objective, like many others that we have achieved will also be realised.

We have built road networks that have brought communities closer to each other, and have narrowed the distance that our people travel from their homes to their workplaces. The National Health Insurance Bill, which President Cyril Ramaphosa just signed into law, will be a 'jerk in the arm' that aims to make quality healthcare available to the rest of the populace. We have also learnt with shame, that there are some amongst us, who in their desperation to preserve privilege, have opted to approach the courts to stop the people of South Africa from accessing quality healthcare.

We have created peaceful communities, where human rights are fundamentally inherent to all human beings. It is for this reason, that the ANC-led government saw it befitting, that it must intervene and defend the people of Gaza against the atrocities of the Israeli government. We are also holding the same view in the Western Sahara and many other parts of the world, where apartheid and subjugation rear a head.

Allow me to use this moment to also shower heaps of praises to Hon Chupu Mathabatha, whose unparalleled leadership has not only stabilised governance in the provincial administration, but it also restored confidence in our people's view of their government. Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, as you vacate your position as leader of this government, we can only wish you the best in your future endeavours. You are what Reverend Martin Luther King Jr referred to, when he said that, a genuine leader, is not a searcher for consensus, but a moulder of consensus.

Go well Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa. This was indeed an activist Parliament that was characterised by robust debates which were at times confrontational, but were conducted with the sole intention of ensuring that our people receive the best services in the most accountable way. As I cast my eyes on the opposition benches, Hon Speaker, I see a small group of people who are likely not to make it back in this august House, because our people are living testament to the great story that this ANC-led government has done well during the past 30 years.

Honourable Members, as I reflect back to the past five years. I am willed that we have done our best in transforming this society, and given another opportunity we will seize it in the same manner, all over again.

I thank you very much, Hon Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Chief Whip. Thank you very much. We will now call upon the Hon Deputy Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, Hon Premier, and honourable Members. Let me take this opportunity to thank all the political parties for their farewell messages. Even though we have received the message from the ANC only. Sometimes when you don't speak, you are also sending a message. Indeed, today marks the last Sitting of the sixth term of Limpopo Legislature. For that reason, it is appropriate that we also take this opportunity to bid farewell to all the Members of the Legislature.

It is not an easy task to say goodbye, particularly, when we have reached the end of the 5-year term. We have worked well with all the political parties represented in this House. We served the people of this province and country with distinction, dedication, excellence, honesty, and integrity. It is, indeed, a memorable 5-year term. I wish to thank the Hon Speaker, the Chief Whip, the Deputy Chief Whip, the Chairs of Chairs, the Deputy Chairs of Chairs, the Leader of Government Business and all other political office bearers for your support.

To the Acting Secretary, Team Legislature, political parties' support staff, thank you for your support, we hope you will still be there in the Seventh Administration to provide the valuable service to the honourable Members. Most importantly, allow me, Hon Speaker, to pay tribute to our Hon Premier Stanely Chupu Mathabatha for the leadership, guidance and wisdom the Hon Premier has provided throughout his tenure, as the Premier of this province. We are delighted to have worked with you Hon Premier and your Executive. You and your Executive have always been available when we needed guidance. To our opposition, it must not be a sign that you will be alone in the Seventh Administration.[LAUGHTER].

It might be a wrong sign that you will be alone there, we want to thank you very much, Hon Managa. God can give you a serious sign and you don't see it. On behalf of all the Presiding Officers, we wish to say that it has been a great honour and privilege of a lifetime to have served in the sixth term of the administration. Honourable Members,

it has been a privilege serving in the Sixth Administration , we look forward to the Seventh Legislature, and to meet many of you back in these benches with renewed mandates. Mudzimu kha ri shudufhadze. May God bless you.

Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. We will now to item 9.

9. DRAFT RESOLUTION

Hon Chief Whip, the floor is yours.

THE CHIEF WHIP

I hereby move that when the House rises today, it will go into recess until its term expires. However, the Legislature will remain competent to execute its functions until the day before the general elections on 29 May 2024 in terms of section 108(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

I move accordingly, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Chief Whip. Hon Chief Whip, it seems as if Members did not understand you. I see , Members are starting to talk to each other, maybe you can repeat what you said. [LAUGHTER]

THE CHIEF WHIP

I, hereby, move that when the House rises today, it will go into recess until its term expires. However, the Legislature will remain competent to execute its functions until the day before the general elections on 29 May 2024 in terms of section 108(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Therefore, you still remain Members up until a day before elections. I therefore move accordingly, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder honourable Members? Hon Selamolela, you are recognised.

MR SELAMOLELA

Hon Speaker, I, Donald Selamolela, from the African National Congress and the outgoing chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts until the day before elections, stand to support the motion as presented by the Chief Whip. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable Members.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are there any announcements?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Honourable Members are invited to luncheon right after the adjournment of the proceeding. The venue of the luncheon is the Club House, Parliamentary Village. The second announcement, the Speaker has received an invitation from the South African Council of Churches for the Provincial Prayer Day. The invitation is extended to honourable Members and all political parties represented in the Legislature. The prayer session will take place at Jack Botes Hall, 22 May 2024 at 10:00.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Hon Deputy Speaker.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Honourable Members, the House is adjourned until further notice.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]



**LIMPOPO
LEGISLATURE**

It's your voice, use it!



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

LIMPOPO PROVINCE

ANNUAL HANSARD REPORT, 2024

OF THE

DELIBERATIONS AND DEBATES

OF THE

FIRST SESSION

OF THE

**SEVENTH LEGISLATURE OF THE LIMPOPO
LEGISLATURE**

It's your voice, use it!

Vision

The Limpopo Legislature seeks to be a representative body, a vanguard of people's aspirations and interests towards a democratic, nonsexist, nonracial, united and a prosperous society.

Mission and Strategic Goals

The Legislature is an autonomous institution and an agent for transformation that strives to:

- defend, strengthen, deepen and maintain democracy;
- make quality laws and policies for the citizens of the province;
- have an effective and meaningful participation of the citizens in the law-making processes;
- articulate the needs and desires of the citizens;
- be a transparent, consultative and accountable institution;
- maintain norms set nationally for eradication of racism and gender imbalances;
- maintain norms set nationally for eradication of racism and gender imbalances;
- have a representative and accountable budget; and
- ensure provision, retention of competent skills and efficient utilization of human resources.

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Education	Ms M M Lerule-Ramakhanya
Health	Ms D M Mashego
Social Development	Ms F F Radzilani
Economic Development, Environment and Tourism	Mr T B Matibe
Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure	Mr E S Rachoene
Transport and Community Safety	Ms S V Mathye
Agriculture and Rural Development	Ms N G Kekana
CoGHSTA	Mr R B Makamu
Sport, Arts and Culture	Mr F J Maseko
Provincial Treasury	Mr K E Mahoai

OFFICE-BEARERS OF LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE

The Speaker	Ms M G Makhurupetje
The Deputy Speaker	Ms T P Mamorobela
The Chief Whip	Mr E M Mokgonyana
The Deputy Chief Whip	Mr G R Monama
The Chairperson of Committees	Mr T A Mokone
The Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Mr H P Ngobeni
The Leader of Government Business	Mr R B Makamu
The Leader of the Opposition	Mr M L Mapoulo
The Acting Secretary of Limpopo Legislature	Dr I S Nkuna

MEMBERS OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE (in alphabetical order)**PARTIES REPRESENTED IN THE HOUSE:**

African National Congress (ANC)
 Democratic Alliance (DA)
 Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)
 uMkhonto weSizwe (MK)
 United Africans Transformation (UAT)
 Vryheidsfront Plus (FF+)

1. Baloyi Dunisani Lyborn	EFF
2. Chidi Tiny Doraine Ramathabatha	DA
3. Helm Maria Alleta	DA
4. Jack Velile Cyril	MK
5. Kekana Nakedi Grace	ANC
6. Kupa Constance Ramadimetja	ANC
7. Lebea Kedibone Margret	ANC
8. Lebogo Matome Jacob	EFF
9. Lerule-Ramakhanya Mavhungu Maureen	ANC
10. Letsoalo Mapula Gratitude	EFF
11. Mabotja Thabo	ANC
12. Machete Phetole Percy	ANC
13. Magolo Matlebjane Abraham	EFF
14. Mahasela Mahlodi Caroline	ANC
15. Mahoai Kgabo Elias	ANC
16. Maila Kobodi Diens	UAT
17. Makamu Rodgers Basikopo	ANC
18. Makhurupetje Makoma Grace	ANC
19. Malebana Chuene William Dissagree	ANC
20. Malemela Dumisani	EFF
21. Mamorobela Tebogo Portia	ANC
22. Mapoulo Makgabo Lawrence	EFF
23. Maringa Vongani Wesly	ANC
24. Maritz Marcelle Frieda	FF+
25. Maseko Funani Jerry	ANC
26. Mashego Dieketseng Masesi	ANC
27. Mataboge Shimane Morris	ANC
28. Mathe Simon Matsobane	ANC
29. Mathye Susan Violet	ANC
30. Matibe Tshitereke Baldwin	ANC
31. Matjomane Germinor Delly	ANC
32. Matjomane Makua Asnad	ANC
33. Matlou Leswafo Josua	ANC
34. Mdaka Falaza Philemon	ANC
35. Mmetle-Ramohlola Dikeledi Josephine	ANC
36. Mnisi Gloria Dzunisani	ANC
37. Mogoane Mogaleadi Kgothatso	EFF
38. Mohale Mankwana Christinah	ANC
39. Mokaba Mapula Anna	ANC

40. Mokgonyana Essob Mmanoko	ANC
41. Mokoele Mosibudi Esther	ANC
42. Mokone Thabo Andrew	ANC
43. Molapo Walter Samuel	EFF
44. Monama Gannye Rodgers	ANC
45. Mphahlele Selaelo Regina	EFF
46. Muhlope Mhloti Ethel	ANC
47. Nempumbuluni Thembeleni Colbert	ANC
48. Nenguda Dowalani Alton	ANC
49. Netshifhefhe Khathutshelo John	ANC
50. Ngobeni Hasani Peter	ANC
51. Nkonyana Bongani Abednigo	ANC
52. Pheedi Maseko Solomon	ANC
53. Phokane Maudu Johannes	ANC
54. Radzilani Fulufhelo Florence	ANC
55. Rachoene Ernest Sebataolo	ANC
56. Rakgoale Christian Nkakareng	ANC
57. Ramathuba Phophi Constance	ANC
58. Sebopela Seanego Tumelo	ANC
59. Selane Che Bonnie David	ANC
60. Sepuru David Mmakgabo Champ	ANC
61. Shai Mpho Sonnyboy	ANC
62. Smalle Jacobus Frederik	DA
63. Tshivhase Midiavhathu Prince Kennedy	ANC
64. Wilson Evelyn Rayne	DA

PERMANENT DELEGATES TO NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

1. Kennedy Meisie	EFF
2. Mokwele Frans	ANC
3. Molokomme Regina	ANC
4. Ndlovu Sanny	ANC
5. Phala Phiroane	ANC
6. Pienaar Nicolaas Hendrik	DA

COMMITTEES OF THE LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

CATEGORY ONE – INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE COMMITTEES

- a) Rules Committee
- b) Internal Arrangements Committee
- c) Programming Committee
- d) Whippery
- e) Disciplinary Committee
- f) Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests
- g) Committee of Presiding Officers
- h) Oversight Mechanism Committee
- i) Committee of Chairpersons
- j) Multiparty Women's Caucus
- k) Pandemic and Disaster Committee

CATEGORY TWO – PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

- a) Provincial Treasury
- b) Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs
- c) Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure
- d) Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
- e) Agriculture and Rural Development
- f) Transport and Community Safety
- g) Sport, Arts and Culture
- h) Education
- i) Health
- j) Social Development
- k) Public Administration

CATEGORY THREE – STANDING COMMITTEES

- a) Public Accounts Committee
- b) Public Participation and Petitions
- c) Quality of Life and Status of Women, Youth and Disability

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
FRIDAY, 14 JUNE 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:30**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE PRESIDING OFFICER [JUDGE PRESIDENT M G PHATUDI]

I would like to ask the House to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations. Let us bow our heads.

[SILENCE]

You may be seated.

May I, at this stage, ask the Secretary to read out the notice convening the First Sitting of the Limpopo Legislature.

THE ACTING SECRETARY [DR I NKUNA]

Thank you, Judge President. This Sitting is called by the designated Judge President, Moletje George Phatudi, in terms of section 110(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, today, on Friday, 14 June 2024 at the Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber at 10:30.

During this Sitting, the newly elected Members of the Seventh Provincial Legislature shall take the prescribed oath or affirmation. The Limpopo Provincial Legislature shall further elect the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the provincial Legislature as well as the Premier of the province.

The notice has been published in Gazette No. 3545 of 13 June 2024.

Thank you.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

It's also my pleasure and privilege to inform the honourable House that this gathering is in terms of the rules governing the first Sitting of the provincial legislatures as promulgated and published by the Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa in terms of Government Notice No. 2527 of 2024 as amended with effect from yesterday. So, these rules remain applicable to the proceedings of this House.

I will now be requesting the Secretary to request Members to come and subscribe to the oath or affirmation in groups of 10 Members. I think that before that happens, we need to firstly confirm the list of Members, and I also wish to record that the Secretary or the Acting Secretary of the House is returned in terms of the designation provided in the course of this morning; and so, are the assistant secretaries. Over to you, Secretary.

2. THE SWEARING-IN OF NEW MEMBERS OF THE SEVENTH LEGISLATURE OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE

THE ACTING SECRETARY

Thank you, Judge President. I hereby confirm that the list that I have before me is the correct list submitted for the purpose of today's Sitting. Thank you.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

At this stage, having confirmed that you're in possession of the list of Members constituting the Limpopo Provincial Legislature for 2024, it is my honour, therefore, to call upon the following Members in a group of 10 to come and subscribe to the oath of office. Over to you, Secretary.

THE ACTING SECRETARY

Thank you, Judge President. I will call them in groups of 10 as you have indicated. The first one on the group is:

[THE SECRETARY READS OUT THE NAMES OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS TO BE SWORN IN AS MEMBERS OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE.]

Ramathuba Phophi Constance, Kekana Nakedi Grace, Mokone Thabo Andrew, Matibe Tshitereke Baldwin, Rachoene Ernest Sebataolo, Kupa Constance Ramadimetja, Mdaka Falaza Philemon, Mahasela Mahlodi Caroline, Netshifhefhe Khathutshelo John, and Mataboge Shimane Morris. [APPLAUSE]

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

To those Members who are before me, there will be those who will be subscribing to the oath pursuant to the prescribed oath of office and those who might opt for affirmation. To those who would like to take the prescribed oath, may you kindly read out the oath of office before you start with number one on the list, i.e., Dr Ramathuba Phophi Constance. Do you take oath or affirmation?

DR RAMATHUBA

I take oath.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Please, proceed.

DR RAMATHUBA

I, Ramathuba Phophi Constance, swear that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the

Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a Member of the Legislature of the Limpopo province to the best of my ability. So help me God.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

For the sake of brevity, I request that if none of you is going to take affirmation, then those declarations could be made at the same time; it's just to save time. So, having done so, then, you may start now. It's for those who are going to take oath of office.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS

I, Kekana Nakedi Grace; I, Mokone Thabo Andrew; I, Matibe Tshitereke Baldwin; I, Rachoene Ernest Sebataolo; I, Kupa Constance Ramadimetja; I, Mdaka Falaza Philemon; I, Mahasela Mahlodi Caroline; I, Netshifhefhe Khathutshelo John; I, Mataboge Shimane Morris, swear that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a Member of the Legislature of the Limpopo province to the best of my ability. So help me God.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Thank you very much. We shall then ask the Secretary to again call another batch of 10 Members to step forward. You may pronounce their names.

THE ACTING SECRETARY

[THE SECRETARY READS OUT THE NAMES OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS TO BE SWORN IN AS MEMBERS OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE.]

Pheedi Maseko Solomon, Lerule-Ramakhanya Mavhungu Maureen, Mashego Dieketseng Masesi, Mmetle-Ramohlola Dikeledi Josephine, Makhurupetje Makoma Grace, Malebana Chuene William Dissagree, Mokoale Mosibudi Esther, Mathye Susani Violet, Mahoai Kgabo Elias, and Radzilani Fulufhelo Florence.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

In the same way, I would like at this stage to begin with those who would be taking the prescribed oath of office and at the same time enquire as to whether there is anyone who would opt for affirmation instead of the prescribed oath of office. You can indicate that by a show of hands, but in the absence of any, then I shall assume that all of you would take the prescribed oath of office. You may do so once and at the same time by reading out the prescribed oath of office on record. You may do so.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS

I, Pheedi Maseko Solomon; I, Lerule-Ramakhanya Mavhungu Maureen; I, Mashego Dieketseng Masesi; I, Mmetle-Ramohlola Dikeledi Josephine; I, Makhurupetje Makoma Grace; I, Mokoale Mosibudi Esther; I, Mathye Susani Violet; I, Mahoai Kgabo Elias; I, Radzilani Florence Fulufhelo, swear that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the

Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a Member of the Legislature of the Limpopo province to the best of my ability. So help me God.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

I thank you. You are duly sworn in as Members of this House. [APPLAUSE] I also would like to call upon the Secretary to proceed calling upon the next batch of Members from 21 to 30 in that sequence.

THE ACTING SECRETARY

Alright. Thank you, Judge President.

[THE SECRETARY READS OUT THE NAMES OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS TO BE SWORN IN AS MEMBERS OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE.]

Mnisi Gloria Dzunisani, Rakgoale Christian Nkakareng, Mathe Simon Matsobane, Makamu Rodgers Basikopo, Sepuru David Mmakgabo Champ, Mokgonyana Essob Mmanoko, Sebopela Seanego Tumelo, Maseko Funani Jerry, Phokane Maudu Johannes, and Mokaba-Phukwana Mapula Annah.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

At this point in time, we would like to hear as to whether there is anyone of you who would settle for or take affirmation instead of the prescribed oath of office associated with a Member. You may do so by raising up a hand to signify your choice. In the absence of anyone for that option, then I would request Members to jointly pronounce upon the oath of office by reading it loudly on record.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS

I, Mnisi Gloria Dzunisani; I, Rakgoale Christian Nkakareng; I, Mathe Simon Matsobane; I, Makamu Rodgers Basikopo; I, Sepuru David Mmakgabo Champ; I, Mokgonyana Essob Mmanoko; I, Sebopela Seanego Tumelo; I, Maseko Funani Jerry; I, Phokane Maudu Johannes; I, Mokaba-Phukwana Mapula Annah, swear that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a Member of the Legislature of the Limpopo province to the best of my ability. So help me God.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Thank you. Again, at this stage, you are duly sworn in as Members of this House. [APPLAUSE] We are now proceeding to request the next batch of 10 Members to come and take oath of office. That would be from your 31 to 40 Members. Over to you, Secretary.

THE ACTING SECRETARY

[THE SECRETARY READS OUT THE NAMES OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS TO BE SWORN IN AS MEMBERS OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE.]

Mamorobela Tebogo Portia, Matjomane Germinor Delly, Monama Gannye Rogers, Nenguda Dowaleni Alton, Mohale Mankwana Christinah, Selane Che Bonnie David, Matlou Leswafo Joshua, Mabotja Thabo, Muhlope Mhloti Ethel, and Ngobeni Hassani Peter.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

At this stage, like I have done before, I would like to find out whether there is anyone who would like to settle for affirmation instead of prescribed oath of office. If there is anyone who would like to settle for that, would they kindly indicate by a show of hands. Okay. Now that you have indicated that, would you kindly read out your affirmation into the record. You may take affirmation.

HONOURABLE MEMBER

I, Matlou Leswafo Joshua, swear that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a Member of the Legislature of the Limpopo province to the best of my ability.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Is that all? Is there any problem there? Okay. You are declared a Member of this House subsequent to your affirmation. May I ask honourable Members to kindly pay attention as Members are being sworn in because I thought it is important that you hear what they have to say in doing so. With the balance remaining, would you kindly pronounce your prescribed oath of office into the record jointly.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS

I, Mamorobela Tebogo Portia; I, Matjomane Germinor Delly; I, Monama Gannye Rogers; I, Nenguda Dowelani Alton; I, Mohale Mankwana Christinah; I, Selane Che Bonnie David; I, Mabotja Thabo; I, Muhlope Mhloti Ethel; I, Ngobeni Hassani Peter; swear that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a Member of the Legislature of the Limpopo province to the best of my ability. So help me God.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Thank you. You are duly sworn in as Members of this House. [APPLAUSE] As they depart, may I also once again call upon the Secretary to request the next batch of Members to step forward and take necessary prescribed oath of office.

THE ACTING SECRETARY

[THE SECRETARY READS OUT THE NAMES OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS TO BE SWORN IN AS MEMBERS OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE.]

Shai Mpho Sonnyboy, Lebea Kedibone Margret, Tshivhase Midiavhathu Prince Kennedy, Machete Phetole Percy, Nempumbuluni Thembeleni Colbert, Maringa Vongani Wesly, Matjomane Makua Asnad, Nkonyana Bongani Abednigo, Mapoulo Makgabo Lawrence, and Mogoane Mogaleadi Kgothatso.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Okay. Like we have done before, anyone who would like to settle for Affirmation instead of the prescribed oath of office may kindly indicate by raising their hand. In the absence of any indication, then I would ask Members to simultaneously pronounce the prescribed oath of office by reading out loudly into the record.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS

I, Shai Mpho Sonnyboy, I, Lebea Kedibone Margret; I, Tshivhase Midiavhathu Prince Kennedy; I, Machete Phetole Percy; I, Nempumbuluni Thembeleni Colbert; I, Maringa Vongani Wesly; I, Matjomane Makua Asnad; I, Nkonyana Bongani Abednigo; I, Mapoulo Makgabo Lawrence; I, Mogoane Mogaleadi Kgothatso; swear that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a Member of the Legislature of the Limpopo province to the best of my ability. So help me God.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Right. Thank you so much and you are considered to be duly sworn in as Members of the House. The sixth batch of 10 Members shall also be called by the Secretary to the House. Over to you, Secretary.

THE ACTING SECRETARY

Thank you, Judge President.

[THE SECRETARY READS OUT THE NAMES OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS TO BE SWORN IN AS MEMBERS OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE.]

Lebogo Matome Jacob, Mphahlele Selaelo Regina, Molapo Walter Samuel, Letsoalo Mapula Gratitude, Malemela Dumisani, Magolo Matlebjane Abraham, Wilson Evelyn Rayne, Smalle Jacobus Frederik, Helm Maria Aletta, and Chidi Tiny Doraine Ramathabatha.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Is there anyone who would like to take affirmation of office instead of oath of office as prescribed? I see one hand. Would you kindly proceed to read your affirmation into the record.

HONOURABLE MEMBER

I, Lebogo Matome Jacob, solemnly affirm that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a Member of the Legislature of the Limpopo province to the best of my ability.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Thank you, you may step forward. For the reminder, I would request you to pronounce your oath of office by solemnly taking a declaration simultaneously. You may do so jointly.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS

I, Lebogo Matome Jacob; I, Mphahlele Selaelo Regina; I, Molapo Walter Samuel; I, Letsoalo Mapula Gratitude; I, Malemela Dumisani; I, Magolo Matlebjane Abraham; I, Wilson Evelyn Rayne; I, Smalle Jacobus Frederik; I, Helm Maria Aletta; I, Chidi Tiny Doraine Ramathabatha; swear that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a Member of the Legislature of the Limpopo province to the best of my ability. So help me God.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Thank you. You are duty sworn in and you are now Members of this Parliament. [APPLAUSE] Shall we restore order, please. The Secretary shall now call the last batch of Members remaining to come forward and take oath or affirmation.

THE ACTING SECRETARY

Thank you, Judge President.

[THE SECRETARY READS OUT THE NAMES OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS TO BE SWORN IN AS MEMBERS OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE.]

Maritz Marcelle Frieda, Jack Velile Cyril, and Maila Kobodi Diens. [ULULATING]

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Right. Anyone of you who prefers to take oath of office instead of an affirmation, please raise up your hand if that is your choice. In the absence of that, then we shall call upon two Members to simultaneously take oath of office as prescribed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS

I, Maritz Marcelle Frieda; I, I, Maila Kobodi Diens, swear that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the Republic; and I solemnly promise to perform my functions as a

Member of the Legislature of the Limpopo province to the best of my ability. So help me God.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Thank you very much. You are duly sworn in to become Members of this Legislature. [NOISE] May I have your attention, please.

3. THE ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER OF LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE

We have arrived at a very important stage of these proceedings and that is the nominations for the position of the Speaker of the House, and the nomination will be made on a prescribed form. If only one nomination, which is valid, is duly received, I will declare the nominated Member as the duly elected Speaker of this House. However, if more than one nomination is received, then the House will have to speedily go into the election process.

Then, if we are on the same page with that one, I want to assume that nominations are with the Members on their desks and it is confirmed. Therefore, at this stage of proceedings, I would like to invite Members to proceed with nominations on the prescribed form amongst themselves for the Speaker of the House. Is that a hand? Yes. May you identify yourself for the record.

MR MATIBE

Thank you, Judge President. My name is Mr Matibe Tshitereke Baldwin. I rise to nominate the name of Hon Makoma Grace Makhurupetje for the position of the Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

You have heard the nomination of Madam Makhurupetje. Is there a seconder to that nomination? Okay. May you rise honourable Member and identify yourself.

MS LERULE-RAMAKHANYA

Thank you, Judge President. I am Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya, a Member of the African National Congress. I rise to second the nomination of Hon Makoma Makhurupetje as our Speaker. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Thank you. There is a seconder for the nominated Member. The next issue is whether there is any further nomination for the position of Speaker. I'm going to count from one up to three. If I do not see any hand, then it would be irrefutably assumed that the declaration be made that the nominated Member would be considered duly elected Speaker. I start now. One, two, three. [APPLAUSE]

[SONG]

Okay. Order! Order! Thank you so much. At this stage of the proceedings, as you can see, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje is being escorted by two of our Members to come and evict me from the seat, even before I declared her, but it is common knowledge that Makoma Makhurupetje has been overwhelmingly and unopposed elected Speaker of the Legislature of the Limpopo province. Please, come and take your rightful position.

[SONG]

THE SPEAKER

You know, I don't know where to start, Hon Judge President. Okay. I'm confused and very excited – firstly to be an honourable Member and the Speaker. I used to call others Speakers, but today it's me who is being called Speaker.

Let me take this opportunity, Judge President, Hon Phatudi, to thank you for affording me this opportunity to give my words of appreciation and gratitude. Let me greet leaders of political parties represented here, specifically the leader of our party, the African National Congress, the Provincial Secretary Vhamusanda Vho Madadzhe, you are here, and you are highly acknowledged. [APPLAUSE] Provincial Commissioner, you are here in this Legislature, and we acknowledge you. I also acknowledge all guests that I might not mention by name. In future, I will acknowledge you properly, but today, the newly appointed honourable Members, I greet you all. I take this opportunity, ladies and gentlemen; esteemed colleagues and friends, to stand before you today with a profound sense of gratitude and humility as I accept the responsibilities of the Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature.

I'm deeply honoured by the trust that you have placed in me, and I am excited that the journey that lies ahead is going to be very exciting. I want to thank the Members of the Legislature for demonstrating confidence in my ability to be the Speaker. I acknowledge all parties in this House for ensuring that democracy thrives. I, therefore, commit myself in accordance with the Constitution to work closely with all political parties represented here in this House in ensuring that all constitutional mandates as an institution are effectively executed.

I pledge to fully comply with the Constitution and rules of the House in executing my responsibilities as the Speaker. Wherever possible, I will consult with the relevant office-bearers and structures within the Legislature to achieve efficient and effective functioning of the legislative institution in a transparent and accountable manner. For the Legislature to be efficient and effective, cooperation from amongst Members of this House will be highly needed.

We need to work together in upholding the decorum and dignity of the House. We should always observe and respect our Constitution, rules of this House and any other relevant legislations that govern our operation. I, therefore, commit myself that I will act fairly, impartially and apply rules of this House in ensuring that there is participation of all Members of this House in a manner which is consistent with our democracy.

I as well take this opportunity to thank the people of Limpopo for going all out and making sure that they put their cross so that all of us are gathered here like this.

Indeed, I will as well acknowledge that there were people who came before us. As this seventh administration, I must also thank Madam Rosemarry Molapo and all other Speakers who came before us that with the majority and the manner that the people of Limpopo went all out to vote, as this honourable House, we will not disappoint them because our people deserve better.

On that note, I will work as well with everyone in the institution. I would like to say, the journey starts now and let's work together. People are becoming impatient out there.

Once more, thank you very much for showing confidence in me. I really appreciate this opportunity. Thank you so much. [APPLAUSE]

We now proceed with the Orders of the Day.

4. THE ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY SPEAKER OF LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE

The House proceeds with the election of one of its Members as the Deputy Speaker. I must now remind Members that nominations have to be submitted on the prescribed form and that, in terms of Part A of Schedule 3 of the Constitution, debates may not be allowed. So, I want to check if there are any nominations. Parties may make their nominations and submit them to the returning officer. Whoever wants to nominate can raise their hand. I don't know you properly for now because you don't have name tags there.

If I don't pronounce your name properly, I would really like to apologise in advance. I see the hand of Hon Mmetle for nomination. Maybe they can give you the mic.

MS MMETLE-RAMOHLOLA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. My name is Mmetle Dikeledi Josephine. I hereby nominate the name of Hon Tebogo Mamorobela to be the Deputy Speaker of this Legislature. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

I have been guided that I will have to get the seconder before I request the nominee to check if she does accept the nomination. Can I request the seconder from the honourable Member that side. You will introduce yourself as and when you nominate, and we hope that the form will be provided to you.

MR PHEEDI

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. My name is Maseko Solomon Pheedi. I'm a Member of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature. I hereby stand to second the name of Tebogo Mamorobela as the Deputy Speaker of this House. Thanks very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Pheedi. Before we check as to whether there is any second nomination, can we first check if Hon Mamorobela is in and if she is accepting the nomination.

MS MAMOROBELA

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I, Tebogo Portia Mamorobela, accept the nomination.
[APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

She gladly accepted the nomination. Is there any further nomination? I will count from five to one. Five, four, three, two, one. In the absence of any other nomination, I therefore declare Hon Tebogo Portia Mamorobela as duly elected Deputy Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature. [APPLAUSE]

[SONG]

While you are singing, can we request two Members to usher the Deputy Speaker to her seat accordingly. Thank you very much. I am now going to step down again to allow the Judge President to come and proceed with the next item. Over to you, Judge President.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I'm back on the field. I have been requested to return here as I hereby do. We have arrived at another milestone in these proceedings, which relates to the election of the Premier. Actually, the nomination of the Premier must be on the prescribed form as the nominations of the Madam Speaker. Earlier on, I did not ask you, Hon Speaker, whether you accept the nomination. However, it doesn't mean you were not properly. However, let me assure you that by conduct of assuming and by being here, you are lawfully and constitutionally appointed.

So, I'm just saying that because it's very important to mention that you have been properly elected.

5. THE ELECTION OF THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE

At this point in time, I would like to call for the nominations for the position of, le re ke Tonakgolo ka Sepedi, akere, the Premier in terms of the Constitution. That has to be done on a prescribed form. Again, if more than one nomination is received, of course, thereafter the prospective incumbent having consented, it is a necessary prerequisite that the House would then, in the event there is more than one nomination, proceed with the election process. If it's only one name received, then I will declare the nominated Member as a duly elected Premier of the province of Limpopo.

May I, at this stage, receive the nominations of the Premier. If there is anyone showing a hand, would you kindly as well identify yourself for record purpose.

MS RADZILANI

Thank you, Judge President. I'm Fulufhelo Florence Radzilani, and greetings to our newly elected Hon Speaker, Grace Makhurupetje and Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; the honourable Members of this august House; the provincial secretary of the ruling party, Vhamusanda Vho Madadzhe; and all other political parties represented here. I rise to nominate the Premier of this province by the name of Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba. [APPLAUSE]

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

You all heard who the nominee for the position of Premier is. Is there any seconder? Yes, ma'am next to the nominated person. Start by introducing your name first.

MS MATHYE

Thanks, Judge President. My name is Susani Violet Mathye. I rise on behalf of the African National Congress to support or to second the name of Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba to be the Premier of Limpopo province. I so move, Your Honour.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Let me ask, for the sake of completeness, as to whether there are any further nominations for the position of Premier. I repeat; one, two, three. Are there any further nominations? I won't stop until the third count. I'm counting: One, two, three.

BACKGROUND

[SONG]

Stop singing! Stop singing! As a matter of formality, Dr Ramathuba, the nominated candidate Member, do you accept the nomination?

DR RAMATHUBA

Thank you, Judge President. I, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba, do accept the nomination. [APPLAUSE]

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Without any other further contestations, I declare Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba to be the Premier of Limpopo province.

[SONG]

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Thank you. I have just been provided with an instrument that contains the prescribed oath of office for the Premier. The Premier we have just heard is Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba. Would you rise and approach me; at least this time be able to singularly take that other book. The first one is pertaining to membership of this House. This

other one is a signification of your commitment to the Republic of South Africa in the manner as set out in the document. Would you kindly take an oath and read it loudly into the record.

THE PREMIER

I, Ramathuba Phophi Constance, swear that I will be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and will obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other law of the Republic; and I undertake to hold my office as Premier of the province of Limpopo with honour and dignity; to be a true and faithful counsellor; not to divulge directly or indirectly any secret matter entrusted to me; and to perform the functions of my office conscientiously and to the best of my ability. So help me God.

THE JUDGE PRESIDENT

Yes, you are duly sworn in. Sorry, isn't it that I have to sign that I have been presiding officer for the time being here as the Judge President of the High Court of South Africa sitting in Limpopo province and have assented my signature to the oath of office by the Premier? I, therefore, would like to say, ya ka tema ke e kgathile. I have fulfilled my role, and the next step is that I am going to ask to withdraw from this Chamber and leave the rest of the proceedings to the Hon Speaker who will continue with the business of the day. I am not sure as to whether you will be accorded the opportunity as the Premier to address the House after I have left the Chamber. However, I think that you should do so, and the rest of the proceedings regarding the appointment of permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces and ancillary matters shall be left in your capable hands, Madam Speaker.

At this stage, I bow out with grace out of this Chamber. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. We can all get seated. Indeed, we must take this time and opportunity to thank Judge President Phatudi for coming here to render all the items that he has rendered. We appreciate it as the Legislature. Re re le ka moso ge re le kgopela, le se re lahle, gomme re tla tšwela pele re šoma le lena.

We now move to the order of the proceedings of the Legislature. The next item is as follows: we will be requesting the political parties that are represented in the House to give their congratulatory messages. I can be guided in terms of the list of political parties. However, we can start with the UAT (United Africans Transformation), if it is here. You only have just two minutes of congratulatory messages. If your mic is not working, you can come to the front. You can start by introducing yourself for recording purposes.

MR MAILA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. My name is Diens Kobodi Maila from the UAT. I would like to pass my congratulatory remarks to the newly elected Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba. I would like to say to her, Limpopo has five children. These children need to be treated equally. The first child is Sekhukhune District, where I am coming from;

the second child is Mopani; the third one is Vhembe; the fourth one is Capricorn, and the fifth one is Waterberg. Bjale, ge o aba dijo abela bana ba gago dijo kamoka ka go lekana. Ke realo ka mantšu a mannyane ke re ke leboga kudu. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. The honourable Member will be followed by a Member from the Freedom Front Plus. You have two minutes.

MS MARITZ

Thank you, Hon Speaker, and congratulations to you. I would like to welcome our new Premier in Limpopo, Dr Ramathuba. Since the seventh administration of the Legislature begins, I would like to offer a piece of advice to the Premier, that is, prioritise the interests of the people of Limpopo above all else. In the past, the people's interests were not given the attention they deserved. It is crucial to rectify this moving forward. My utmost wish is that the blunders made by the previous administration would not recur, and instead, a sustainable positive change will be brought about in the lives of the people residing in Limpopo. Dan wil ek graag vir die Premier opdra. Eerbare Premier, Spreuke 3:5–6 sê: "Vertrou op die Here met jou hele hart; en steun nie op jou eie insig nie. Ken Hom in al jou weë, en Hy sal jou paaie gelyk maak." Kom ons bid vir wysheid sodat ons die mense van die provinsie kan dien. Baie dankie.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Freedom Front Plus. DA, it is your turn.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker, and congratulations on your election. I stand on behalf of the Democratic Alliance to congratulate Hon Premier, Dr Ramathuba, on her election as the Premier of Limpopo. I must say we are looking forward to seeing your Cabinet, Hon Premier. It is going to be quite interesting, but for those who are still to come, we look forward to that and we congratulate those that you will select. The DA looks forward to engaging the new Executive of this House, and to a relationship of respect and cooperation.

As we move into the new term of the Seventh Parliament and considering the oath and affirmations all the honourable Members have taken today, let us ensure that the people of our glorious province are put first above party and personal interests. Let us never forget that we should be humble servants to all of our people and that we are representatives of all our people regardless of their status, background, creed, colour or religious beliefs. There are serious challenges that need to be addressed in Limpopo, the most important being poverty, joblessness, crime, service delivery, health and education. Regardless of who is elected in this new term, these must be prioritised. This is what the new Executive will be held accountable for, as must we all, particularly you, Hon Premier, and your Cabinet. Let's put the people first; let's move this province forward. I thank you, Hon Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Member from the DA. That would be followed by the EFF.

MR MAPOULO

Thank you very much to the august House. Let me thank those who have been elected with us as Members of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature. Thank you, new Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature, Hon Makhurupetje and your Deputy Speaker, Hon Mamorobela; and also the first woman Premier of this province. [APPLAUSE] I would like to highlight that as the EFF we take this opportunity to congratulate you as the first woman who will lead this province. Re tshepha gore o tla ba le selo sela ba sebitšago gore ke lešoko. Lešoko refers to our land. Lešoko refers to the high unemployment rate, which is there; and make sure that our children who are struggling to get out of abuse of drugs and nyaope are moved out of that area. I hope bjalo ka mme o tla swara thipa ka bogaleng. I just want to warn you that the previous Premier never attended most of the Sittings. You must be seen here so that you can be accountable. Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable Member of the EFF. An honourable Member of the majority party, the African National Congress the stage is yours.

MR MOKGONYANA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. provincial secretary of the African National Congress, Vhamusanda Vho Madadzhe; Judge President; Deputy Speaker of our Legislature, Hon Mamorobela; Speaker of our Legislature, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje; Premier of the province, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba; newly sworn-in Members of this august House, government officials and members in the public gallery, I greet you on behalf of the African National Congress.

Today marks the beginning of another enterprising chapter of this democratic government geared towards a full attainment of economic emancipation and social justice for our people. We have gathered in this august House to commemorate the beginning of the seventh administration, which is a historic milestone of this country's democracy. As we observe this colossal moment, we are also excited as the Limpopo province to welcome the first female Premier in this democratic dispensation. The appointment of Dr Phophi Ramathuba as a female Premier of this province is a historic landmark that demonstrates the ANC's unwavering commitment towards achieving a nonsexist society. In Dr Phophi Ramathuba, the ANC has gone for its best of the best. As we witness this breakthrough, we do so with full confidence that she will be equal to the task.

She has demonstrated her zeal and commitment towards the improvement of the lives of our people in the past several years that she has served as a Member of this provincial government. She has also proven herself to understand the ideals of the ANC as both a liberation movement and a leader of this government. She identifies with the struggles of our people, and we have no doubt that with her at the helm of this provincial administration, government will continue to discharge its mandate of

improving the lives of our people. Her appointment is by no means an act of kindness or mercy but a recognition of sheer determination, leadership and a true commitment towards the realisation of the national democratic revolution. She is the true epitome of *mosadi o swara thipa ka bogaleng*, with a character and demeanour that resembles Mme Charlotte Maxeke, Mama Winnie Mandela, Mme Lydia Komape-Ngwenya, Mme Joyce Mashamba and a litany of other female leaders whose leadership has left an indelible mark in the history of this nation.

This appointment is a reflection of a world that we have always imagined when thousands of our delegates converged at Kliptown and conceived what is popularly known today as the Freedom Charter. When we say to build a nonsexist and equal society as a core principle of this democracy, we made this commitment without exception. Today we are alive to that reality. On behalf of the ANC in this House and the millions of the people of Limpopo who have overwhelmingly mandated us to lead their government, we are all congratulating Dr Phophi Ramathuba as the Premier of this province.

As I conclude, let me also extend a congratulatory message to both Hon Makoma Makhurupetje and Hon Tebogo Mamorobela for the appointment of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, respectively. The ANC is indeed well-represented in this august House by women of fortitude and visionary leadership.

I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much to the African National Congress. Now we move to the next item. I take this opportunity as well from the Office of the Speaker to congratulate Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba as the first woman “President”.

BACKGROUND

Premier!

THE SPEAKER

I withdraw what I’ve just said. I am just excited, you know. Hon Matamela will be angry with me. I congratulate you as the first woman Premier of Limpopo. [APPLAUSE] You are coming in the footsteps of Mme Charlotte Maxeke, and we have got confidence in you. Please come and address the Legislature and the people of Limpopo as you give your acceptance speech. [APPLAUSE]

6. THE PREMIER’S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

THE PREMIER

Thank you, Hon Speaker, and congratulations to you too. Congratulations to the Hon Deputy Speaker. Let me acknowledge the presence of the provincial secretary of the African National Congress, Vhamusanda Vho Madadzhe and all the members of the African National Congress and members of other political parties who are here.

Honourable Members of this distinguished House, let me also congratulate you as we will be working together in this seventh administration. Esteemed members of the judiciary who are led today by Judge President Phatudi; leadership of the opposition parties that are here – I welcome your congratulatory remarks and your messages of support, including the warnings that you have indicated, as long as they are for the benefit of the people of Limpopo – chairpersons and members of traditional institutions; our stalwarts and veterans of our struggle here; our religious leaders; youth; women; business, labour and community leaders who are here; Executive Mayors and Mayors who are here; Speakers of our different municipalities; leadership and heads of Chapter 9 institutions; and all other institutions that are supporting our democracy; provincial commissioner of the South African Police Service; Director-General and all members of senior management offices, including heads of departments who are here; media representatives who are here; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, to you the people of Limpopo, dilo di fetogile. [APPLAUSE]

It is my singular honour and rare privilege to assume this responsibility entrusted upon me by the African National Congress and the people of my beloved province of Limpopo. I am more than humbled by your faith and the confidence you have shown in me as the first democratically elected female Premier of this great province. Allow me to pay my gratitude to the esteemed leadership and members of this great movement, the African National Congress, including its alliance partners who are here today to witness this historic occasion. I would also like to thank my family, especially my strongest pillar, my only surviving parent, my mother and friends, and my comrades for offering me those words of encouragement. I dare not fail you.

Hon Speaker, allow me to also take this opportunity to pay a special homage and wish to dedicate this historic honour to the heroic women of our province who championed the struggle for the emancipation of women against the triple challenges of poverty, gender-based violence and patriarchy still facing our women even today. These heroic women are today smiling at us in their graves when they see for the first time that in this Legislature, we have elected a female Speaker and a female Deputy Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

The biggest beneficiary here is the chairperson of the ANC Women's League who has been smiling and saying to us, you are still going to say "Malibongwe!" the whole day. These heroic women included, amongst others, the late Cde Joyce Mashamba, the late Mam Lydia Komape-Ngwenya, Cde Marie Stella Sexwale-Mabitje and many others whom I can't mention. However, it is also important to say, Hon Speaker, that those who are still alive like Cde Rejoyce Mabudafhasi, Cde Maite Marutha, Cde Dikeledi Magadzi, Cde Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Cde Cathrine Mabuza, just to mention a few, are also excited where they are to see their movement, the African National Congress, finally implementing their dream in their lifetime.

Hon Speaker and Members of the House, I do not take this responsibility for granted. Your confidence in me has placed on my shoulders and those of other deployees a necessary burden to work diligently and tirelessly to change the lives of our people for the better. I know it as a matter of fact that my election today is not a personal fit but a call to action. I shall always strive to exercise my responsibilities with one thing in mind – that the people of Limpopo and their needs must always come first. The word responsibility carries a dual but complementary meaning. In one sense it refers to the

state of having the duty to deal with something. In another sense, it talks to the state of being accountable for something. It is my intention that the key defining feature of the seventh administration shall be the responsibility to create an environment conducive to the economic growth of our people and the socioeconomic advancement of our people tilted of course in favour of the most vulnerable amongst us. We also have the responsibility to remain accountable to those who brought us to this Chamber and into public office.

As public representatives of the people of this province, we are also humbled by the unequivocal and solid voice of the citizens of Limpopo when they said, Limpopo must once again be governed by the African National Congress. More than a million people in this province have spoken. As the ANC, we accept your overwhelming mandate conscious of the service delivery challenges that lie ahead. Again we dare not fail you. We know your overwhelming mandate means nothing else except getting Limpopo to work, creating jobs, getting safe running water to all our households, getting our young children out of streets to go to school, and getting all our clinics to have all medication that is required. I can go on and on, but we need to invest in our people.

It is in this context that we are also welcoming the Official Opposition. We are welcoming the EFF. We are also welcoming other opposition parties: the DA, the MK Party, the UAT including the Freedom Front Plus. We are called upon to work together to ensure that we create job opportunities for the jobless, that we accelerate the provision of houses for the homeless and, above all, that we deliver water and electricity to the most vulnerable and needy in the vast farmyards and far-flung villages of Limpopo. Underpinning our electoral mandate as the African National Congress is also the responsibility to ensure empowerment of young people through quality education and training as President Oliver Reginald Tambo once said that a nation that does not invest in its youth does not serve its future. In the same vein, the creation of conducive conditions for businesses to thrive and participation of our people in the mainstream economy is non-negotiable. In this regard, a focused attention to industrialisation, Director-General, and manufacturing will be the centrepiece of this administration so that we can put Limpopo on a higher trajectory of economic growth and development.

Hon Speaker, we are alive to the fact that we are called upon to execute an extremely taxing task. However, as revolutionaries ourselves, we have accepted that ours is not an easy parade; hence, we call it a struggle. Our province is one endowed with human capital. These beautiful people of Limpopo in all their splendour and diversity stand out everywhere. Limpopo has an abundance of physical beauty and natural wealth only if we could create an environment in which all these three ingredients can be put together to drive economic growth and development. That is the responsibility that the people of Limpopo have entrusted us with, individually and collectively, irrespective of our political affiliations.

In terms of human capital, let me remind you, honourable Members, that as a province we have donated some of our best talent to Gauteng and major centres in our country. If you go to the South African Reserve Bank, if you go to the National Treasury, if you go to the academia, if you go to the mining sector, tourism, the agricultural sector and the country's financial institutions, you will find that the sons and daughters from this province are leading those institutions. They do us proud serving the entire nation, but

we can also do with some of those talents as we gird our loins to raise the gains here at home. However, for that to happen, we must create economic opportunities and better living conditions in this province.

I am not against the migration to Gauteng or elsewhere in our country; it is a global phenomenon. People change places for a variety of reasons, but it shouldn't be because they cannot find economic opportunities at home. So, we owe our current and future generations something different – a socioeconomic environment that makes it easy for them to choose to stay and develop their neighbourhoods. After all, when Limpopo does well South Africa will benefit too. However, unless we raise our individual and collective game, the sons and daughters of Limpopo will continue on the journey on N1 to Gauteng and elsewhere in search of better economic opportunities. We can do better; we must do better; we have to do better. It is, however, worth appreciating that we are not starting from a weaker foundation as the 1994 administration had to do. Unlike them, we are inheriting a much more solid administration and a better province. In this regard, I beg your indulgence to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all my predecessors, from Adv Ngoako Ramatlhodi, to Ambassador Sello Moloto, to Cde Cassel Mathale and, of course, to my very own boss, Chupu Stanley Mathabatha – Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa'a Moraswi – for their varied contribution to our province. Successive administrations under the stewardship of these leaders have over the past years ensured that Limpopo is a better place to live in. Today 87% of our households are electrified. No less than 86% of households have access to water. About 96% of our learners are on the School Nutrition Programme. We have increased our Grade 12 pass rate to over 79,5% and, more importantly, we have built state-of-the-art schools, state-of-the-art hospitals and clinics and other essential infrastructure such as roads and bridges across the province. We pride ourselves that all the people of this province have a sense of belonging in Limpopo.

Completely gone are the bantustans and other aberrations of apartheid that sought to divide our people along racial and tribal lines. We have a full-fledged single administration in this part of the country. Nevertheless, the challenge of this new administration is not to drown in the glory of our past achievements but to work even harder to make Limpopo a much better place to live in. It is against this background that today we recommit ourselves to jealously guard against any tendency that seeks to reverse the gains of the past 30 years. At the core of this tendency is crime and corruption. I implore all of you to join me in renewed efforts to fight corruption. We must do this because corruption is not only a government problem; it is a societal problem that requires all of us to play our role, be it the ruling party, be it you in the opposition benches, be it our organised business and members of the public.

Let me conclude my acceptance message by recommitting the new administration to the building of an inclusive economy that creates jobs and prioritises rural development. In keeping our commitment to investing in our people, and access to safe drinking water – and we will continue to repeat it – access to primary healthcare, equality education, the provision of human capital and improvement of infrastructure in all our schools and health facilities, we will of course outline in detail the priorities and plans of this government during the official opening of this provincial Legislature to be convened in all likelihood before the end of this month. However, I must also mention that we must at all times feel great discomfort in living alongside fellow citizens

who are struggling to make a living simply because of their circumstances at birth. That is their starting point in life.

All of us who are sitting here in this Chamber bear the responsibility of ensuring that there is no child who is left behind without an opportunity to strive for a better life than that of his or her parents. Irrespective of your political party affiliation, honourable Members, let us all leave here with a renewed sense of loyalty and commitment to serving the people of our province, our beautiful province. We have no other home except Limpopo. Limpopo was once referred to as Africa's Eden. It was referred to as Africa's Eden because when you go to Sekhukhuneland, you will be welcomed by the statue of King Sekhukhune. Therefore, we need to revive that liberation route, which reminds us that this was a king who was able to lead the Sebatakgomo which inspired, later on, the African National Congress to form uMkhonto weSizwe.

When we move up North to Vhembe, we know we are inspired by the Mapungubwe Heritage Site where you will find beautiful artefacts; some of them are found at the University of Pretoria. It shows that our people knew civilisation long before the white man came to this land. They have been trading those artefacts as far as India. In the Vhembe region, we don't talk of the Big Five, we talk of the Big Six. You can go and see the biggest baobab tree in the entire world. When you move to that side of Mopani and go to Hoedspruit, you will find those rare species that people can pay dollars and pounds just to see. Let us advertise that. We have got our own Rain Queen Modjadji. How many of us talk about her? It is time to remind the world that it is only in Limpopo where you can find a queen who can make rain fall. I was telling some people that I didn't know where God was when he created man. However, I can tell you that when God created us women, as you can see the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and myself, He was sitting in Waterberg, inspired by those biospheres, the beauty of Waterberg. [APPLAUSE]

Honourable Members, all of you here wish to take a holiday to Dubai. Why? There is nothing in Dubai. It is a dessert, but because the government there has been able to create a hype about how beautiful Dubai is, this is what you are going to start seeing. We must talk about the beautiful Limpopo – Africa's Eden. We have this far worked well together, and I have got no doubt whatsoever that united in action we can do more to make our province the best place to live in. Let us do more together. I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Indeed, a woman has spoken. Re a leboga, Tonakgolo, to say God was sitting in Waterberg. Thank you so much, Hon Premier. We now proceed with the Orders of the Day. I am now going to request the Chief Whip, Hon Mokgonyana to deal with item 7.

7. MOTION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF PERMANENT DELEGATES

We will request you to deal with the two motions, both seven and eight, at the same time if you have them.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much once again, Hon Speaker, Makoma Grace Makhurupetje, from Waterberg.

APPOINTMENT OF THE PROVINCIAL PERMANENT DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

Section 61(2)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa stipulates that the provincial legislature must, within 30 days after the result of an election of that legislature is declared, appoint the permanent delegates in accordance with the nominations of the qualified parties represented in the House. In compliance with the dictates of that constitutional imperative, I hereby move that this House resolves to appoint the following persons as the provincial permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces:

- Mr Phiroane Phala – African National Congress.
- Ms Regina Molokomme – African National Congress.
- Mr Frans Mokwele – African National Congress.
- Ms Sanny Ndlovu – African National Congress.
- Ms Meisie Kennedy – Economic Freedom Fighters.
- Mr Nicolaas Hendrik Pienaar – Democratic Alliance.

I so move, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mokgonyana. Is there any seconder to the motion? Even those who are sitting on my left are allowed to second. Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. On behalf of the African National Congress, I duly second the motion as presented by Hon Mokgonyana. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. The motion has been seconded. Obviously, there will be no objection. Can we now proceed to the second motion, that is item 8.

8. MOTION FOR THE CONFERRAL OF A MANDATE TO THE LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL PERMANENT DELEGATES

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you once again, Hon Speaker.

CONFERRAL OF A MANDATE TO THE LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL PERMANENT DELEGATES TO VOTE FOR THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP

Section 64(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides that the chairperson and one of the deputy chairpersons of the NCOP are elected from

amongst the permanent delegates for five years unless their term as delegates expires.

In light of the above, this House is required to confer a mandate to the permanent delegates to vote for the Chairperson of the NCOP during its first Sitting. I, therefore, move that this august House confers a mandate to its permanent delegates to vote for Hon Refiloe Mtsweni as the Chair of the NCOP.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Mr Mokgonyana. Is there any seconder to the motion? Hon Lebea, you are recognised.

MS LEBEA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I, Kedibone Lebea, rise on behalf of the African National Congress to support the motion as presented by the Chief Whip, Hon Mokgonyana. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Lebea. We now proceed to item 9.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

I will request the Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela, to give us the announcements.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I want to differ a bit with the Premier when she said God was sitting in Waterberg. I think he was sitting in Vhembe, you can see I am a yellow bone.

Anyway, thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Let me congratulate you and also congratulate the first woman Premier in this province of Limpopo. We are really proud as the ANC Women's League. I have to say that because I am the provincial secretary of the ANC Women's League. We are very proud to have the first-ever woman Premier in this province. Congratulations, Premier. I would also like to congratulate all the Members that are sitting here and in advance congratulate those that are going to be in the Cabinet.

I only have two announcements. The first announcement is about the photo session that is taking place immediately after the Sitting. Protocol officers will escort all Members to the photo session. The second announcement is for the honourable Members and our guests to go have lunch. They will also be ushered by the protocol officers to the basement. Please note that lunch will be served after the photo shoot.

We will first go and have a photo shoot and afterwards proceed to the basement for lunch. Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Deputy Speaker.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Honourable Members, you know that normally when we adjourn the Sitting, we are supposed to tell you the date when the next Sitting will be held. Today we adjourn the Sitting, and we will not tell you when we will reconvene because that is going to happen after our consultation with the Premier about her readiness for the State of the Province Address. The next Sitting of the Legislature is going to be about the State of the Province Address. After consultation, the date of the next Sitting will be communicated accordingly.

On that note, we have come to the end of our session today. I declare the session officially adjourned. I will request that you all wait for the normal proceedings to happen, then all of us can be able to follow. Thank you so much. The House is adjourned.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
POLOKWANE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHAMBER
FRIDAY, 02 AUGUST 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you. You may all be seated. Good morning honourable Members and very important guests that are very beautiful today. Let me take this opportunity to welcome honourable Members, and all our important guests to the 2024 Official Opening Address. I also welcome our guests who have connected via social media platforms.

Our listeners and viewers on various communication platforms are mostly welcomed. Honourable Members, you will recall that during our last visual Sitting on Tuesday, 30 July 2024, the House resolved that the Official Opening Address shall be held at Jack Botes Hall, Polokwane Local Municipality, Capricorn District Municipality on Friday, 02 August 2024.

Based on that resolution and in accordance with section 110(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, (Act No. 108, 1996) read together with section 2(2) of the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, 2004 (Act No. 3 of 2004); Rule No. 24 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Limpopo Legislature of 2017; I hereby declare Jack Botes Hall as the precinct of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature. Honourable Members and guests, this Sitting is convened in terms of Rule 12(1) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Limpopo Legislature only to afford the Premier of the Limpopo province, Hon Dr Phophi Ramathuba, an opportunity to deliver the Official Opening Address to the people of Limpopo.

Honourable Members, it is my honour to welcome the Hon Premier; our first female Premier, Hon Dr Constance Phophi Ramathuba, and our mother Ms Ramathuba, who is today the partner of the Hon Premier.

Then, let me also take this opportunity to welcome the Deputy Speaker of Limpopo Legislature, Hon Tebogo Portia Mamorobela and her partner; honourable Members of Parliament who are here with us today, you are mostly welcomed; honourable Members of the Executive Council and your partners, you are warmly welcomed; Chief Whip of the Limpopo Legislature and your partner, you are warmly welcomed; all honourable Members of this august House, the Legislature of Limpopo; I can see that today you are very beautiful and your partners are really making this Legislature very beautiful; you are warmly welcome as the host; leaders of the opposition parties in the Legislature; honourable Members of the National Council of Provinces and your

partners; honourable Judge President of the Limpopo Division of the High Court, Justice Moletji and Judge Phatudi.

I once more want to take this opportunity to thank you. We are constituted in this manner because you did come and ensured that all Members are sworn in accordingly.

The retired Judge of the Limpopo Division of High Court, Justice Ian Makgoba, Justice T C Tshidada, Justice Makoti, Acting Justice T J Ngobeni, Acting Justice Diamond and all Judges present here today, the Regent King of the Modjadji Queenship, Mpapatla Modjadji, khe phuphudi kha mokhalaga; le hamohedhwe Molobedu, you are welcome. I welcome the representatives of the Kingship of the Mphephu Royal House. I as well warmly welcome the representatives of the Sekhukhune Kingship royal families.

Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, Hosi Ndavezitha Ngove, mi amukeriwile na vandla ra n'wina na komiti ya n'wina hinkwenu na tihosi. Le magošī a rena, maaparankwe, bengmabu le amogetšwe ka mo goo Lekgotlatheramelao letšatšing la lehono. Heads of state institutions; Limpopo Provincial Commissioner of Police, Lieutenant-General N T Hadebe, you are welcomed. Umcimbi lo ngewakho mma, you are welcomed and all your delegation and all the team that you have been working with.

The chapter nine institutions specifically, I want to welcome Ms Nkaro Mateta for ensuring that we have free and fair elections on 29 May 2024. This is your product. We say thank you so much to you and your team from the Electoral Commission in Limpopo. You are warmly welcomed. [APPLAUSE]

The Director-General of the province, Mr Mabe Nchabeleng, and all your HODs; our Acting Secretary of the Legislature, Dr Isaac Nkuna and all your managers, heads of national departments in the province; former Premiers; MECs; Speakers; Deputy Speakers; former chairpersons of committees and former Members of this Legislature, you are warmly welcomed; chairpersons and Chief Executive Officers for public entities and the boards, you are welcomed.

Our most important people in this House are the Executive Mayors and Mayors of our municipalities together with their Speakers. Specifically, I want to greet the honourable Cllr, Mosema John Makoro Mpe and your Members of the Mayoral Committee for really hosting us. Thank you very much, once more.

The Speaker who is hosting me as the Speaker of the Legislature, Cllr Modiba Welhemina, we really appreciate you for hosting us. Thank you so much. The leadership of the political parties, the African National Congress, led by vhamusanda; the Provincial Secretary, Vho Reuben Madadzhe and your leadership; the leadership of other political parties that are here, specifically, I must recognise the leadership of EFF; the leadership of Democratic Alliance; leadership of Freedom Front Plus; leadership of UAT and leadership of uMkhonto weSizwe Party, you are warmly welcome.

Leadership of Cosatu and other unions; leadership of Sanco and the organisations of people with disability. In this province, we have got our important stakeholders which

are the churches. I want to welcome the bishops that are here. I just want to welcome Bishop Muriri, you are warmly welcome, Bishop Sikhwari, the Chairperson of the South African Council of Churches and your delegation, Bishop Masela, Dr Bishop Mphahlele, Dean Machaka, Dean Rachekego, le baruti ba ba le go gona, ke akaretša le Dr Rapakwana; Moruti Thaba, Moruti Mofuladze le baruti kamoka, gomme ke sa le bale dikereke tša rena tše dikgolo mo profenseng tša St Engenas and the ZCC. They are warmly welcome.

The Vice-Chancellor and the delegation from higher education institutions, I'm told that Professor Mokgalong is here, and you are warmly welcomed as the Principal of the University of Limpopo and your delegation.

Business community; media fraternity; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen and the media who is broadcasting all these activities, I want to say to all of you, kamoka ga lena ke lena baeng ba bohlokwa. Le ge ke sa le bitša ka mabitšo. Tell yourself that you are the most important guests of the Premier today. So, you are warmly welcome in this august House. [APPLAUSE]

Honourable Members, let me take this opportunity to invite the Hon Premier, the first female of this province of the democratic government after 30 years, it's the first time we welcome the first female Premier in this province. Our Premier, Hon Phophi Constance Ramathuba, to deliver the Official Opening Address. Hon Premier, the podium is yours.

[PRAISE SONG]

THE PREMIER

Thank you. Ro livhuwa. Ro livhuwa mianga. Ndi zwone.

2. THE OFFICIAL OPENING ADDRESS SPEECH BY THE PREMIER (Address by Ms P C Ramathuba, Premier)

Ndo livhuwa u tou thonifihiwa nga mme au. A zwi anzi u itea. Speaker of the Legislature, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Members of the Executive Council; honourable Members of the Legislature; Members of the National Council of Provinces; Chief Whip of the Legislature; Judge President of Limpopo, Judge Phatudi and all former Judges who are here; King M Modjadji of Modjadji Queenship; the Regent and representatives of the Mphephu and Sekhukhune Royal families; Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders and Khoisan leadership and all our esteemed traditional leadership that has graced us; Executive Mayors and Mayors of our beautiful province; the leadership of the ruling party, the African National Congress as led by our Provincial Secretary, Vhamusanda Vho Reuben Madadzhe; leaders of the opposition political parties all who are here; former MPs and MPLs who are here; the current Members of Parliament who are here; Director-General and Heads of Department; stalwarts and veterans of our struggle; the Provincial Commissioner of the South African Police Services; our heads of both Chapter Nine and Chapter Ten Institutions; leadership of our faith-based organisations also led by the Chairperson of the South African Council of Churches; the first female Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa, Bishop Sikhwari

[APPLAUSE]; leadership of organised business and labour; youth, women and community leaders; distinguished guests; members of the media; badudi ba Limpopo, vhadzulapo vha Limpopo vthane vha khou ri tshetshesesa kana ndi nga kha dziradio, kumbe mi langute eka thelevhixini, niri eka n'wina hinkwenu.

Aa. Thobela. Avuxeni. Lotjhani. Goeie môre. Ndi matsheloni. [APPLAUSE]

Hon Speaker, our people have spoken! This was attested by the unprecedented contestations of those marathon unique ballot papers during the 29 May 2024 general elections. The people of Limpopo have once more given us another opportunity to turn their lives around for the better.

They want change. They cannot be patient to infinity; hence, we are gathered in this Legislative Chamber today at the commencement of the seventh democratic administration. I shall utilise this occasion to outline our plans for the people of Limpopo to thrive. Yes! Indeed, the change they want is the change they will experience.

Hon Speaker, in delivering this address, I'm reminded of the ferocious battles which were waged by our forebears for this country to attain this state of democratic constitutionality. Our revolutionary mission was meticulously executed in all battle fronts because we have incessantly drank from the well of wisdom and followed in the footsteps of trendsetters, in the mould of the well-travelled Mrs Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke, the gallant Ms Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and the resilient Ms Albertina Sisulu, the illustrious Ma'm Lydia Komape-Ngwenya, the firebrand Getrude Shope, the stalwart Florence Mophosho, the fierce Ms Bertha Gxowa and the courageous Rahima Moosa, the indomitable Ms Lilian Ngoyi; just to mentioned but a few.

It is no coincidence, Hon Speaker, that I am mentioning this list of pioneering women revolutionaries of the liberation struggle, as we are, of course, ushering in the Women's Month of August. [APPLAUSE]

This list of Matshwara-Thipa-ka-Bogaleng, has paved the way and made it possible for countless women from around the world to be leaders of nations, to become Chief Executive Officers of big conglomerates and multinational corporations, to assume roles as captains of industries and many other strategic positions that were traditionally occupied by men, against all odds including the Premiership of Limpopo. [APPLAUSE]

Our democratic government has crafted numerous policies and programmes to tilt the tide against patriarchy and create an equal society where both men and women coexist with equal opportunity and equal rights.

The events of the historic August 1956 march where more than 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings to record their discontent against the diabolic Apartheid's Pass Law, will be placed high on the agenda during this Women's Month.

We will use the same energy to reach the pinnacle of this government's programme of action to liberate our people in general and, of course, women in particular and this time around our battles will be against poverty, it will be against hunger, it will be against unemployment and, of course, inequality.

As we run the gauntlet of this ensuing five years, we are on course with a cogent plan to achieve more rapid, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and job creation to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living; to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

These three priorities are the mainstays of the seventh democratic administration. Limpopo stands ready to ensure that these priorities are converted into actions that will inform our endeavour to create a better life for all. We will elaborate further on these when we develop our Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024 to 2029.

Our jobs plan for Limpopo focuses on harnessing the potential of key economic sectors such as mining, agriculture, manufacturing and tourism through industrialisation which will ensure inclusive prosperity for all our residents.

By leveraging our natural resources, fostering entrepreneurship and promoting sustainable development, we are paving the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for Limpopo as a gateway to the continent, thus contributing towards creating a better Africa and a better world.

Hon Speaker, it is on record, and it is a fact that almost 72% of South Africa's mineral reserves are found in Limpopo province with untapped rare earth's potential. With global mining industry experiencing significant transformation resulting in major capital investment paradigm shifts, Limpopo is well-positioned to align very favourably on these shifts. Mining investment is shifting drastically to the 'Big Six Metals', namely: copper; Platinum Group Metals focusing on (platinum and iridium); lithium; nickel; cobalt and other rare earth elements.

Lessons have been learned from our several and different annual Mining, Energy and Industrialisation Conferences. They have provided a sound platform to attract investments. These conferences represent a strategic efforts to position Limpopo as a prime destination for both national and international investors.

Our major investors in mining, retail, property development and agroprocessing are instrumental in driving the desired growth. Therefore, we should transform the investment commitments into tangible outcomes for our people in the form of jobs by producing wealth through ownership including revenue and business growth.

The fact of the matter is that these investment commitment figures are meaningless to the young unemployed graduates, unless he and she experiences development in the form of jobs.

This year will mark our fourth conference which will continue to harness and leverage on the potential of these fields and will be held on 23 to 24 October. We are once more as Limpopo provincial government extending our invitation to all our potential investors with the view that we must take stock on our previous commitments and come up with diagnosis as to what went wrong in areas where we couldn't deliver on our commitments.

It is only after the full diagnosis which will be made where we can decide on the way forward on whether the treatment is surgical or whether they still hope for consecutive treatment.

By optimising our untapped mineral resources, improving infrastructure and fostering positive community relations through partnership, we aim to position Limpopo as a leading mining region while ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth through beneficiation. Hon Speaker, you know very well that me and you come from a long way and most of the time you would ask me why my skin is so smooth and soft, and my answer has always been that little secret – that humble avocado that girls from far north in Tshakhuma and that girls from eastern part of our province in Tzaneen grew up applying on their faces. [APPLAUSE]

During our time, there was no household without an avocado tree. What we didn't know is that this avocado holds immense economic value once converted into a face mask which today we spend thousands of rands to acquire in our beauty spas and retail stores. Meaning that people were inspired by the women from Vhembe and Mopani to come up with all these beauticians. [APPLAUSE]

These are some of the opportunities lying in our backyards that we should harness. Besides being either a fruit or vegetable depending on what you are consuming it for at that moment, the number of finished products that the simple avocado can become is astounding.

Statistician-General, Mr Risenga Maluleke, in his 2023 Household Survey Report, indicated that Limpopo is still the leading province in the production of additional source of food at 90,6%. In simple language, the people of Limpopo, despite not owning any tracts of land have proven beyond reasonable doubt that they are subsistence farmers in their own right. They are able to feed themselves and their families and making it easy to tackle the cost of living as reliance on market products from retail stores is lessened. Unfortunately, over the past 30 years, we have not done much to change their status and support them to become commercial farmers.

Ms Wendy Moshakga, from Lonsdale village in Moletji who is my special guest today is one of those many subsistence farmers who have managed to feed their children and take them to school by growing vegetables in her backyard patch and selling them in her neighbourhood to make a living. If there are people who deserve to own a land, people who deserve funding and people who deserve training, it's absolutely her.

Hon Nakedi Kekana-Sibanda, my MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, our programmes on Agriculture should be biased during this Seventh Administration towards rural farmers like Ms Moshakga who have demonstrated a keen determination to work the land without getting any government assistance.

The global market for products like subsistence products such as avocados is available. We do have the global market but unfortunately it has set standards too high to be met due to the fact that they are not trained to comply with harvesting techniques and all other standards for international markets. So, that avocado which we allow it to fall first and apply it on our face can make a living and grow the economy of this

province if only our farmers can be trained to harvest it so that it doesn't lose value. Hence, Hon Nakedi Kekana, my mbokodo, I repeat, we dare not fail in this regard.

Hon Speaker, it is our desire to see industries focusing on manufacturing agricultural products established in Limpopo and cutting down exporting of raw material that could easily have been processed locally in our province resulting in more job creation. Why, in this day and age, should we tolerate the practice, for example, of exporting raw phosphate for manufacturing of fertilisers elsewhere outside our province? Why don't we add value on our phosphate before exporting it by converting it to a finished product? We can start small, but we will ultimately achieve. Former President Nelson Mandela put it correctly when he said, "a winner is a dreamer who never gives up."

Hon Speaker, it is the intention of this government to increase participation of black producers in domestic and export markets and broadening their participation in the agricultural value chain.

Again, we have directed our MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development to work on a short to medium-term strategies towards realising our desire which we will outline fully during the State of the Province Address.

Hon Speaker and honourable Members, another sensitive area of concern are the two agricultural projects, namely: the Lebowakgomo Chicken Abattoir and the Mashashane Hatchery that have for a long time given us some consternations. We have already interacted with both the MEC and HOD for LEDET to explore means of reviving the project. In two weeks' time, Hon MEC, I hope I shall be receiving the updated progress report, and I will receive it on site at the Lebowakgomo Chicken Abattoir, not in my office because, Hon Speaker, office must fall for all public representatives. [APPLAUSE]

In the coming five years, I'm not expecting any MEC to be procuring new office furniture because who will be sitting in that furniture? You must be out there where the people want you. Services are not in the building, but they are within the communities.

The Zebediela Citrus Project is another project that has held our plans back to unlock economic opportunities for our people due to various challenges related to the management, ownership and beneficiations. Equally, the MEC for Agriculture has reassured me this time that, very soon we will be receiving bags of oranges once more from that farm since she is intervening.

We, however, at the same time take solace on community-driven projects like the Majeje Citrus, Magadime Citrus, Kopano Citrus and the Hereford Vegetable Cluster which demonstrated that government support is yielding positive results in the interest of promotion of inclusive growth and development.

We equally commend the current efforts in the local red meat industry where a Public-Private Partnership initiative will enable our black farmers to export red meat to international markets and leveraging on the recently signed trade agreement with China and Saudi Arabia on agricultural commodities.

Hon Speaker, on industrialisation, I would also like to deal with two ambitious economic initiatives in the form of special economic zones that have a potential to turn around this province of mine Limpopo into a real economic powerhouse so that people can stop laughing. They call us Life Orientation province while they refer to their provinces as Mathematics and Physical Science. They will unlock the economic potential of not just in South Africa but on a global scale.

Honourable Members, let me rather first touch on a matter that is sensitive not only to me but probably to the majority of our people and also to the Members of this Legislature. Almost 10 years ago as a province we set ourselves on an ambitious project to fight unemployment in our province. We had targeted to create over 22 000 jobs through the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone. I must say, in the process, unfortunately we have experienced some hurdles and hindrances that have delayed the realisation of this noble dream. However, we dare not succumb to failure in this catalytic project.

That is why to this effect, we have directed the MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Hon Baldwin Tshitereke Matibe, -you see, it's bold. I even bold it- to pay full attention to this imperative and game changing project by, amongst others, implementing a 6-month turnaround plan that we have agreed on. No stone must be left unturned until all initial agreements for investment partners are unlocked, until the plans for water provision in the area are implemented and until all environmental concerns that have held this project back are fully addressed. In this way, Madam Speaker, our dream shall manifest.

On the other hand, the second Special Economic Zone initiative, which is budding with hope is the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park (FTIP) that we currently fully own through our provincial entity, the Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA). The Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park has developed a positive investment pipeline of 32 domestic and global companies worth R56 billion with a potential to create 6 000 jobs in the first five years of operation and a further 20 000 jobs over 10 years.

Nine of the 32 investors are already confirmed to take residence in the park in the next 12 months. These are projected to invest just over R10 billion. This we will live to see maturing into a realisable dream during our Seventh Administration. On this one because I'm pronouncing it, Hon Baldwin Tshitereke Matibe, we dare not fail.

Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) are key to job creation. Limpopo is a rural province, and I will repeat and it has a potential of turning around our joblessness status through supporting our SMMEs. This can be achieved through the establishment of a dedicated development and industrialisation fund for local SMMEs and cooperatives. We will focus on the implementation of our township and rural economic strategy. It is against this background that the province has dedicated 30% of procurement spent to support local production by SMMEs and cooperatives.

It is in this light that we hereby, in front you, direct the MEC for Finance, Hon Kgabo Mahoai, to ensure that this is realised without fail and not forgetting the payment of suppliers within 30 days by all our provincial departments and entities. [APPLAUSE] This is non-negotiable. Not under my watch!

The MEC for Health, Ms Dieketseng Mashego, will tell you that she inherited a department which 10 years ago was at 67% compliance, but when she inherited it this year, it is at 100% compliance. So, if Health can do it, there is no department which must fail on this one. It is possible.

The revitalisation of industrial parks, the development of automotive hubs and the implementation of Green Energy Master Plan further demonstrate our commitment to sustainable industrialisation and economic growth in our province.

Through our own agency, the Limpopo Economic Development Agency, (LEDA) we will strive to strengthen our programme of revitalisation and establishment of industrial parks which currently we have identified in our strategic centres of Nkowankowa, Seshego and Thohoyandou.

To this effect, we shall embark upon a programme to strengthen and capacitate entities with the aim of not only focusing on their primary mandates, but also to enable this administration to expeditiously achieve its goals and objectives of rapid and sustainable economic growth.

Honourable Members, for sustainable socioeconomic growth, relevant skills are required. Hence, we shall embark on an aggressive skills development programme linked to key economic levels of our province.

It is our firm belief that youth development is a key priority for us and we are committed to target young people for reskilling to meet the demands of our envisaged industrialised, digitalised and inclusive economy. The province has already adopted its provincial human capital strategies during the Sixth Administration. Our role therefore is to expedite its implementation with concrete timeframes for us to avoid it accumulating dust.

Hon Speaker, plans are at an advanced stage to establish Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) campus in Giyani. [APPLAUSE] You can see, people are doubting. During our recent meeting with Prof Tinyiko Maluleke, the current Vice-Chancellor and Principal of TUT, we agreed that we cannot allow a situation where a child from KaMunghonghoma, after passing Grade 12, is forced to travel long distance in a quest for higher education.

We are looking forward towards a situation where he or she will take a short left to further her higher education in a more advanced university of technology right there in his or her backyard. What is of concern for both of us, however, is the people who have illegally started occupying the identified erstwhile Giyani College of Education before even refurbishment could even commence.

We are calling upon all those who have hijacked and illegally occupy any of our government property to desist and vacate with immediate effect or else. [APPLAUSE] Operation "Vhuyisani thundu ya muvhuso" is about to be launched. This one will be launched with the Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant-General Madam Thembi Hadebe. It's then that you gonna understand and it's not gonna be lies. We know there are properties in Thohoyandou, there are properties in Kremetart and there are

properties in Vaalwater; you know yourselves. Vacate with immediate effect. [APPLAUSE]

Those who think it is far-fetched must think again – the doubting Thomas. Let me remind you that when we pronounced that the University of Limpopo will be the first institution of higher learning university to establish a post-1994 medical school, we were accused of hallucinating. Today a child from HaTshikundamela when she wants to study medicine, she doesn't have to take a bus for a long trip to Cape Town or to Durban or to Johannesburg or to Pretoria. She simply takes a shot left to Mankweng, to Prof Mokgalong at the medical school proudly brought to you by the ANC-led government. Currently, the very same ANC-led government has already started with the construction of the first ever Limpopo Central and Academic Hospital. [APPLAUSE]

In a similar vein, initiatives towards the opening of a specialised skills branch at Sekhukhune TVET College, which will further contribute towards addressing skills gap and unemployment challenges in our province are underway. We are in collaboration with various Sector Education and Training Authority (SETAs), embarking on skills development through apprenticeship and learnership programmes.

To date, the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Sector Education Training Authority (merSETA) has committed R130 million targeting 500 candidates in the third quarter and 460 in the fourth quarter to commence in an apprenticeship programme in various critical sectors including, amongst others, in motor mechanics, diesel mechanics, mechanical fitting, welding, and also in electrical trades.

We remain unflinching in our resolution to continue exploring partnerships with SETAs in other areas that may provide support. We are all in agreement that laying of key infrastructure will support the economic growth as envisaged in our Limpopo Developmental Plan.

The provincial government is steadfast in its commitment of upgrading and maintaining strategic roads that connect various communities that will also connect agricultural areas and also connect the Special Economic Zones, tourism destinations and also our mining industries. These road projects are not merely about laying down asphalt and concrete; they are also about fostering opportunities, they are about stimulating economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

Our strategic focus on road infrastructure is underpinned by the pressing need to address substantial backlog in road upgrades within the province. With a vast provincial road network spanning at just over 20 000 km, of which 66% of them remain unpaved, the biggest challenge with these gravel roads is not necessarily that they are gravelled or unpaved. However, the fact that we have neglected to either blade, re-gravel and even basic maintenance, is what makes me not to sleep at night.

That is why using our internal resources and capacity to make gravel roads user-friendly, by re-graveling, blading as well as clearing bushes around them for community use. We must commend the work that is done by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure under MEC, Hon Sebataolo "Dikgerekgere" Rachoene for Dikgerekgere Wednesday. [APPLAUSE]

The Dikgerekgere Wednesday's project was born out of this concern, and it has revealed, honourable Members, the great potential that some of our departments have capacity in utilising our own resources for infrastructure maintenance purposes. We must also equally appreciate those municipalities that have already started to join this revolutionary programme. I have seen my municipality, Mogalakwena Local Municipality, having their own Dikgerekgere Friday which is also aimed at reducing reliance on service providers to do work that could ordinarily be done in-house.

Earlier on, together with the Speakership, the Speaker and I, we were able to join police commissioner on a parade wearing our stilettos without the fear of spraining our ankles as a result of our potholes because the City of Polokwane is hard at work fixing our streets. This is what we want to see throughout all our municipalities.

We want to see dust everywhere in our villages, not to wait for the funeral announcement and not to wait for Councillor to make a sit-in within our municipality offices because our yellow fleet must be insourced, and we must appoint staff that will work. This is what we want to be remembered and be known for as the Seventh Administration. [APPLAUSE]

Having noted the demand by our traditional leaders, I have now directed both the MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and the MEC for Finance to find within our limited budget funds to procure these yellow fleets and also to prioritise their operators for fulltime employment in the public service within a short space of time. The very same employees against the shortage of funds have proven that they do have capacity to maintain our gravel roads. So, why not empower them by adding more fleets and adding more workers and cut down on the middlemen. We can do things by ourselves.

Capacitating our state institutions for us to insource services will be sacrosanct and shall remain the priority of this Seventh Administration. Plumbers must be hired, Municipal Managers; electricians must be hired, and carpenters must be hired for us to avoid outsourcing even on changing a globe in a clinic, including the unblocking of a toilet at this august House thereby Lebowakgomo. It must be the thing of the past. It must be done inhouse. [APPLAUSE]

Honourable Members, we have not forgotten about a number of stagnant infrastructure projects across various sectors and departments. To this effect, we have directed the EXCO Infrastructure Cluster to do an audit of all unfinished infrastructure projects in your Maphutha Malatji Hospital and develop an action plan to bring them to practical completion. When we present our State of the Province Address, come February 2025, we should be speaking a different language on this matter. [APPLAUSE]

Madam Speaker, in its manifesto, the African National Congress, committed under its priority to invest in people and meet basic needs that it will give national and provincial government powers to support and intervene in municipalities that struggle to provide services to communities. The ANC manifesto continues to commit to provide clean water, maintenance of infrastructure and water infrastructure.

As a pathway, the President of the Republic has instituted the District Development Model (DDM) which will coordinate and integrate development across different levels of government and sectors. We will give effect to the President's DDM initiative through our intergovernmental relations forum. Our focus as the Seventh Administration will be to strengthen and support municipalities in distress.

Honourable Members, we have heard your cries and the cry for the people of Thabazimbi. The people of Thabazimbi deserve a stable municipality that will render services to them. The people of Thabazimbi are not interested in our egos and our political differences. They are interested in getting services.

We want to reassure them that this matter is receiving attention and Executive Council will very soon pronounce itself on the matter. That pronouncement will be inclusive of the way forward. There will be decisions that are going to be taken. They might not be nice to you, but leadership is about taking decisions not selling ice cream.
[APPLAUSE]

MEC, Hon Makamu has spent sleepless nights visiting that municipality. We have reached a level where we are going to decide, and we will decide for them. One of the most critical basic services impacting on the lives of our people is water. Recent challenges in water provision call for a concerted efforts to double our levels of provision. At one point in 2010, we were able to reach 84,1% access to water, from what we use to have in 1996 which was 33,5%.

However, in the past decade we witnessed a decline to 69,1%. Unfortunately, water has no alternative. When I was still in primary school, my ma'm taught me that "no water, no life." Our major concern is the coordination of water services to unlock some bottlenecks in areas like Sekhukhune, Mopani and also Vhembe where bulk water infrastructure exists, but yet it has taken years for communities to enjoy the benefit of such basic services.

Hon Speaker, let me share a story with you which the speech writer refused to add.
[LAUGHTER] I recently visited Malamulele meeting with the senior traditional leaders; I'm not sure if Thovhele Vho Mphaphuli is here. He stood up in that meeting when we were discussing about roads and told us that he does understand that roads do have alternatives which I do not understand which one of them. However, he says more than 10 years ago we visited him and Thovhele Vho Ramovha as government and requested land for the Nandoni Dam construction. Fast forward, the dam has been constructed. They were excited that they even slaughtered a goat and chicken for us as government to eat and feast because we brought good news, but he said something contrary to what they thought the dam will bring.

They told me that Premier, "This dam of yours has not delivered water in our households. What we know is that this area is usually a warm area even in winter but because of this dam it has become so cold. Because of this dam, Vhembe might be a malaria area, that area was never been a malaria area. This dam has brought anopheles mosquitos". These are female mosquitos which are biting his subjects, and they are now suffering from malaria. Then he said to me that there are two things that the dam has brought. It has brought its malaria through mosquitos and the cold weather.

Now, it's against this background that we are not going to compromise. While we understand that water authority is not with the provincial government, we have now directed the Director-General to lead a technical team comprising of District Municipal Manager, our water authority, municipal managers and the Department of Water and Sanitation and all our water boards to unlock all water-related bottlenecks projects as a matter of extreme urgency.

We are taking bold steps and pronounced together with the MEC for CoGHSTA, Hon Basikopo Rogers Makamu. We are embarking on a programme called 'Operation hi n'wa mati Friday'. [APPLAUSE] Honourable Members, Vhathu vha hashu vha tōḁa maḁi. Vanhu va ka hina va lava mati. Batho ba ga bo rena ba nyaka meetsi.

This cannot be overemphasised. Through this bold move, we want to use every Friday to launch a water project across all corners of the province. [APPLAUSE] You ask the same question when we say, 'Dikgerekgere Friday.' Who is paying for that? Government will also consider the option of encouraging our municipalities to acquire their own borehole drilling equipment in order to expedite the acceleration of water provision in our communities. In the same breath, all district municipalities will be encouraged to procure their own water tankers which will reduce reliance on private service providers. Some of these things are manmade and we believe that by building inhouse capacity, water challenges will be resolved.

We are also encouraging our Councillors, especially Ward Councillors, my colleagues, Mayors and the Executive Mayors to reside in their wards and their own municipalities, where they were elected so that they can face similar hardships faced by their constituencies. [APPLAUSE]

Imagine if you were the Premier and after inauguration on 14 June you relocate to Sandton or Camps Bay; driving a car with a GP registration. This means that you will be contributing to Gauteng revenue collection but continue to plead poverty with our Treasury. Charity begins at home. Let's also see all of you public representatives driving even cars that are "L" for Limpopo registration. Pay that disc in your own local municipality not for any other.

Hon Speaker, we have decided as the Executive Council to convene all our professionals within the construction environment, all our engineers and quantity surveyors who are employed in our government departments in our municipalities and all our entities. We want to convene them in one room, and we are not going to leave that room until they give us solutions towards our infrastructure challenges.

Be it water, be it building or roads. We will extend the invitation to all sons and daughters from our province who are all over the country who are making and contributing positively towards economic growth to join us in that summit. We don't believe that as an engineer, whether civil or a quantity surveyor, you are happy to be residing in Sandton or Hyde Park while your own village that has made you who you are is without roads or water.

At the end of the day those of us who understand the African proverb, 'It takes a village to raise a child'. It is time to give back. We are not saying come and work fulltime. We are not saying come and relocate.

THE PREMIER

We are calling on you to bring the expertise. We have seen in the Department of Health that rural health project is run by professors from Groote Schuur Hospital and Steve Biko Academic Hospital. Prof. Steve Matshidze is the Head of Department in the Free State University of Orthopaedics. Even not so long, a weekend ago, he gave himself a weekend to come and operate his own people. So, we are saying, we don't have money to pay you, but we want your brains and ideas. I'm calling upon all of you. I know that as professionals, we get fulfilment when we serve our people better than when we get money.

Hon Speaker, we are moving from the premise that we are indeed the descendants of the warriors; Kings and Queens. We are indeed the descendants of Queen Modjadji, we are indeed the descendants of Hosi Ngungunyane, Ikosi uNyabela, Kgošikgolo Sekhukhune, Kgošigadi Madinoge Kgoloko, King Makhado Tshilwavhusiku Ramabulana and many others who resisted and defied the colonial imposition to defend the sovereignty of their people.

Therefore, our bond with the institution of traditional leadership predates this democratic state. This is why in our plans we will continue to work with the House of Traditional Leaders. Our support to the institution of traditional leadership continues to grow and supporting them in their work with all the resources including but not limited to the construction of their offices.

We are therefore directing you, MEC Hon Basikopo Makamu, to continue with what we have started in the Sixth Administration and provide them with their tools of trade including their motor vehicles. We shall continue, in this financial year, to provide maaparankwe with these essential tools to make their work easy. We are an 80% rural province; therefore, we can never undermine or senior and traditional leadership. Re bana ba kgoši. Hi vana va ndhavezitha. Ri vhana vha vhothovhela. Whether you agree or not, that's a fact.

Through various initiatives, we are making a tangible impact on the lives of our citizens and working towards a more inclusive and prosperous society. We are committed to seeing reduced levels of poverty, inequality, vulnerability and social ills by 2025 by making sure that persons with disability access residential facilities, access services in protective workshops and provide psychosocial support services for behavioural change.

Limpopo remains a rural and poor province. While we are making efforts to change this status through our various economic strategies and interventions as outlined above, we are alive to the reality that we still have families who sleep on an empty stomach. Hence, the MEC for Social Development, Hon Ms Fulufhelo Radzilani, is directed to prioritise increasing the number of vulnerable households in accessing food from the current 4 550 to at least 7 200 –which translate to 16 750 people- through the department's food security programme.

At the end of the day, Hon Ms Radzilani, the enemy remains hunger and poverty to our people. While we have made significant strides in terms of Grade 12 results looking back in 1996 when we were at the pass rate of 38 % pass rate, today we pride ourselves with almost 80% pass rate. The challenge posed towards sustaining and improving on these upwards trajectories is our failure to invest on Early Childhood Development.

We would want to see improved school readiness of children as this is a better foundation phase for better results at higher grades and reduction in school dropouts. Honourable Members, it is also our responsibility to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning by making sure that school infrastructure is fit for purpose. We expect the Department of Education, supported by all relevant departments to provide schools with water infrastructure and proper sanitation infrastructure so that the MEC for Education must focus on her core business which is teaching and learning.

Additionally, the department is working hard to eradicate pit latrines in our schools. All schools that are currently using pit latrines will be provided with appropriate sanitation facilities within the reasonable and acceptable period of time, bringing to conclusion the sad part of pit latrines in our province.

We have since directed the MEC for Education, Hon Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya, to give us a comprehensive report on the remaining schools whose sanitation facilities are still to be completed. We can't compromise on pit latrines; we have to eradicate them in their entirety.

It is an open secret Hon Speaker that the President of the Republic, His Excellency, Hon Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa has signed the National Health Insurance Bill into law that must be enforced. Its success will be highly dependent on our ability to re-engineer public health facilities from primary healthcare level to tertiary level. Hence, we are directing MEC for Health, Ms Dieketseng Mashego, to work around the clock in making sure that our health facilities receive the Office of Healthcare Standards Compliance accreditation as required for contracting with the NHI fund.

We, therefore, call upon all our municipalities to support the Department of Health by providing services like water, power supply, occupation certificates and certificates of compliance where applicable.

We are also alive to the fact that the MEC for Health, just like her counterpart in Education, has responsibility to focus on her core mandate which is the provision of healthcare services not building clinics, not supplying water and not power supply. Hence, MEC Hon Sebataolo Rachoene, we need to capacitate your department so that it focuses on it's mandate which is infrastructure.

Crimes against vulnerable groups with special focus on gender-based violence and femicide are unacceptably high. It is against this background that we call for a collaboration between South African Police Service, Department of Transport and Community Safety, Departments of Health and also the Department of Social Development, community policing structures and all other relevant stakeholders to

implement crime prevention campaigns across the province in order to address crime that is affecting our communities.

Hon Speaker, we have judges in this House. They will confirm that successful prosecution and conviction rate are two indicators which can lead towards the reduction of these violent crimes. Unfortunately, these indicators are dependent on the quality of work that will be done by the investigating officer, the quality of work that must be done by attending forensic clinician, be it a doctor or a nurse, by the counsellor or psychologist or social workers who are supposed to prepare our victims and all our witnesses by the prosecutor himself or herself to start taking these cases very serious and present facts to a presiding judge or magistrate.

Unfortunately, we always blame judges for the outcomes forgetting that we have not put our system strong. Perpetrators can afford senior counsels and advocates. What is sad is that our victims who are from the poor working class are dependent on state prosecutors who some of them are not taking their jobs serious.

Hence, we are directing our MECs for Transport and Community Safety, Social Development and Health by working with provincial commissioner of Police, the NPA and Justice Department to convene a consultative forum which will also be addressed by the judges in order to deal with these systematic challenges so that we can have tightened cases. Every rapist or everyone who murders a women must go to jail for life. It is possible; we have done it before. [APPLAUSE] Hon Speaker, the reality is that, if I report you as my rapist, two days later you are loitering around the street, the third day you are coming to kill me. So, we need to take this matter seriously.

Hon Speaker, Limpopo province is one of the most diverse provinces of South Africa with the population consisting of seven different ethnic groupings. We come a long way as a province that was formed from three main ethnically based homelands. Therefore, it is important and critical for the Seventh Administration to promote social cohesion and find innovative ways through implementation of arts, culture and heritage programmes.

To unite the diverse cultures in the province, we have directed Sport, Arts and Culture, who has also started hitting the ground running, Hon Jerry Maseko, to lead the department in implementation of multilingualism. Mi fanele kuri mi kota ku vulavula. Le kgone go apa. Vha kone na u amba and cultural exchange programmes in the current Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. If you are a Member of this House and you can't speak any of these languages, there is a serious problem. How do you lead them when you can't communicate with them?

Evidence exists, honourable Members, that sport and physical activities can benefit education immensely and that sport presents the child at school in a manner that is unsurpassed by any other activity.

It remains our wish that our school sports programmes should be supported for them to produce more global stars like in the mould of our Seshego-born Kgothatso Montjane, who in June 2024, became the first black South African woman to win at Wimbledon when she won the wheelchair women's doubles. [APPLAUSE] Kgothatso Montjane is not a child of a tennis player or did she go to Model C school. She went

to Helen Franz Special School, but here she is flying our flag high. She would have joined us today but unfortunately; she has just lost her mother. May her lost soul rest in peace.

Let's be with her in prayers because she needs that energy. We are asking you to tune in so that you can watch her, Kgothatso from 28 August to 8 September 2024 when she will be flying again the Limpopo flag in full mast during the Paralympics Games in France. Kgothatso is not alone who will be representing us. In this august House my special guest is Sherrol James from Vhembe. An athlete who will also be flying our flag as Limpopo. We pride ourselves with these young women. What a special Women's Month gift to the people of Limpopo! [APPLAUSE] We must also encourage young men to represent us at that level. [LAUGHTER]

Equally, allow me to also take this moment and recognise Steyn De Lange, a Limpopian wrestler, who is currently participating in Team South Africa flying our flag at the moment at the Paris Olympics.

Hon Speaker, once upon a time, this province was dubbed "Africa's Eden". Those who named it were inspired by its rich biodiversity which made it easy for us to optimise numerous tourism avenues and products offered by this province.

The Seventh Administration will focus on repackaging the number of tourism outlets offered by this province. First and foremost, we must note that in our midst we have got the MEC for Health from Mpumalanga, I always remind her that 70% of Kruger National Park is actually located in Limpopo. It is also to be noted that 70% of the Kruger National Park is located in Limpopo province and it is time for our Limpopo Tourism Agency to leverage on this aspect and collaborate with SANParks and change this mentality that it is in Mpumalanga.

The problem is that we are not developing our side that's why people think it's in Mpumalanga. Dilo di tšhentšhitše. Tourism Limpopo, you must change this mentality.

In addition, we also have two heritage sites that have been declared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The Mapungubwe and Makapan Valley Heritage Sites continue to be this province's shining icons that must be used as formidable selling points to the global community.

To this end plans are afoot to have the Hoedspruit Airport to be granted an international license because of the increasing numbers of overseas tourists who visit the "Kruger to Canyon Biosphere". [APPLAUSE]

There is evidence that domestic tourism is gaining momentum in our province, especially during ordinary and long weekends. We should take advantage of this phenomenon and build rural economy and tourism through the likes of B&Bs in our villages. Go re ge le eya gae go bomma le be le marobalo. We must create accommodation for you. A reliable transportation network will also go a long way in unlocking tourism potential at local, provincial and national level.

Therefore, we cannot over-emphasise the fact that the people of Limpopo are waiting with eagerness and anticipation for the much-vaunted high-speed train that will

shorten the travelling time between Gauteng and Limpopo. Upon completion, the high-speed train will not only benefit the tourism industry but of critical importance, it's likely to decrease traffic volumes on the N1 stretch by half which is currently responsible for high road traffic accidents and fatalities. Every weekend we are signing death certificates of young men and women who are still economically active because of utilising N1.

Hon Speaker, as I conclude, let us remember that ethical behaviour is the cornerstone of good governance. As we embark on the Seventh Administration, we must commit ourselves to principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability. A key aspect of this commitment is our unwavering stance against corruption and maladministration.

We will implement robust anti-corruption strategies, ensuring that our actions are guided by the highest ethical standards. Together we can build a Limpopo where corruption has no place, where public resources are protected and where our people receive services they deserve. We will advocate for good governance because it leads to attracting more investors because they would want to do business where accountability is the order of the day. Let us lead by example, fostering a culture of trust and respect and demonstrating our dedication of serving our community with honour. By doing so, we will inspire confidence in our leadership and pave the way for a brighter future.

Hon Speaker, critically, it is one thing to have this grand plan but forget the most important aspects of why we are all here. The reason we exist as leaders is yet again found in these three critical questions that on a daily basis we must all ask ourselves. The first question being, what do our people want? I still repeat; our people because, for me, when you call them, "our people", it means you feel their pain. The second question is, what do we want for our people? And the third question would be, what are we going to leave behind for our children, our grandchildren and great grandchildren?

In answering these questions, please consider one of my favourite quotes by Amílcar Cabral: "Struggle is daily action against ourselves and against the enemy". In this context, the enemy remains hunger, the enemy remains unemployment, the enemy remains poverty and the enemy remains inequality.

Hon Speaker, allow me to extend my appreciation to my organisation, the ruling party, in this province which was given a decisive majority of over 73% by the people of Limpopo, the African National Congress, for having entrusted me with the responsibility to take this great province forward, especially that they are not in any government of whatever kind of unity. [APPLAUSE] So, when they entrusted me with that, it is a greatest honour, and we dare not fail our people.

I also wish to thank all my predecessors starting with Adv. Ngoako Ramatlhodi; followed by Ambassador Sello Moloto; and then Deputy Minister Cassel Mathale and, of course, Mahlatji'a Hlabirwa, Moraswi, my immediate former boss, the Deputy Minister Hon Stanley Chupu Mathabatha, for laying the foundation down in advancing the development of our province. One will focus on building on the foundation that they have laid with emphasis on implementation of all progressive policies that have been developed all over the years

To my family, especially my partner who is my mother, [LAUGHTER] there is no one deserving of this limelight than her. That is a fact. Even my children cannot come closer to her. So, nobody, even my man, understands; he can't come closer to her. My entire family, I know you are here in your numbers. Thank you very much for your support and understanding. I would not be able to survive without your support.

To the Director-General, Heads of Department and all men and women in the provincial government, let me thank you in advance because I know that after today you have received the marching orders, and you are going to heed the call and dare not fail the people of our province. So, thank you for not failing the people of this province.

To my 10 Members of the Executive Council, the people of Limpopo have spoken. We dare not fail them. As I invite all of you, just like our BET Award winner Makhadzi muimbi when she said, "Kha ri ye rothe Limpopo, dzi a vhuya Limpopo". Come to Limpopo. You won't regret. "Dilo di tshentshitse". "Swilo swi cincile. "Zwithu zwo shanduka" I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable Members. Indeed, it was a maiden speech. It was a maiden address to the people of Limpopo. Re a leboga, Hon Premier, Dr Ramathuba. Dilo di tshentshitse. Honourable Members, firstly, it will be important that I take this opportunity to send our heartfelt condolences to the Montjane family.

Indeed, she is the mother of our icon. May her soul rest in peace. Hon Premier, your guest is here, MEC for Health in Mpumalanga, Hon Sasekani Manzini; is here. Honourable MEC, you are welcomed. But as well, it was important that as I did my own welcoming to these Members and acknowledgements, I did not acknowledge those that might not feel comfortable, especially those who came before me.

Former Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature; Vho Dean Tshenuwani Farisani vha hone fhano as well as my recent predecessor, former Speaker, Ms Rosemarry Molapo; le bona ba gona mo. Re a leboga. On that note, honourable Members, we shall now call upon the Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Portia Mamorobela. You can as well acknowledge your partner, ma'm. You are welcome to do so.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon Speaker, thank you very much. When you were acknowledging the Premier's partner, Hon Mokaba and Hon Rakgoale were worried that you are not mentioning our partners. Now they wanted to know who the partners of the Deputy Speaker and the Speaker are. The partner of the Deputy Speaker is the daughter, Precious Mamorobela.

The partner of the Speaker is the son, Mahlatsi Makhurupetje. Apparently, Members want to see the partners of the Speakership. You are requested to stand up. Those are our partners. Ke tsebile gore a ba sa nyaka ditaba, Members of the Legislature. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. If it was in our church, both of us; me, you,

the Premier and I were going to sing “Igama lamakhosikazi malibongwe” after the Premier has delivered such an address that speaks to the core needs of this province.

Without wasting any time, I will not sing that song, we will sing it outside the House, Hon Premier, at our lunch place. Thanks very much, Hon Speaker, today indeed is a great day for the citizens of Limpopo. Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, has set the tone for provincial government service delivery roadmap for the Seventh Administration and further outlined key strategic objectives for the next five years.

We expect the departments to provide detailed plans of action during their Budget Speech presentations as you have heard the Premier mentioning the MECs one by one giving directives. Thanks very much, Hon Premier, for giving hope to the people of Limpopo. We are certain that the people of Limpopo will receive quality service they rightfully deserve.

I also thank you, Madam Speaker with your partner, in particular, for presiding over this important Official Opening Address Sitting. I also express my gratitude to all who have contributed to the success of this event, in particular, the staff of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature as led by the Acting Secretary, Dr Nkuna, Office of the Premier, South African Police Service, Polokwane Local Municipality and the media.

Guests and Members, we have the following announcements: we will have our lunch at Bolivia Lodge, and you are advised to use the N1 bypass. Our traffic officials will escort guests to Bolivia Lodge. Please, please, follow the convoy and obey traffic control measures. I repeat, follow the convoy and obey the traffic control measures.

Our protocol officials will be waiting for us at Bolivia Lodge. All guests are invited by the Premier to go and have lunch with her. And also, we have made sure that when the Premier is leaving this House, she is not going to address the media; she is going straight to the lunch place so that people can start eating because they won't eat if she is not there. They will have to wait for the Premier and these are her guests. So, the media will see her after lunch with her guests.

Honourable Members, I am notified that the debate on the Official Opening Address will be held on Tuesday, 06 August 2024. Hon Premier will respond to the debates on Thursday, 08 August 2024. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Deputy Speaker. This House is adjourned to Tuesday, 06 August 2024 at 10:00 in the Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber. Thank you.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
TUESDAY, 06 AUGUST 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

We will now take this opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you very much, you may all be seated. Honourable Members, items 2 to 5 on the Order Paper are deferred to the next Sitting. We shall now move to item 6 on the Order Paper: Tabling the Financial and Fiscal Commission Report on the Annual Submission for the Division of Revenue for 2025/26. The MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Mahoai, you may take the podium.

[ITEMS 2–5 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

6.1 Tabling of the Report on Financial and Fiscal Commission on the Annual Submission for the Division of Revenue 2025/26

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Thank you, Hon Speaker. On behalf of the Financial and Fiscal Commission and in compliance with the provisions of Section 220(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, as amended, and section 9(1) of the Intergovernmental Fiscal Act, 1997, Act 97 of 1997 as amended; I hereby table the Financial and Fiscal Commission' submission for consideration by this august House. I submit.

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mahoai. The report is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration and to report back to the House. Let's move to the tabling

of the consolidated MFMA Section 71 Report for the quarter ending 31 March 2024. The MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Mahoai, you may take the podium.

6.2 Tabling of the Consolidated MFMA Section 71 Report for the Quarter Ending 31 March 2024

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Once again, thank you, Hon Speaker. As we may recall, section 71(7) of the Municipal Finance Management Act provides that the Provincial Treasury must, within 30 days after the end of each quarter, make public a consolidated statement in the prescribed format on the state of the municipality's budget per municipality and per municipal entity. In accordance to this, I hereby table the report, as mentioned above, for consideration by this honourable House. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mahoai. The report is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for further scrutiny and to report back to the House.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1. Debate on the Premier's Official Opening Address

We shall now call upon Hon Essop Mokgonyana.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you, Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela. Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; Members of this august House; Members of the Executive Council; distinguished guests and members of the public in the gallery; ladies and gentlemen, I greet you all this morning.

The Premier's official opening address has set an unambiguous tone, that this Seventh Provincial Administration is determined to amplify the delivery of services to the people of this Limpopo. It is a call to action that resonates well with the ANC's electoral manifesto, and as the deployees of the ANC in this august house, we shall do everything in our power to ensure that its aspirations and directives find expression in government programmes. We shall use this period to heighten the creation of jobs, deepen and defend this democracy, invest in our people, tackle the high cost of living and strive towards creating a better Africa and the world.

South Africa is today a model of democracy around the world, and we have demonstrated that we want this same democracy for our friends in Palestine, Western Sahara and many other parts around the world. The official opening address of the Seventh Provincial Administration was a clear command and a call to all of us to join hands with this government, as it ups its service delivery. Honourable Members, we are all aware that the May 29 general elections have, in so many ways, re-ignited the electoral zeal of 1994. Noting that the people of this province have used their electoral power to overwhelmingly place the ANC as a leader of their government; it is therefore

incumbent upon us to ensure that they become the immediate beneficiaries of the services that we are rolling out. This has placed an additional responsibility on all of us, in this august House, to understand that despite our differing political views and outlook. Our people should be placed at the apex of this government's services.

The achievements that have been underscored in the past 30 years, have laid a solid foundation for the Seventh Provincial Administration to continue with the work of improving the lives of our people. We have used the advantage of our numbers in this House to improve the lives of our people and our programmes, and during this administration, we will be in pursuit of the same objective. Despite the upheaval challenges that lie ahead, we have greatly transformed this country, Honourable Members. We have greatly altered this country's skyline by drastically reducing the number of mud houses, increasing access to basic services, improving the quality of education, healthcare, and have set its economy on an unprecedented growth path. We have increased access to water services for our people, electricity provision, and we have built world-class schools and health facilities. We have rolled out an unmatched roads improvement programme since 1994. And we have covered vast kilometres with tar roads, that no other government has covered on the African continent. We achieved all these because at the centre of our services, we have always placed our people and their most pressing needs first. The accomplishments of the past 30 years are worth celebrating, in the midst of the great challenges that we are faced with as a nation.

Hon Premier, we have observed with keen interest, the energy and enthusiasm that you have brought with you into your new position. Your service delivery record is unparalleled, and we are confident that you will bring with you this same energy and zeal into the Office of the Premier. The former President of Malawi, Her Excellency Joyce Banda, should have had you in mind when she uttered the words: "The seeds of success in every nation on Earth, are best planted in women." Your focus on improving the economy, healthcare, education and infrastructure is both timely and necessary. It was, indeed, an overarching address that highlighted the economic potential of the Limpopo province.

It is reassuring to note that this government prioritises the most pressing issues faced by our society. Hon Premier, seated in this august house, we all agree that, if our approach towards economic growth does not change, we are likely to achieve the same set of results, and that has rendered the majority of our people economically infantile and put them on the economic sidelines. We cannot keep on boasting about the vast mineral deposits in this province if such deposits do not benefit the people of this province. If we are to create the much-needed jobs in the economy, we must put concerted efforts on economic quick-wins; which include the intensification of infrastructure investment, and injection of more resources into the agricultural sector to offset small-scale farmers and to grow the mining sector to its optimal levels.

We welcome the numerous commitments made by potential investors during investor conferences, which were held in this province. We are therefore making a sincere appeal that, all those who committed funds during such conferences should be followed up to fulfil those promises. In her address, the Premier has rightly observed that farming and mining are the mainstay of this province's economy, and this government has an obligation to harness both sectors. In his famous poem "Good

Timber”, Douglas Malloch reminds us that; the man who never had to toil to gain and farm his patch of soil, who never had to win his share of sun and sky and light and air, never became a manly man, but he lived and died as he began.

Our people continue to survive on subsistence farming with little or no government intervention, because they do not want to live and die as they began, as Douglas Malloch puts it. They are determined to work the land and make a decent living out of it. This, therefore, compels us, as a government, to tailor our government programmes towards helping them to improve their craft and become self-sustainable. If you travel throughout this province, you will realise that our people are working the land, and what is required of us is to get them access to more land, assist them with grants to improve their trade, help them access commercial markets and provide them with the requisite skills to help them become more competent. Without singing much adoration on your person, Hon Premier, let me reiterate that your appointment is a breath of fresh air into our political discourse and we are certain that with you at the helm, this administration will cause a serious dent on the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

In the past few weeks that you have assumed office, you have outdone yourself as you demonstrated to all of us that the best way to deliver services to our people is to visit them in their localities and provide them with such services. When you took to the streets and launched the ‘Dikgerekgere Wednesdays’, you demonstrated to the people of Limpopo that, the Seventh Administration is going to be an action-packed period of government. If we are to make amends to the status quo, we should craft many other similar programmes across the various government departments.

I am throwing the gauntlet at other sector departments, like Education, Health, Transport, Community Safety and others, to be innovative and devise similar programmes, that will make our people feel their services on the ground. By this, we will also be narrowing the widening gap between this government and its people. Hon Premier, with the daring pronouncements that you have made of campaigns like the ‘Hi Nwa Mati Fridays’, the turning around of the Lebowa kgomo abattoir, and the courageous proclamation of agricultural programmes being tilted towards small-scale farmers and women in particular, you must also know that we have some Members in this august House, who are here on an opposition ticket, who cannot fathom the expression that ‘Dilo di Tšhentšhitše’.

To them, these types of engagements are about political expediency and scoring cheap political points, while they do little to contribute to the development of the lives of our poor people. Because of their counter-revolutionary character, they have flatly refused an honest invitation to become a part of the Government of National Unity, when an opportunity to do so presented itself.

This, they did because they do not want to make any meaningful contributions towards the growth and development of this Republic. They enjoy howling and heckling from the sidelines, but are quick to run for cover when called to take any position of responsibility. If there is any political formation, in this august House, that is a threat to this country’s democracy, that is backward, anti-progress, regressive, primitive, unsophisticated, repulsive, anti-revolutionary, uncultured and reactionary, that stands for nothing, it is the EFF.

They have decried ideological differences as a basis of their contention for their little appetite for joining the Government of National Unity. However, in their deepest of hearts, they know that the Government of National Unity will thrust them into the spotlight, and compels them to be accountable to the people of South Africa. We all know that their allegiance is to the leader of their cult and not the people of the Republic of South Africa.

It is for this reason, Hon Premier, that we implore you to take courage and lead the people of this province on an assertive path of creating jobs and providing them with world-class services. It is also worth noting that, in your address you have been forthright in pointing out the obvious challenges that face our society, and you also directed relevant Members of your Executive to resolve them.

We are all looking forward to the economic bustle that will be brought up, once the Musina-Makhado and Fetakgomo-Tubatse Special Economic Zones are in full steam. There was much fanfare around the initiation of these programmes, Hon Premier, and being the solution-oriented leader that you are, the people of Limpopo expect you, to untie any bottle-necks around them and get them the much-needed jobs. Our people cannot eat excuses, Hon Premier, and for this reason, we expect your wisdom and leadership to take them out of the doldrums of poverty and disenfranchisement.

Our goal of building state capacity is evident on many fronts. A few months back, when we were confronted with the persistent energy crisis, we made a commitment to the people of this country that we will win this battle. Yes, we have indeed, turned the situation around, and we have experienced minimal electricity supply problems during this winter. While some had dismissed it as a political ploy, the national grid is now in full swing, and our people are experiencing an uninterrupted power supply.

The Michael Komape incident remains one of the darkest chapters of this democratic state. Our remorse for this situation will be demonstrated by the speed through which we aim to eradicate pit toilets in our schools. I know that the Department of Education has made serious inroads in this regard, but our wish as Members of this House, is to see all ablution facilities of this nature being discontinued. In his book, *A Time for New Dreams*, the famous African writer Ben Okri reminds us that: "There is no mystery about the decline of nations, it begins with the decline of its people. Its first symptom is the nation's failure to celebrate its people."

Why is this so? Because people represent the unconscious vigour and fighting spirit of a land. As I conclude Hon Premier, let me hasten to remind you that you carry on your shoulders the aspirations of many young women in this province, who look at you and see their own idol and role model. You carry, on your shoulders, the wishes of the great martyrs of this struggle, like Mme Joyce Mashamba, Mom Lydia Komape-Ngwenya, Mme Priscilla Mokaba, and many other heroines of our struggle, who had wished to live to see a female Premier in this province, but never did.

I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mokgonyana. Hon Laurence Mapoulo, you may take the podium.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Premier, present here, colleagues from the EFF and other opposition parties, I greet you all. Hon Speaker, first and foremost, we are going to thank the people who voted for the EFF and entrusted us with the responsibility to be a very progressive opposition party. It is disingenuous to mention the greatest revolutionaries like Mama Lydia Komape, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Charlotte Maxeke, when your daily conduct seeks to erode what they stood for and amounts to undermining their revolutionary values. Hon Premier your government meticulously failed the youth of this country given that Limpopo's official unemployment rate increase to 32,%, up by 2,4% points from 30,3% in the previous quarter.

Furthermore, the greatest women you mentioned were real mothers of the nation, who never discriminated against nor divided Africans and also understood the importance of why Africa must unite. This Women's Month must trigger the real inner sense of Pan-Africanism and Ubuntu amongst all of us. No one must perpetuate xenophobia and other colonial mindsets of denying Africans healthcare. What programmes ensure women and men coexist? We gather here when women continue to be slaughtered by their partners, and we have not seen any tangible initiatives that seek to turn the tide against GBV.

The EFF is a committed proponent of building an ethical, capable government and developmental state. We will deeply zoom into any attempts that seek to narrow, for selfish and factional politics, the objects of diluting this important pillar. There is nothing ethical when corruption is growing with no consequences. There shall never be a capable state, when reliance is on consultants. There is nothing developmental, when the people of Giyani still don't have water, despite billions which were paid when the business people of Polokwane relate to their municipality through paying expensive rates.

The recorded 72% of SA mineral reserves that are found in Limpopo mean nothing to our people. For the last 30 years, you failed to build a single city or meaningful industrial park in all mining communities. This would have literally, positively changed the living conditions of the mining communities. We must distance ourselves from unnecessary roadshows and investment conferences which only milk our resources.

Hon Premier, as a medical doctor, you should be aware of the role and impact of platinum metal groups in medicine, especially, in the treatment of cancer, development of personal hygiene products, keeping the nation warm and making cars safer; yet, there is no deliberate programme to maximise on these multiple opportunities which are shipped raw to other nations. Hon Speaker, the Premier stood in this House, praising the Musina-Makhado SEZ, rubbing salt to the wounds created by her predecessor, as lies were told to communities in terms of the so-called benefits of Musina-Makhado SEZ. You failed to tell the nation that the SEZ is a failed project, because the ANC-led government deviated from prescribed protocols, thereby bypassing essential policies.

The United Nations Development Programme's compliance watchdog has cancelled the memorandum of understanding it entered into with the controversial Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone, because it is a high-risk project with reputational risks. Some of the so-called investors remain dodgy characters and have no solid history of delivering to any nation. The EFF will closely monitor any intended spending on the SEZs and calls for the review of the plans and honest involvement of communities. The emerging trend of one investor being given control of large portions of land, as practised in the Polokwane Municipality; is stagnating development and undermines creativity which can lead to the creation of jobs.

Hon Premier and former MEC of Health, it is strange that you omitted to update the various digitalisation projects for hospitals. What is the link between digitalisation and mediocre legal bills that keep growing? It is not my mother's language. That is not a problem, but a slip of a tongue. [LAUGHTER]

The Lebowakgomo Clinic, is amongst clinics which suffer lack of water and electricity, lacks medicines, and fails to operate for 24 hours. These conditions affect the mental state and morale of medical personnel in the province. Hon Premier, as a so-called Communist, you are reminded of the extracts from the party directive of 1965: "Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better..." As Amilcar Cabral said: "Tell no lies, claim no easy victories". In 2022, during SONA, President Ramaphosa mentioned Thando Makhubu from Jabulani, known for his Soweto creamery, an initiative without government support. It is clear, the trend is constantly being part of our annual theatrics.

Hon Premier, your special guest, Mme Wendy Moshakga makes lots of sacrifices, including at times not being able to feed her kids, so that her business can operate. This is because your government fails to help the poor and they deject them, unless they are politically aligned to ANC factions for that matter. We are proud of Mme Wendy Moshakga from Lonsdale, Mme Ramokone Kwakwa from Pepesane in Moletjie and Ntate Manamela from Seshego, Zone 1, as self-funded subsistence farmers who sought government help to no avail. They never even helped them with a cent. The EFF challenges the Hon Premier and MEC Kekana to say after my speech, you go and assist those people, and we will be proud of you.

The EFF demands the decolonisation of curriculum content. We can't have an educational system which does not teach or train students to relate to the economic opportunities of our province. Our kids must be taught mining, agriculture and more important subjects such as Maths. Such a decolonised system will enable our youth to be competitive globally.

Hon Speaker, we demand a detailed report on Lebowakgomo Chicken abattoir. In 2015, it was found that the abattoir had almost two years without operating as there was no water-use operating licence, despite the capacity to slaughter 20 000 chickens daily. This is another failed project by the ANC-led government.

The residents of Mashite, Ward 25 in Lepelle-Nkumpi, Giyani, GaMmalebogo, Seshego, Juju Valley, Moregloed, and Ivy Park and other communities in the province,

still suffer due to lack of water, whilst drinking water with animals. The 'Hi nwa Mati Fridays' is just a PR exercise trying to go there and prosecute. The EFF is willing to transfer skills on how to transfer the knowledge because you are copying on our manifesto.

Come near us. Don't use 'Dikgerekgere Wednesdays' because you copied that from us. You never even budgeted for it. You must tell us, exactly when did you plan for it? When did you ever budget for it, because nobody had ever planned for that 'Dikgerekgere Wednesdays' of yours? You have started looting our money. You have started, indeed. Hon Speaker, you must start insourcing the real staff. You must insource doctors. You must insource engineers, because we need them for water and sanitation. They must be absorbed and get salaries and all the benefits that all employees get. Not this 'Dikgerekgere' of yours that is dehumanising our people. Don't do that.

Technological facilities are required to help with GBV and other crime-related matters. These must include the upgrading strategy of the Mapungubwe and Marula festivals which reached peak levels like the then Julius Malema festivals, do you remember them, they were held in Polokwane.

Your education system is giving R350,00 to graduates who are supposed to benefit from the salaries of this government.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mapoulo. Hon Mapula Mokaba, the stage is yours.

MS MOKABA

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. Speaker, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje in absentia; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Maloko a Khuduthamaga ya Profense ya Limpopo; Chief Whip of Limpopo province; Deputy Chief Whip; Honourable Members of the Legislature; Honourable Members of the National Council of Provinces; our traditional leaders; Leader of Government Business; the Leader of the Official Opposition; leaders of political parties, the leaders of organised business and labour; baswa, bomme; le baetapele ba setšhaba; baeng kamoka ba go hlomphega ka mo go Ntlong-kgolo; members of the media; ladies and gentlemen, thobela. Kgotsong.

We welcome the State of the Province Address by Dr Phophi Ramathuba. We are humbled and praise ourselves that this province has produced the first female Premier in the Seventh Administration. [APPLAUSE] We are meeting today and debating the first address by the first woman Premier in the Limpopo Legislature. This month is the month of women, and we must celebrate the success and achievements of strong women all over the world. We must honour and pay tribute to females who came before us and dedicated their lives to ensure that women are granted equal rights as to men.

In her address to the people of Limpopo, our Premier emphasised that the President has said that our people have spoken. It is imperative to indeed deliver on the mandate that the people of Limpopo had entrusted on us as Members of the Legislature. The people of Limpopo want poverty, hunger, unemployment and inequality to be eradicated. They need to be empowered. Our Premier has mentioned a number of projects to be implemented in this Seventh Administration, and if implemented, the thorn that is hanging above our heads will be removed and the economy will thrive.

As Members of the Legislature, we will play our role for this project to become a reality. Of utmost importance is the revival of the agricultural projects that the Premier has mentioned. I am, personally, touched by the work done by Mme Wendy Machakga from Lonsdale. It clearly indicates that we were not doing enough to help mothers who are struggling and who are trying their best to ensure that their children get better lives to grow. I implore the Department of Agriculture and Leda to ensure that Mme Wendy Machakga gets the necessary support, in terms of land, financial grant and marketing of her products. Please do not give her a loan and burden her. She must thrive and contribute to the growth of the provincial economy, as well as participating in the agricultural value chain.

We have observed that the other agricultural project that need serious attention, is the Zebediela Citrus. The Department of Agriculture and LEDET must, jointly, play a role in reviving this project. The project cannot be left to die without assisting the community involved in it. There must be a dedicated team to assist the community of Zebediela. We are going to work together with the government during oversight to ensure that the Lebowakgomo chicken abattoir and the Mashashane hatchery are revived and also become a success.

At the end of the term, we must be able to say to the community that: here is our success together, give us another chance to do more together. We commend our Premier for identifying these projects and others because they will be able to create jobs in rural areas. Our Premier mentioned some of the successes of the community-driven projects like the Majeje Citrus Farm and the Kopano Citrus which demonstrated that government support is yielding positive results in the interest of the promotion of inclusive growth and development. We commend this progress, and it is an indication that the government, as led by the ANC, is hard at work in Limpopo.

Together with communities around Limpopo we must do more. Our Premier mentioned the revival of the industrial parks of Nkowankowa, Seshego, and Thohoyandou, which we appreciate as a good move for small businesses. However, we call upon LEDA to comprehend that, indeed, it would be small businesses that would occupy those warehouses, and they need to thrive. The rental that these businesses will be paying should be matched according to their sizes. This tendency of LEDA charging rentals, as if it is a commercial bank of small business, is not good for the development of these small businesses.

LEDA must deliberately and consciously ensure that the rental is reasonable for these small businesses to be sustainable and be able to thrive. Our Premier addressed the august House about the skills development in this province. We commend this initiative, because it will promote economic growth and social development by creating a more skilled and diverse workforce. Skills development initiatives help to level the

playing field and reduce inequality in the economy. However, there is a challenge with regard to children not graduating on time. Upon completion of their level or N-certificates, they are required to do practical work to graduate. Where must they go to do their practical work?

The private sector is not helping them. We implore the Department of Public Works to develop deliberate programmes to help the skilled learners who completed their levels and N streams to get practical work to enable them to contribute in the growth of the economy.

I thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mokaba. Hon Evelyn Wilson, please take the podium.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Deputy Speaker and all protocols observed. Premier, at the end of your speech on Friday, I was not sure if we should laugh or we should cry. Was it a comedy or was it a tragedy? At least you did make an admission that many mistakes have been made in the previous Parliament and this Legislature. Please visit all corners of Limpopo like we do. Frankly, most of our population is not interested in the condition of your skin. The people in Limpopo are hungry, living in squalor and poverty, jobless, waterless and homeless.

As you made your speech, thousands of farm workers were losing their livelihoods as a result of black frost and the fires that devastated the farms throughout the province. Instead of talking about this disaster and telling us how you intend to help these farmers and their employees, you either say our programmes of agriculture must be biased towards the rural farmers. We are in a rural province, so all farmers are rural. A large percentage of our people are employed in the agricultural sector, and this is one sector where most jobs were lost in the last two quarters. We want to see the upliftment of subsistence farmers, it is necessary, but we cannot neglect the commercial farmers, who contribute hugely to the GDP of the province and are one of the largest employee contributors in Limpopo. As with the Zebediela citrus farm, it is gone. The entire farm has been stripped off everything that is needed to make the farm viable. The provincial budget will not be able to replace what has been destroyed. Investors in this project are going to be very hesitant, because at what cost would it take to revive the farm?

As for the Lebowakgomo chicken abattoir and the Mashashane hatchery – yawn! We have heard of this project for over 10 years, and it is now a case of seeing is believing. We will not hold our breath. The same applies to the Makhado Special Economic Zone – yawn! The Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park – yawn! Premier, without water and maintained infrastructure, without the issue of licences nationally, these projects are a pipe dream. Without the expertise to make this project a reality, I can assure you, we will be saying the same thing in the next five years.

MEC Mahoai, we look forward to seeing where you will find the billions to make this a reality, and remember it must be realised without fail. Skills development is indeed necessary. And the DA has long said, and it was part of our 2024 manifesto that we must bring back the apprenticeship programmes. However, skills without opportunity are wasted. Ideally, these skills must be used to create jobs and SMMEs, but again without basic infrastructure like water, roads and electricity, these skills will go to waste and skilled workers will move to provinces where more skills are available.

Let's talk about our municipalities. The majority have unfunded budgets. The revenue collection is horrendous. Three have been declared dysfunctional, nationally, and this province has declared many in financial distress. Mismanagement has been rife, and they simply cannot sustain themselves. They cannot deliver services, because they do not have the finances nor the skills to do so. They have just completed their IDP cycles, and their budgets and in principle this is finalised.

Now when coming back to roads, just this week in your address to communities in Lephalale, Premier, you stated that when you commit and there is money, build that road. The aftermath, the media was telling us that the province made an application to the Treasury for R300 million to help the Limpopo roads crisis. Premier, what you should have said is the opposite. When you have the money, then commit and build the roads. Talk is cheap, Premier. It is easy to stand on a podium and shout that every year the budget must be made for yellow machines. The drivers of those machines must be permanently employed.

We are not playing Monopoly, Premier. The MECs, Mahoai and Rachoene are not allowed to print money. If, indeed, you want to insource more services, increase yellow fleet to improve road infrastructure in an attempt to create opportunities, encourage economic growth and improve the lives of citizens, then free up resources to achieve this by heeding the DA's call to disband the dysfunctional RAL, and then have its function along with the skilled labour and technocrats in positions absorbed into the public...[INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon Wilson, it looks like there is an order there. You can take a seat, Hon Wilson. Hon Mokgonyana, you are recognised.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. We just plead that the surname of Hon Mahoai must not be butchered like it is done. It is Mahoai, not Mohoai. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mokgonyana. You may continue, Hon Wilson.

MS WILSON

Talk is cheap. So, heed the DA's call to disband the dysfunctional RAL and have its functions, along with the skilled labour and technocrats in positions, absorbed into the Department of Public Roads. This will free up resources to invest in the infrastructure.

Concerning water, with due respect, Premier, it is a constitutional mandate to provide clean water to the people. It is not a party commitment. In the Human Rights Commission (HRC) report on the status of water in Limpopo, not one water service authority, and they are the municipalities, meet the requirements of the Water and Sanitation Act. That same report requested reports from all authorities within three months on their plan to rectify the crisis.

The same was asked for the Department of CoGHSTA and the Office of the Premier. That was last year already. Where are the reports, Premier? Please give us access to them urgently. Surely, former Premier, Mathabatha, did this and you must have a copy. MEC Makamu, please can we see your submission to the HRC in the next portfolio committee meeting? Again, municipalities will be unable to require their own borehole equipment. It is a specialised field, and it requires specialised personnel which they cannot afford. We still look forward to every Friday's water project launches. We shall attend and we would appreciate a calendar for this.

Traditional leaders are respected, and they must play a pivotal role in the upliftment of their people. They have received their cars, and their traditional offices are mostly completed. We look forward to meeting them in the meeting of CoGHSTA to hear what they have done to ensure the alleviation of poverty and hunger that is being implemented in their communities. Social Development is critical in a province that suffers extreme poverty, and we will certainly assist the MEC with the list of vulnerable households needing food aid. Premier, what has been done to make the accessibility of SASSA grants easier for the poor and vulnerable? The cost of getting to town for grants has become such a huge strain on our people.

On Education, again, we can help you Premier. There is already a comprehensive report on schools with incomplete sanitation and pit latrines. We can have it, and save the MEC the trouble. But what about teenage pregnancies, vacancy rate, and inadequately qualified teachers? You did not mention this. You say 100% of our medical facilities are now compliant. Please can they help the health MEC produce the OHSC report urgently?

In conclusion, I would suggest starting with consequence management in all the departments and municipalities, to prevent further corruption and incompetence. Publish performance indicators and contracts for your MECs.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Wilson. Hon M S Rachoene, please take the podium.

THE MEC FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; esteemed Members of the Executive Council, Chief Whip of the ruling party; chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure; MPLs from the opposition benches; honourable Members of the Legislature, ladies and gentlemen, thobela. Avuxeni. Ndi mats Sheloni.

It is my great pleasure to be afforded this opportunity to be standing before this august House and participate in the debate. Today, as I join honourable Members, representing the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure. I do so in tribute to my father, Hlabirwa 'a Phakana Maphato, Daniel Rachoene who passed on yesterday. Papa encouraged and supported me to work in serving the people of Limpopo, and the country, despite the circumstances. Even in his last days, he would say, Phakana wena šoma, nna ke tla ba gabotse. I have drawn strength from his words.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this session takes place two days before the country commemorates Women's Day. Commemorating Women's Day means, celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and calling for action to accelerate gender parity. In Limpopo, we celebrate the month in style as the province made history by having the first female Premier. Today we celebrate our progress in building a gender-neutral society where women are free and equal and enjoy the rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution.

In Limpopo we realised a struggle for women emancipation, a struggle that the 1956 women generation has led. Over 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to petition against the enforcement of black women needing to carry passes under the apartheid Pass Law Act. The Pass Law Act allowed people of colour to always carry an identification document or pass with them. This controlled and restricted their freedom of movement under the apartheid regime, and if they were unable to present a pass on request, they were refused access to what was known as whites-only areas.

As I stand on this podium, allow me to salute the Honourable, the first female Premier of Limpopo, Dr Constance Phophi Ramathuba, who is passionate about service delivery. Mosadi wa go swara thipa ka bogaleng. Mosadi wa go iša tau setswetši. [APPLAUSE] Many will choose to criticise you for they selectively choose to ignore the leadership you are providing. In you, Hon Premier Ramathuba, the ANC deployed a seasoned cadre who is energetic and always on the ground ensuring that our people receive service delivery; a promise the ANC made to the people of this province when we were canvassing for the general elections. Our people responded positively and ensured that we get an overwhelming majority in the May 29 general elections. The ANC's collective leadership in the Seventh Administration is undeterred and remains focused. We are on a revolutionary mission, and we are on course.

Honourable Members, the ANC has come at a difficult time, at a time when our people are facing many service delivery challenges. You, the Hon Premier, are leading the way and helping the people of Limpopo to move forward and from challenges to practical ideas. In your previous responsibility, we have seen you mobilising men and women to improve rural health. The Hon Premier is, today, at the helm of the provincial

government where you are tasked with ensuring that improved service delivery is realised.

The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure is one of the strategic departments that are appropriately placed to ensure that they raise infrastructure development in the province. We remain on course in implementing the government's commitment to using infrastructure development, as a driver for the South African economy, job creation and skills development. During apartheid, infrastructure development was limited to the geographical areas of the old South Africa, with deliberate neglect of the townships and rural areas. Today, we heard of policies of the apartheid regime that often focused on the need to target minority groups.

Since 1994, the year the infamous Tintswalo was born, the ANC has been at the forefront of a comprehensive and well-integrated approach to the development of our people. As the ANC-led government, we know the service delivery that our people need. Hon Premier, the speech you delivered during the opening of the Seventh Legislature at Jack Botes in Polokwane, brings hope to the people of Limpopo. On the infrastructure provision which focuses mainly on road construction and maintenance. You made this centrepiece of service delivery. We have rolled out our sleeves and put on our boots, engaging with different stakeholders to collaborate in using the roads and asset management system, competence and technologies to assist communities with road maintenance and planning activities.

As the ANC-led provincial administration, we are very clear that infrastructure is critical for creating favourable conditions for production and consumption, facilitating economic diversification and providing our people with much-needed access to services, facilities and opportunities. We are redoubling our efforts to ensure that this is achieved. As the ANC-led administration, we are, unashamedly, saying that a critical element of providing infrastructure is ensuring that these projects and programmes translate into social and economic transformation. We have progressed quite far in our efforts to ensure the backlogs, but it is clear that more still that needs to be done.

The Hon Premier rightfully outlined in her address that, the 'Dikgerekgere Wednesday' initiative, Cde Mapoulo, will go a long way in maintaining our roads that have been previously neglected. The essence of this campaign is to prioritise the maintenance of infrastructure in our province, particularly, road infrastructure.

Through this campaign, we seek to rehabilitate dilapidated and neglected roads in the province. This campaign has also inspired our local municipalities. Today, if you drive into our capital city, Polokwane, you will see the work. The maintenance and rehabilitation of the road network in the capital city has been taken to heights never seen before. We implore all our municipalities to come on board, like the Polokwane Municipality, to help make our general roads infrastructure drivable.

Our communities are in dire need of services; irrespective of which government entity is delivering them. We will rest once this concept is fully implemented for the people of our province. We move from a solid understanding that, the people of our province deserve the best quality and properly maintained infrastructure. This will go a long way in attracting investment to our province and facilitating social mobility.

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Rachoene. Hon Marcelle Maritz, you may take the podium.

MS MARITZ

Hon Speaker, Hon Premier, esteemed Members of the Executive Council, leaders of the opposition parties, Members of this House and guests, good morning. Goeie môre. Thobela.

Hon Premier, the Seventh Administration of the Limpopo Legislature has commenced, and we, as the FF Plus, wish to reflect on the State of the Province Address (SOPA) debates of 2023/24. We, strongly, encourage the Hon Premier to address the long-neglected road issues that were not discussed during your initial SOPA.

It is regrettable that, despite being the foremost producers of potatoes and various other vegetables, the responsibility for road maintenance has been placed upon the farmers. Numerous roads remain in a dire need of repair.

Hon Premier, our farmers are not only facing challenges with the roads, but also dealing with the aftermath of the recent catastrophic black frost and wildfires that struck the province in July. This has caused distress among our farmers, with some of them losing their entire crops. The rough estimate of the damage is currently at R200 million, which will have a significant impact on both our food security and the economy of Limpopo. As a result, we can expect higher prices for food products in this province, that is already struggling with poverty. I respectfully urge the Hon Premier to adopt an open-door policy and engage with various stakeholders to declare a state of disaster and provide assistance to all affected farmers. Hon Premier, it was a very sad time for me to move through the farms, and I am talking about all the farms in the province, not specific farmers, all farmers are farmers. It is heartbreaking to see what they are going through. So, I would like you to have an open door, please. It is essential that you promptly address the departments involved in corruption and fund mismanagement. Prioritising this issue will lead to a solution of many problems, smooth project implementation, and the provision of critical basic services, such as water throughout the province.

Musina-Makhado has been facing water challenges for over two years, and we need your intervention. We have opened a criminal case and a complaint to the Human Rights Commission and still awaiting final High Court day.

Hon Premier, the FF Plus remains deeply concerned about the Musina-Makhado SEZ. Some issues raised include the potential impact on coal exploitation, the risk to South Africa's GHG (Greenhouse Gas) mitigation commitments under global agreements due to climate change, the threat to biodiversity, as the Musina-Makhado SEZ overlaps with parts of the Vhembe District biosphere reserve, and the potential impact on water access, as resources may be diverted to the water intensive project, potentially affecting the local population in our province.

Hon Premier, in your opening speech, you highlighted the significance of safety within the province; however, you did not address the issue of the border fence between Beitbridge and Stockpoort. It is well known that a considerable number of crimes in our province are perpetrated by illegal immigrants. This situation complicates the efforts of the South African Police Service, as the lack of information regarding the offenders hinders the resolution of these cases.

I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Maritz. Now is the time for Hon Rodgers Makamu. My apology, Hon Makamu, there are people who are taking pictures at the gallery, and it is not allowed. It is only the Legislature cameras that are allowed to do so. Thank you very much, if you can cooperate. Hon Makamu, you may take the podium.

THE MEC FOR COGHSTA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker, Tebogo Mamorobela. Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; esteemed honourable Members of the Executive Council; honourable Members of this august House; distinguished guests and fellow citizens of Limpopo, avuxeni. It is with immense pride that I stand before you today to congratulate our newly appointed Premier, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba. Her appointment as the first woman Premier of Limpopo is a landmark achievement, echoing the dreams of the brave women of 1956 who marched against the Prime Minister, J G Strijdom, demanding equality, justice and freedom. Today we honour their legacy through the leaders like Premier Ramathuba, who continues to break the barriers and lead the unwavering dedication to democracy and women dignity. Hon Premier, your address has resonated deeply with us, presenting a visionary path to inclusive, growth and prosperity. Your programme of action is not just a roadmap, but a beacon of hope, assuring the citizens of Limpopo of a future filled with opportunities.

Hon Premier, your speech is unprecedented that even our friends from the left took time and quote you verbatim on what you have said. To show that the pain has gone straight to the chest, they are talking the way they are talking. Your strategic vision aligns perfectly with our Constitution. The principle advocated by President Cyril Ramaphosa and the ANC manifesto, as President Ramaphosa said, "Let us make this era of unity and action in pursuit of socioeconomic goals." Your commitment to foster unity and focusing on socioeconomic transformation embodies these sentiments. Your emphasis on gender equality, economic empowerment and attention to rural areas is crucial.

Substantive investment into municipalities, local enterprise and communal resources will invigorate our local economies and strengthen our communities. This holistic approach is exactly what Limpopo needs. It is so surprising, Hon Premier, that your guests, became a top priority from our left, that you honoured exactly what they felt it should be able to touch on the ground. You did well Hon Premier, by inviting your guests to come here to prove that this government is on the ground and is working with the people. We are placing a significant focus on addressing challenges faced by other municipalities like Thabazimbi and Musina. Our intervention aims to restore

functionality and accountability, improving financial management, transparency and operational efficiency. We are committed to working closely with local leaders and communities to ensure that these municipalities fulfil their constitutional obligations. In support of traditional leaders, CoGHSTA has provided the much-needed mobility offices, staff and other support to traditional leaders, ensuring that they effectively serve their communities.

We are also pleased to announce the successful completion of another initiation season underscoring our commitments to preserving culture heritage and ensuring safety. In our request for integrated human settlement, we have delivered housing to our military veterans, to whom we owe our liberation. Hon Jack can confirm to this House that he received a house from CoGHSTA, and we should hand it over to him. This is a proof that we are working for the people. These initiatives reflect our goal to build cohesive inclusive communities, where everyone can thrive. These deals of comprehensive plans will be outlined in our upcoming policy pronouncement. Let me assure you that our approach is holistic, sustainable and geared towards a long-term benefit. I'm surprised to hear as to where we will get these millions. When the Premier was launching 'Dikgerekgere', it was clear that we are going to use internal capacity without necessarily needing additional money. Then we are told that we should be able to do that. People should not listen selectively.

Hon Premier, Dr Ramathuba; your leadership and visionary plans provide a solid foundation upon which you can be able to build a prosperous future. Oliver Tambo once said, "A nation that does not take care of its youth has no future." Your commitment to youth empowerment, education, and employment opportunities is testament to this truth. Your focus on healthcare reforms, education, environmental sustainability promises a brighter future for Limpopo.

Your initiatives aim at fostering economic growth by supporting small business and encouraging investment, which will stimulate our economy and create much-needed jobs. As we move forward, let us remember the spirit of the brave women of 1956. Their courage and dedication have reminded us that through unity and resilience, we can overcome any challenge. Hon Premier, Dr Ramathuba, your leadership embodies this spirit, guiding us towards a more inclusive future.

In conclusion, let us commit to working together to realise the vision that Hon Premier, Dr Ramathuba has set forth. We draw inspiration from our Constitution, the ANC manifesto, leaders like O R Tambo, who had envisioned a nation built on justice, equality and opportunity for all.

Hon Premier, your words have invoked a sense of purpose and determination in all of us. Together we will build a resilient, thriving and inclusive Limpopo. As CoGHSTA, we pledge an unwavering support to your administration and vision, which are fully aligned with our programme of action, including "Hi Nwa Mati Friday". We will make sure that this programme is unveiled in this august House.

As I conclude, I want to thank you, Hon Premier. When we work together, we will make Limpopo flourish like never before. Ke a leboga. Ndza khensa. Inkomu.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Makamu. It is now time for Hon Cyril Jack.

MR JACK

Thank you, Hon Speaker and the Premier of the province, our progressive party caucus, and our masses who voted Zuma in. Let me take this opportunity to correct Hon Basikopo Makamu. Hon Makamu does not cease to surprise the people of this province. I mean, before those “toilet” houses, he distributed containers in Mopani. That is his character.

First, and foremost, let me send my gratitude to our former President, Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, who made it possible to govern us as the nation, and to support uMkhonto weSizwe party in a period of four months. This extraordinary son of the soil broke the history records, and he deserves to be listed in the Guinness Book of Records. What a man, instead of ‘big nose’. Despite constant attacks from the white monopoly capital and the ANC sellouts, President *Jacob* Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, stands out as a true servant of our people. I stand before you, calling upon each and every Member of this Seventh Administration, to pause and see the history of this struggle to liberate a black child, in particular an African. President Jacob Zuma and other comrades, on their long walk to freedom, did not anticipate that one day the ANC will become a sellout party.

It is ironic for the Premier to stand before this House to invite the spirit of the strugglers and the liberation stalwarts. Madam Premier, these spirits have long deserted the ANC because of its corruption and theft. The ANC has lost its directional compass towards a total emancipation of our society. After losing its popular support by 60%, the ANC devised an evil plan and a sellout strategy in the form of Government of National Unity. A fancy way of working with our oppressors who killed our heroes like Chris Hani. They continue to kill black excellence such as Judge Hlophe, Adv Mkhwebane and Judge Nkola Motata. We are witnessing ANC-led government lying to our people about total liberation of our country, which will not be realised because you are not in control.

In her speech, the Premier said nothing tangible, but rather reagitated all speeches of former Limpopo administration government. The Premier proudly acknowledged the ANC’s 30 years of failures.

Last week, an innocent Mrs Wendy Moshakga, from Lonsdale village was paraded before this House. She was not even ashamed that Mme Wendy could not access land under the ANC rule. Let me add that, there is no hope for the future, because the Minister of Agriculture is an anti-black and is an oppressor of land expropriation without compensation.

I thank you, Hon Basikopo Makamu.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Velile. We shall now call upon Hon Dieketseng Mashego.

THE MEC FOR HEALTH

Hon Speaker, Hon Premier, esteemed Members of the Executive Council, Chief Whip of the majority party, honourable Members of the Legislature and esteemed guests, good morning.

Hon Premier has clearly articulated the Limpopo provincial government programme of action of addressing its priorities and to liberate the people of Limpopo in general, and the women, in particular, from the shackles of the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. To this end, the Premier in her own words said: "The government's plan is to achieve more rapid, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and job creation to reduce poverty and tackle high cost of living to build a capable, ethical and developmental state". The onus now lies with us to ensure that we convert these priorities into actions that will inform our endeavour of providing a long and a healthy life for the people of Limpopo. This is what the Premier has emphasised.

When the Hon President, Matamela Ramaphosa, signed the National Health Insurance Bill into law in May 2024, making the historical moment and a commitment by the government to pursue the Universal Health Coverage (UHC), it meant that all people, and I mean all, have access to the full range of quality health services they need, when and where they need it without financial hardship. When we say all people, we mean everyone regardless of your colour, gender, financial capacity or social status. It covers the full continuum of essential health services from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care across the life course from cradle to the grave. On the Universal Health Coverage, through the National Health Insurance, will certainly eradicate the discrimination of access of services between the rich and the poor.

We have taken heed of the marching orders which were given concerning the need to ensure that our health facilities receive the Office of Health Standards Compliance accreditation, as required for consulting with NHI fund. Work has already commenced to that effect. To this far, great strides have already been made with ideal clinic model to get our clinics to comply. To that effect, the number of clinics attaining ideal clinic status have jumped from 18% in the 2022/23 financial year to 42% in the 2023/24 financial year. The department will ensure that more of our clinics attain ideal clinic status in the current financial year, while we are also working to maintain the status for those already ideal. This should not only set us on a pedestal when it comes to the universal healthcare coverage, but it will assist us to serve our communities better. In the current financial year, we will also focus on ensuring that as many of our hospitals as possible attain ideal hospital status and comply with the Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC) status, which will ensure quality health services.

One of the key aspects of the implementation of the National Health Insurance will be resourced facilities, in terms of infrastructure and human resources. To attain this, we will ensure that all our hospitals and clinics are adequately staffed. On this score, we will ensure that all vacant and funded posts are filled timeously.

The strength of our healthcare system is fundamental in our quest to provide quality healthcare services. This will include the strategies, responses and activities that are designed to sustainably improve the performance of our health system. One of the key

approaches to strengthening our healthcare system is leadership and governance. We have already started with the recruitment processes to fill vacant positions of CEOs, heads of institutions, clinical managers of hospitals and operational managers of clinics and health centres. Additionally, we are working to capacitate and empower our hospital management team to be able to implement the ideal hospital realisation and maintenance framework. Currently, a workshop on clinical governance is underway to inculcate a culture of productivity and effective management. Therefore, the doubting Thomases about the efficacy of the NHI should think again. Ke ra bona bo makgolwa ka go bona.

The Premier was emphatic in her speech on matters of growing the economy and job creation. As we welcome the plan, we are quite mindful that economic growth is subordinate to the healthy population. Improved health outcomes will lead to more people attaining good and increased life expectancy, making them available to actively participate in the economic activities of the province. When people are healthy, they stand a better chance of becoming economically active.

Within two weeks from now, we will be launching “Operation Bophelo Pele”. This will ensure that on a weekly basis, ka bo Labohlano, we take healthcare services to the people where they are. Re ya metseng kamoka, to ensure that our people receive the healthcare services that they deserve. By visiting our communities, we will be encouraging them to prevent the disease as we all know that prevention is better than cure. We will be reducing unnecessary sicknesses through this operation. Working together, we have an opportunity to raise the bar further. We are fully committed to taking the Department of Health in Limpopo to a new level of service delivery that focuses on productivity on a daily basis and making sure that everyone knows what they are supposed to know and does what they are supposed to do.

I have no doubt that once we get this approach right, the results will start showing in all aspects of our departmental efforts. In conclusion, to the Hon Premier, indeed, change is here. Zwithu zwo shanduka. Dilo di tšhentšhitše.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Dieketseng. Hon Maila Kobodi, it is your turn.

MR KOBODI

Hon Premier, Hon Speaker and the Chief Whip, ndi matsheloni. Thobela. Good morning. Goeie môre.

I am here today to welcome the Seventh Limpopo Legislature speech made by the Hon Premier over the last weekend. The speech is promising, if it will not be rhetoric. However, I want to demonstrate my satisfaction over few issues which have formed part of your speech. Hon Premier, you have forgotten the issue of land. The land that was taken long time ago from the hands of the Africans. I am talking about it, because

we are having the government, but we don't have land. The question is, when are we going to get our land back?

The second question is, are you aware that if we don't own land, the economy will not be in our hands? We are tired of being consumers in our own country. Therefore, it is now time to get back our land, gobane lehumo le tšwa tšhemeong. We would like to see Agriculture being introduced as the compulsory subject at our schools. This means that learners from Grade 3 to Grade 12 should be taught an agricultural subject so that they can use those agricultural skills when they are facing poverty and hunger as an enemy.

Hon Premier, you have said in your speech that 72% of South African mineral reserves are found in Limpopo province. The question now is, how do the people of Limpopo benefit from such huge percentage of mineral resources found here? The chrome and copper as we mention a few, do not help the Sekhukhune District, as the raw materials coming out from those mines are not processed there. When are we going to process all the raw materials instead of exporting? When are we going to build the refinery and train the local miners, so that they can be equipped with the necessary skills for utilising the machinery? Hon Speaker, Mmago rena, the Premier has slightly touched on the issue of water projects. As to how and when, has not been mentioned.

Remember, water is a source of life, and it is unfortunate that in the 30 years of democracy, the people of our province are still sharing drinking water with animals. Go fa mohlala, GaMarishane ba sa nwa meetse le diphoofole, ditonki le dikgomo.

Hon Speaker, I was attentively listening when Hon Premier was saying that she will engage with the judges about the rapists, who according to her, must be jailed forever. I agree with her, but it must not be the rapists alone. Murders who kill our people each day in our country must also be sentenced forever. Hon Premier, this can be possible if we do away with the parole system. Motho yo a bolailego yo mongwe ga a swarelwe sa ruri, a se ke a hlwa a sa bowa. Ge e le gore o a bowa, wola a bolailwego le yena ga a tsoge lebotleng pele gomme yo a bolailego a tšwe ka gare ga toronko.

Ke a leboga.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ke a leboga, Hon Kobodi. We shall now call upon Hon Kgothatso Mogoane to the podium.

MS MOGOANE

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker and the caucus of the EFF, as led by the capable leader Hon Mapoulo. Hon Speaker, we thought that as the first women Premier, the people of Limpopo, in particular women will support you, but as it stands, it is an opportunity lost. As we are seated here, Hon Premier, you are the one as the first female Premier, who appointed Hon Florence Radzilani as the MEC for Social Development, with a cloud hanging over her head. Furthermore, you also appointed Hon Kgabo Mahoai as the MEC for Provincial Treasury, despite being found guilty of

gross negligent of over R118 million on dilapidated building in New York, which was never bought. There is nothing which really set you apart from the former Premier.

We must also indicate from the onset that, it is extremely difficult to believe what the Premier has said. Her disastrous legacy in the Department of Health is a testimony to the fact that she is a heart breaker. She broke the hearts of the people of Limpopo with her lacklustre service delivery record of empty promises during her long tenure in the Department of Health. Let us make a reflection on her legacy as the MEC for Health in Limpopo. Majority of healthcare facilities in Limpopo like clinics, do not operate 24 hours. Out of more than 470 clinics in Limpopo, only 50 clinics are operating fixed 24-hour service, followed by further 57 clinics providing 24-hour coverage on an on-call system. We are made to believe that our people only get sick from 8:00 in the morning to 4:00 in the afternoon, and that they stop being sick from the hours outside the ones mentioned here.

Hon Premier, what will happen to the over 800 unemployed doctors who languish at home including other healthcare workers, yet our healthcare centres are strained due to understaffing? The efforts to curb the gender-based violence must be intensified. Lives are being lost daily by women, in the hands of those they trusted as partners. Because of the status quo, women give birth outside the gates of the clinics, just like the incident that was witnessed at Burgersfort, where a heavily pregnant woman gave birth to a child at the gate. The woman was told by the security personnel that the clinic is not yet opened, and therefore, she must wait until the clinic opens.

Furthermore, majority of clinics in Limpopo do not have medication and equipment. When patients visit clinics for treatment of different ailments, they are given Panado as medication. As to whether is a headache, a fracture, high blood pressure, sugar diabetes, it is all the same. The medication prescribed is Panado. All these happened under the watchful eye of the former MEC for Health who is currently the Premier of Limpopo. We demand that all clinics of Limpopo operate for 24 hours, Monday to Sunday to ensure that our people get quality, free healthcare to boost their quality of life.

The R100 million of tomato plant corruption in Tzaneen, Mopani District is not yet resolved to date, despite our call to the government to take a decisive action and bring those who are involved to book. The forensic report in this scandalous project made by corruption is not yet released, and we get a sense that it will never be released, because it does not favour the government. We call upon the Premier to release the forensic report now or else the Economic Freedom Fighters will be left with no option, but to take the matter to court.

The EFF is concerned that there is no workable plan to revitalise the dysfunctional Great North Transport, where more than R300 million of retired workers' pensions were squandered and disappeared into thin air. How far is your government with the recovery plan in this regard and what happened to the perpetrators of this horrendous act? Officials and politicians must be held accountable for their mischievous deeds. Our mothers and fathers lost their life savings, in the form of pension money, through corruption and mismanagement and yet, the Premier said absolutely nothing about this very disheartening issue.

According to the latest provincial data on section 27, Michael Komape Progress Monitor, by January 2023, 210 out of 3 761 schools still have only pit toilets, down from 363 in December 2021, when the Limpopo Department of Education submitted its plan of getting rid of pit toilets to the Polokwane High Court. Just recently in Capricorn District, under Molemole Municipality, at Lefatane Primary School in Botlokwa, GaMakgato, a learner fell into a pit toilet. The heartless ANC-led government continue to put the lives of our children in danger. It is clear that the government did not learn anything from the Michael Komape incident, hence, our children from poor communities continue to be vulnerable and die in pit toilets. With reasons such as these, we demand that every household and every school in Limpopo must get free quality sanitation to restore the dignity and the confidence of our people.

Posts vacant for teachers' profession have always been 52 000 for the 8 years, and it is not responsive to the growing number of enrolments in schools. Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education terminated rural allowance for teachers teaching in rural schools, which led to many teachers migrating to townships and town schools. In the next five years, we are going to have a serious shortage of teachers in rural schools, and yet, there is no concrete and contingent plans presented by the Premier in this regard to address this challenge.

The Limpopo provincial theatre, as mentioned, in its inception is already met by corruption resulting in irregular protest by communities, because of the dissatisfaction in the way in which subcontractors are being hired. People with close proximity to decision makers are given preference in allocation of subcontracts to the exclusion of deserving people. The Premier has not touched on this issue in order to take the people of Limpopo into confidence.

In conclusion, the Premier came to the opening of the Legislature for a talk show without a plan and timeframes. It was just an occasion to showcase expensive clothes, opulence and fancy cars, nothing more. Lastly, we are not threatened by howlers.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mogoane. We shall now call upon the MEC for Social Development, Hon Fulufhelo Radzilani.

THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba; my colleagues in the Executive Council; Chief Whip of this august House and the Deputy Chief Whip; leaders of the opposition parties; the Chair of Chairs and the Deputy Chair of Chairs; chairpersons of the portfolio committees; honourable Members of the Legislature; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Hon Premier, in terms of the election results for provincial and national government, the ANC in this part of the country performed very well. [APPLAUSE] It was on the basis of the provision of services. When we approached those elections, all of us said, this is going to be very difficult election on the basis that people are going to vote

provided that we give them quality services. The way they voted in this province is a confirmation that the leadership of the ANC is highly committed in providing services. We proudly represent our people based on the election results.

Allow me to take this opportunity to extend my sincere words of gratitude to the Members of this august House, as led by the African National Congress, through the honourable Deputy Speaker of this House. The House is in session at the time in which we are making and celebrating the women's month, to pay tribute to the heroines, women of 1956 and countless others who continue to pave the way for gender equality and empowerment in a democratic South Africa.

In the 30 years of freedom and democracy, we celebrate with pride and courage, the resilience and bravery and selflessness of the trailblazers like Ray Alexander Simons, Ruth First, Esther Barsel, Albertina Sisulu, Adelaide Tambo, Mme Madinoge, Matjatie Nchabeleng, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Charlotte Maxeke, Helen Suzman, Mapitsi Mokaba, Raheem Moosa, Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, Marry Stella, Mme Lydia Komape, and countless others, who fearlessly grabbed the sharp edge of the knife aimed at them by the colonial and apartheid oppressors.

I'm referring to women who embodied courage and passion of individuals like their international counterparts such as Alexandra Kollontai, Nadezhda of the Bolsheviks, Louisa Amanda of Naquaraqua, Rosa Luxemburg of the German Communists and many more others. These women did not merely speak against injustice. They took meaningful action to combat it. Today, standing in this prestigious House of honourable Members, I speak with confidence and firmness that the sacrifices made by the aforementioned leaders did not go in vain. As I'm participating in the debate presided by the women Speakership, the House which has produced the first and the forever roaring female Premier in this province, since the dawn of democracy. What a befitting honour to our heroines who played an indelible role to the birth of freedom and democracy. The struggle continues, no women, no revolution.

Madam Speaker and honourable Members gathered here today, we are reaffirming the tone set by the Hon Premier during the opening of this Chamber for the Seventh Administration outlining the plans and commitments in our quest to harness and advance the lives of the people of this beautiful province, as our Premier always says.

With unwavering resolve and boundless courage, Premier Ramathuba leads us towards the future where equality and empowerment will reign supreme. Your steadfast message, Hon Premier, to this House during the opening was the affirmation of the commitment outlined in the six pillars of the ANC manifesto. Key to the manifesto, which amongst others, speaks to the determination to invest in our people, defend democracy and advance freedom, tackle the high cost of living to fight poverty by providing comprehensive social security and basic services, and addressing the impact of rising prices on household commodities, amongst others.

We appreciate the submission by the DA leader that you will approach the department, because that is how people voted us for, to serve them. You will approach the department and make sure we work together to feed those who are hungry out there. The manifesto further speaks about the strengthening of our comprehensive social security system to reduce poverty, vulnerability, social exclusion and inequality

through social assistance, prevent vulnerability and destitution, as a result of the loss of income through social insurance for workers.

The Hon Premier further, in her maiden speech, without hesitation, having understood challenges facing our people in this rural province, declared poverty and hunger as the enemy number one. With this responsibility falling squarely within the Department of Social Development, we immediately understood the marching orders. Poverty and hunger are not mere statistics; they are deeply personal struggles that afflict our most vulnerable citizens. When a household is deprived of the basic necessity of food, it does not just impact health only, it disrupts families, destabilises communities and create the cycle of despair that can last for generations. Therefore, we must prioritise access to food for all household, increase the threshold from 4 550 to 7 200 through the department's food security programme as the Premier has instructed.

These essential shifts will not only alleviate hunger, but will also empower families to thrive, transforming them from mere survivors into contributors to our national fabric. As the Department of Social Development, we aim to achieve this directive by increasing the number of households who are accessing food through the departmental programme, as well as the departmental feeding programmes. Hon Premier, we will adjust our plans, as well as our allocations, which will ensure that we expand food security to the most vulnerable members of our communities. Understanding that food security is a fundamental right, we must ensure that no child goes to bed hungry, and no parent has to choose between buying groceries and paying rent or transport. By enhancing our food security programme, we can provide immediate assistance while working towards sustainable food security measures that will secure our food system for future generations. It is a moral imperative that we confront this issue head on, with a robust action plan that engages every sector of our society.

Today we stand at a crucial juncture in our fight against crime. An issue that has escalated to what our Madam Premier has rightly described as a pandemic. The alarming rise in criminal activities not only endangers our communities, but also threatens the very fabric of our society. In response, the Premier has directed the South African Police Service and the Department of Social Development, Department of Transport and Community Safety, Department of Health, as well as community policing forums to implement aggressive crime prevention campaigns. This initiative is not just timely; it is essential to the society and security of our citizens.

First, we must recognise that crime, much as like a pandemic, spreads and evolves. It affects all sectors of society, and its repercussions extend beyond immediate criminal acts. The Premier's declaration highlights urgent issues.

Let me indicate to Hon Mapoulo, who keeps on interrupting me, that the advantage of reading your speech using the gadget is that you also have the time with you. I am allocated 10 minutes. I am advantaged because of the garget that I am utilising.

We need to treat crime prevention with the same seriousness and commitment we applied to a public health crisis. Hon Premier, as the Department of Social Development, we will launch a family revitalisation programme, which focuses on visiting dysfunctional families and providing the necessary support and resources they

need. By intervening early, we can tackle the root causes of many social ills that plague our society, including teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and gender-based violence. These issues do not arise in vacuum; they are often symptoms of a larger epidemics of poverty and disconnection. Hon Premier, imagine if we have a community where families are supported, empowered and connected, where resources are available, and help is just a visit away. Through targeted intervention and comprehensive support, we can help families heal and flourish. This initiative will not only improve individual lives, but will ultimately reduce the burden on our social services, strengthen community ties and enhance our overall societal wellbeing.

The Premier's instruction for the police to lead in aggressive crime prevention campaigns underscores the need for a robust law enforcement approach. However, we must also acknowledge the integral role of the Department of Social Development. Crime, often, has its roots in socioeconomic factors such as, poverty and lack of education, amongst others. By combining law enforcement efforts with social initiatives, we can tackle the underlying issues that contribute to criminal behaviour.

Hon Premier, the direction to convene a consultative forum is an excellent step forward. We understand that effective crime prevention requires collaborative amongst stakeholders, police, social services, community leaders and the public. These forums should facilitate open dialogue, encourage community inputs and foster partnership. Together we can develop comprehensive strategies that are tailored to the unique needs of our communities.

As I am about to conclude, allow me to indicate that the cost of living remains a pressing concern for the great majority of our people. The ANC-led government is dedicated to implementing policies and alleviate financial burdens on our citizens. Through social grants that we initiated, subsidies for essential services and support for small businesses, we aim to create a safety net that empowers all our people to live with dignity and security. Access to education is a fundamental right that the African National Congress holds dearly. Our manifesto emphasises the need for quality education for all from early childhood development to tertiary education. By investing in our educational system, we are investing in the future of our nation, equipping our youth with skills necessary to succeed in changing a job market.

While progress has been made in presenting and advancing the interest of the vulnerable groups, we continue experiencing the disaster fool and the barbaric acts of gender-based violence and femicide, abuse of children and elderly women, which we will not tolerate, as directed. We will continue to intensify our efforts to curb and eradicate the new pandemic through our collaboration with law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders. We do not take that lightly, that we must deliver to our people.

In the words of our Premier, I would like to repeat and say that we dare not to fail. We will spare no efforts in delivering on the people's needs for the better lives of all our people.

[NOISE]

Hon Speaker, Hon Speaker, Hon Speaker, as I conclude, ... [INTERJUNCTION]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Order! Order, honourable Members! She is done. Thank you, Hon Radzilani.

MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon Speaker and Hon Premier, the behaviour that you see in the House is a call that we need more training. We must not take it lightly. These Members must be well equipped; they must be trained so that they understand their role in the House.

Thank you very much.

MS MOGOANE

Behaviour of the VBS. We are behaving like you when you stole VBS money.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Radzilani. Honourable Members, there is a motion for the amendment of rules and reconstitution of committees. We shall now call upon the Hon Deputy Chief Whip to the podium.

My apology, honourable Members. There is a hand from Hon Mathe. Do you have a point of order, Hon Mathe? Hon Deputy Chief Whip, you may be seated for a while to allow Hon Mathe to speak.

MR MATHE

Hon Deputy Speaker, I'm rising on a point of order, without being intimidated by any person. I want to know as to whether it is parliamentary to say that a Member of this House is talking "nonsense" in this House. I am not talking about noise; I am talking about "nonsense". I want to know if it is parliamentary so that we can also use it freely. This is because we can use it better than them. That should be very clear.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mathe. It is unparliamentary to use that word against another Member, but honourable Members, we must respect this House. When you are respecting the House, you are not respecting me. You are the House, and that you should know.

When you are making noise and howling, you are not howling at me. You are howling at your own House that your community has voted you to be here. All of us, we are a House. We are going to respect our own House, which is ourselves. Thank you very much. The Deputy Chief Whip, you may proceed.

BACKGROUND

Withdraw "nonsense".

MS MOGOANE

I will not withdraw “nonsense”.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon Mogoane, I have made a ruling on that.

MS MOGOANE

He is addressing me. Start with him.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Honourable Members, can we all respect ourselves. Now you have to respect yourselves also. Thank you very much. All of you.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker; Hon Premier of our province; Members of the Executive Council; Chair of Chairs, Hon Mokone and the Deputy Chair of Chairs; Chief Whip of the majority party; Leader of the Opposition; chairpersons of the portfolio committees. Thanks very much.

8. MOTION FOR THE AMENDMENT OF RULES AND RECONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES

I rise to present a motion for the amendment of the rules and reconstitution of committees. The Rules Committee met on Monday, 05 August 2024 to consider the amendment of rules and the reconstitution of committees and its members as follows:

- The Rules Committee recommended that the number of members constituting a committee should be at a minimum of six and a maximum of eight, as per Rule 36 of the Rules Committee;
- The Rules Committee further recommend that not more than 13 motions without notice should be tabled on the same day under Rule 145(3);
- The Rules Committee adopted the reconstituted committee and its members with the ambition of the new committee;
- The Rules Committee recommended that the amended rules be considered as rules of the Limpopo provincial Legislature; and
- The constituted committees and its members be considered as the committees of the Limpopo provincial Legislature.

The House should further note that there are several rules that need to be reviewed, and they will be tabled before this august House as and when they are being finalised. I, therefore, move that this august House adopts this amendment of committees and its members.

I move accordingly, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Deputy Chief Whip. Is there any seconder? Hon Nkonyana, you are recognised.

MR NKONYANA

Thanks, Deputy Speaker. I, Hon Nkonyana, stand here to second the motion as presented by the Deputy Chief Whip.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Nkonyana.

9. NCOP BUSINESS

9.1. Motion for the Ratification of Appointment of our Special Delegates to the NCOP Plenaries in Cape Town

Hon Chief Whip, it is your turn.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thanks very much, Hon Deputy Speaker.

Hon Speaker, section 61(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa read together with House Rule 226(3) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the House provides for the designation and appointment of Special Delegates as required from time to time when the House was not sitting.

In line with these provisions, the following honourable Members were appointed to attend the Joint Sitzings of the National Assembly and the NCOP plenaries when the House was not sitting:

- On 16 July 2024: Hybrid Policy Debate on Budget Vote 03 on Corporate Governance. Members appointed to attend: Hon B R Makamu, Hon K M Lebea, Hon M C Manthata-Mahasela;
- On 17 July 2024: Hybrid Policy Debate on Budget Vote 13: Health. Members appointed to attend: Hon D Mashego, Hon S M Mathe, Hon M C Manthata-Mahasela, Hon C B D Selane;
- On 18 July 2024: Joint Sitting on the Opening of Parliament. Members appointed to attend: Hon P C Ramathuba, the Premier; Hon M G Makhurupetje, the Speaker; Hon T P Mamorobela, the Deputy Speaker and Hon E M Mokgonyana, standing here;
- On 19 July 2024: Joint Sitting Debate on the Opening of Parliament Address. Members appointed to attend: Hon P C Ramathuba, the Premier; Hon M G Makhurupetje, the Speaker; Hon T P Mamorobela, the Deputy Speaker; Hon E M Mokgonyana, same;

- On 22 July 2024: Joint Sitting on the Reply to the Address by the President. Members appointed to attend: Hon PC Ramathuba, Hon M G Makhurupetje, Hon T P Mamorobela and Hon E.M Mokgonyana;
- On 23 July 2024: Hybrid Policy Debate on Budget Vote 13: Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and Budget Vote 33: Human Settlement. Members appointed to attend: Hon E S Rachoene, Hon B R Makamu, Hon M C Manthata-Mahasela and Hon F P Mdaka;
- On 24 July 2024: Hybrid Plenary Debate on Budget Vote 16: Basic Education and Budget Vote 17: Higher Education and Training. Members appointed to attend: Hon M Lerule-Ramakhanya, Hon C B D Selane, Hon M A Mokaba, Hon G R Monama;
- On 25 July 2024: Hybrid Plenary Debate on Budget Vote 28: Police and Budget Vote 34: Mineral Resources. Members appointed to attend: Hon SV Mathye, Hon T B Matibe, Hon C N Rakgoale, Hon M C Manthata-Mahasela;
- On 29 July 2024: Hybrid Plenary Debate on Budget Vote 40: Transport. Members appointed to attend: Hon S V Mathye, Hon F P Mdaka, Hon CN Rakgoale and M C Manthata-Mahasela;
- On 30 July 2024: Hybrid Plenary Debate on Budget Vote 36: Small Business Development and Budget Vote 39: Trade and Industry. Members appointed to attend: Hon T B Matibe, Hon C B D Selane, Hon M A Mokaba and Hon K M Lebea; and
- On 31 July 2024: Hybrid Plenary to consider the Appropriation Bill [B05-2024] section 77: Members appointed to attend: Hon K E Mahoi, Hon C B D Selane, Hon M A Mokaba and Hon M C Manthata-Mahasela.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I hereby move that this august House resolves to ratify the appointments of the abovementioned Special Delegates in line with the abovementioned provisions.

I move accordingly, Hon Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Chief Whip. Is there any seconder? Hon Sebopela you are recognised.

MS SEBOPELA

Hon Deputy Speaker, my name is Hon Sebopela. I rise to second the motion for the ratification of the appointment of Special Delegates to the NCOP. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Sebopela.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are there any announcements? Chair of Chairs, Hon Mokone, you are recognised.

THE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Hon Deputy Speaker, Hon Premier, Members of the Executive Council, Chief Whip and the Deputy Chief Whip, Members of the opposition parties, Members of this august House, I am here to render a very small task but very important.

All honourable Members and guests are invited for lunch. Lunch will be served in the main Committees Boardroom. O mongwe o kile a re o bolela ka sekgowa, ka gore sekgowa se a tshwenya, a nyaka gore bon appetit a re bon voyage. Bjale le go lena ke re bon voyage.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Chair of Chairs, Hon Mokone.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The House is adjourned until Thursday, 08 August 2024 in the Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber at 10:00. Thank you very much.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
THURSDAY, 08 AUGUST 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

THE SPEAKER

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

I request all honourable Members to stand. We need to start with the House proceedings, and I request all honourable Members to respect the decorum of the House. We will not allow honourable Members to disrespect this House. Anyway, we are going to start. We shall now have an opportunity for a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you. We may all be seated. Before we proceed, we must find out from the leader of the EFF whether they want to sit in this House or leave. Can we get a response from the leader of the EFF?

MR BALOYI

We are part of the meeting. The question is irrelevant.

THE SPEAKER

We must respect the House rules. Firstly, you speak while sitting down, and you are disrespecting the rules. [Inaudible]

MR BALOYI

Hon Speaker, we are allowed to participate in the proceedings of this House, so we are not going out.

THE SPEAKER

The EFF is disrespecting this House; we would like to request them to leave.

MR LETSOALO

We seek clarity, Hon Speaker. [CROSS TALK] I'm addressing the Speaker; don't howl.

THE SPEAKER

In this House, when you want to speak, you raise your hand, and you get recognised. Hon Lebogo, you are recognised.

MR LEBOGO

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I thought you were starting with the proceedings of the House. There is nothing that warrants people being taken out, unless you can elaborate on what triggered your decision because no one disturbed you or anyone when you entered the Chamber. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

It is the procedure and decorum of this House that when the Speaker or any Presiding Officer enters this House, we all stand up. There was no reason for the EFF to sit down when the Speaker's procession entered the House. There was no reason given why the EFF decided to sit down, and there was no report given to the Office of the Speaker why you should sit down.

Honourable Member, I don't know your name. Just show me your name tag and you will be recognised.

MR LETSOALO

Thank you, Hon Speaker, and greetings to the EFF caucus. Hon Speaker, this House is guided by rules. Which House rule are you applying to take us out of this House? Can you read the rule that says when you enter this House, we must stand up? It is only on that basis that we can entertain you. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Makamu, you are recognised.

THE MEC FOR COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

Thank you, Hon Speaker, and greetings to the honourable Members. We have just constituted our Seventh Administration and the committees that will run this Legislature. One of the committees is the Rules Committee, which presented its report in this House in the previous Sitting. In that Rules Committee, the EFF is represented, and it agreed with the rules and adopted them in this House, including the decorum of this House. I think it is unfair for the Members of the Economic Freedom Fighters to now act as if they don't know the rules.

THE SPEAKER

What is the rule that allows you to sit down when the Speaker's procession enters the House? Maybe let's start there.

MR LETSOALO

If you are challenging our sitting down, you must substantiate your ruling. You can't say we must leave this House because we did not stand up for you. Read the rule.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mokone, you are recognised.

THE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Hon Speaker, I thought you had made a ruling, and your ruling is based on what you have just said: that we all participate in the Programming Committee and there was nothing that warrants them to behave like this. If they had issues, they should have raised them there. We just met on Monday. This is disrespectful to this honourable House. The Speaker has made a ruling, so let us allow them to leave the House. When they have properly made up their minds, they will come and attend the Sitting. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Lebogo, you are recognised.

MR LEBOGO

Thanks very much for the opportunity, Hon Speaker. You will recall that this is our second Sitting, and we are yet to have a caucus about the issues that you are saying our party leader or our whip agreed to. There is no need for someone to be excited and say the Speaker is correct and has made a ruling on a matter that we are not aware of. Let me remind you that the first time we were here, some of us never stood up and you never made it an issue. It is not for the first time that we were sitting down when you entered the House.

We request that the House proceeds, and we will consult with our leaders regarding what you have agreed on because they are not here today. We are not going to be chased away for something that we don't know. In our first Sitting, we sat down and we did not disturb anyone. It is unfortunate that some Members are saying you have made a ruling. We don't know what people are trying to hide because, in all honesty, there is nothing here that has been disturbed.

When the Hon Premier speaks here, no one will disturb her. We are going to be part of this Sitting; there is no need to be arrogant. If we did not know, you should rather say that, and we will engage with you in the next Sitting. We will delegate our leader to engage with you because the next attempt would be to remove us because we did not smile or did not clap hands, and we will never agree to that.

Thanks.

THE SPEAKER

The rules are formulated in line with the Constitution and in line with the parliamentary practice and conventions that exist. When the Speaker's procession enters the House, all Members shall rise. In terms of House Rule 97(1)(b), a Member is in contempt of or disregards the authority of the Presiding Officer if they (c) deliberately or vexatiously interrupt the orderly conduct of the business of the House. In such cases, the Presiding

Officer may order the Member to withdraw immediately from the House for the remainder of that day's Sitting.

When the Speaker's procession entered the House, you were sitting down, deliberately, and when we were doing the silent prayers or meditations, you were also sitting down. I requested you to stand up, but you disobeyed and disregarded my instructions as the Presiding Officer. On that note, I request you to leave the House. I'm no longer going to recognise anyone; I request you to leave the House.

MR LETSOALO

That is laziness. You are not telling us the rule that says we must stand up when you enter the House.

THE SPEAKER

We are not going to debate. Whatever matter you have, will be sent to the Rules Committee for consideration, and I'm requesting you to leave.

MR LETSOALO

You have not referred us to any rules that are requesting us to stand up.

MR LEBOGO

What are you hiding? You are doing your work; we are doing our work.

THE SPEAKER

You continue to disregard and disobey the authority of the Presiding Officer.

MS MOGOANE

Which rule says we must stand up? Can the Presiding Officer be guided by the rules of this House.

THE SPEAKER

Who recognised you to speak? Why are you talking when you have not been recognised?

MS MOGOANE

You said you are not going to recognise anyone.

THE SPEAKER

Keep quiet then. Hon Smalle, you are recognised.

MR SMALLE

Hon Speaker, let me read from our latest Standing Rules and Orders. I will refer to chapter 2, number 7, which addresses Conventions and practices: “Conventions and practices relating to the business of the House, its Committees and other forums are established by agreement amongst political parties and parliamentary office bearers. These may be varied by agreement amongst them and reviewed from time to time as determined by the Rules Committee”. It is the established practice of this House, and it has not been changed by the Rules Committee, that when the Speaker’s procession enters the House, we all rise and wait to be recognised by the Speaker before we may speak. Thus, the ruling you have rendered is indeed correct.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Smalle. Hon Monama, you are recognised.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. With all powers vested in me as the Chief Whip, I acknowledge that you were correct in ensuring that the decorum and the praesidium of this House and the rules that have been adopted are adhered to at all times. We fully respect your decision. I wonder why they are still sitting here, as we in the Whippers are concerned that there may be contempt for your ruling. Therefore, we humbly request that you activate the necessary mechanisms to ensure they are removed.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Monama. I will now call upon the Sergeant-at-Arms to assist us. I would like to be advised on whether we should adjourn this House so that you can perform your duties and allow this Sitting to continue without disturbances. Honourable Members, please relax; I am at a point where I will not recognise anyone. We have requested the Sergeant-at-Arms to assist us, and at the appropriate time, we will be advised on whether we should adjourn the House.

The House will be adjourned for 10 minutes to allow the Sergeant-at-Arms to assist us.

[THE HOUSE ADJOURNS FOR 10 MINUTES]

[REMOVAL OF THE EFF MEMBERS FROM THE CHAMBER]

[THE HOUSE RESUMES AFTER 10 MINUTES]

THE SPEAKER

We will now proceed with the Orders of the Day. Hon Monama, you are recognised.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. As the Whippery, we would like to submit that due to the defiance of these honourable Members regarding your ruling, we refer their behaviour to the Ethics Committee to process their matter so that it is properly recorded. Furthermore, there must be an exception for the Member who deliberately refused to leave the House even after you requested them to do so.

If it comes to a push that they are suspended from one or two Sittings and docked their salaries, let it be so, so that there is decorum in the House. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Members, there is a proposal on the table. Is there a seconder? Hon Smalle, you are recognised, followed by Hon Maritz.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I stand to second the proposal made by the Chief Whip in accordance with House Rule 97, which addresses the disorderly and disruptive conduct of Members and their removal from the Chamber and its precincts. I so move, Hon Speaker.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Smalle. I now call upon Hon Maritz.

MS MARITZ

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. The Freedom Front Plus also seconds the proposal. We cannot tolerate this kind of behaviour in Parliament. Our Members are here to represent the community and the people of Limpopo, and this behaviour is completely unacceptable. We also second the whippery, and we further propose that their salaries be docked for six months.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable Members. Indeed, I would like to express my gratitude for your support as the Presiding Officer. This House cannot be undermined, and the decorum of the House must not be taken for granted. On that note, the matter is hereby referred to the Ethics Committee for further action. Thank you.

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Thank you very much, honourable Members. Are there any motions without notice in terms of House Rule 145? Hon Mahasela, you are recognised.

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

WOMEN'S MONTH CELEBRATION
(Motion without Notice)

I rise on behalf of the African National Congress for this House to note the following:

- As we celebrate Women's Month, the ANC views this as a time of reflection on how far we, as a nation have progressed in our journey towards women's empowerment and gender equality. It is also a time for all sections of society to intensify our collective efforts towards building a truly equal and nonsexist society.
- Women's Month memorialises and recognises the valiant contribution of women to the cause of humanity through the enduring interventions of women in resisting oppression and cultivating a progressive politics of emancipation that is in the interest of humanity at large.
- South Africa's democracy has made significant progress in restoring the dignity of women. The living conditions of the majority of ordinary women have seen significant qualitative improvement, and women now have access to opportunities that were unimaginable before democracy.
- While significant strides have been made to empower women and promote gender equality, the ANC is the first to concede that the struggle for women's emancipation is far from over. We must acknowledge that women still bear a disproportionate burden of the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. It must trouble our collective conscience that thirty years after the 1994 democratic breakthrough, the scourge of poverty, unemployment and inequality still bears a largely black, rural and female face.
- We commend the efforts of the ANC-led government since 1994 to respond practically to the aspirations of women. The economic empowerment of women is critical for sustainable development and economic transformation in South Africa. Empowering women economically will help eliminate inequality and enhance economic inclusion.
- During this month and beyond, we must make a solemn pledge to continue fighting gender-based violence wherever it may rear its ugly head. While the ANC-led government has enacted progressive legislation and introduced measures to address the scourge of gender-based violence, it remains stubbornly persistent in our communities. Gender-based violence robs women of the opportunity to become productive citizens in their own country. It denies them their constitutional rights and condemns them to a life of perpetual fear. It prevents them from enjoying the fruits of our freedom and democracy. Hon

Speaker, the ANC calls on government, civil society, business, traditional leaders and other stakeholders to join forces to defeat this scourge.

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Are there any other motions without notice? Hon Smalle, you are recognised.

MR SMALLE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

RECEIPT OF THE PRESTIGIOUS UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE INNOVATION AWARD BY THE DA-RUN WESTERN CAPE (Motion without Notice)

I rise on behalf of the Democratic Alliance to move that this House notes that:

- The DA-run Western Cape received the prestigious United Nations Public Service Innovation Award.
- Furthermore, this accolade highlights the commitment to citizen-centric digital transformation, significantly benefiting vulnerable residents and enhancing public services.
- It is important to note that these are the same professional services that have seen transformation in government by DA Ministers within the GNU Cabinet, by getting the basics right and pioneering effective people-centred services, example: shortening queues and reducing permit backlog applications by 30%; by launching probes into unused government buildings such as the R950 million SAPS building, which has been unused for eight years; and by increasing VAT-free food items, making essential groceries cheaper by expanding the basket of VAT-free food items.
- The Democratic Alliance will duplicate these successes achieved and lessons learned in the Western Cape within the GNU by prioritising the people first in every sphere of government.

I so move.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Smalle. Before I move to the next motion, may I please have a seconder for the motion presented by Hon Mahasela. Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the motion as presented by Hon Mahasela. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Can I have a seconder for the motion presented by Hon Smalle? Hon Wilson, you are recognised.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I stand to second the motion as presented by Hon Smalle. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, very much. Is there any other motion without notice? Hon Mmetle-Ramohlola, you are recognised.

MS MMETLE-RAMOHLOLA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

**COMMEMORATING WOMEN'S MONTH: HONOURING THE LEGACY AND
CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA**
(Motion without Notice)

I rise on behalf of the African National Congress for this august House to note that:

- As we mark Women's Month, the ANC commemorates and remembers the horrific assassination of the brave anti-apartheid campaigner and human rights lawyer, Victoria Mxenge, who was brutally killed by apartheid security officers on 01 August 1985.
- Hon Speaker, a bright light in the struggle against apartheid, Victoria Mxenge touched many lives and serves as an enduring inspiration to everyone who knew her. We continue to be inspired by her persistent commitment to justice, equality and human rights.
- She bravely represented the less fortunate and the oppressed in her capacity as a lawyer, and her resilience in the face of hardship continues to inspire hope.
- Hon Speaker, though her life was tragically cut short, Victoria's legacy endures. We remember her strength, resilience, and compassion, and honour her memory by continuing to fight for a world that is just, equitable and free from oppression.
- As we mark Women's Month, we also pay tribute to the women of South Africa whose contributions to the downfall of apartheid have been immeasurable.

- Following the democratic breakthrough in 1994, women continued to play an indispensable role in the reconstruction and development of the country.
- In the name and in honour of the heroic and fearless women of 1956 who took on the might of the apartheid regime during the historic march, we must rededicate ourselves to the task of building a society that responds to the objectives and plight of women, and to accelerate efforts towards the goal of women empowerment and gender equality.

I so move, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable Member. Is there any seconder for the motion? Hon Mataboge, you are recognised.

MR MATABOGE

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise to second the motion as presented by Hon Mmetle-Ramohlola.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mataboge. Are there any other motions without notice? Since there are no further motions without notice, we shall now proceed.

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Are there any notices of motions in terms of House Rule 146? Hon Helm, you are recognised.

MS HELM

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise as Marie Helm, representing the Democratic Alliance.

THE IMPACT OF FIRE AND BLACK FROST DAMAGE IN LIMPOPO (Notice of Motion)

I rise on behalf of the Democratic Alliance to move that this House debate at its next Sitting the implications of the wind, fire and black frost damage in most areas of the Limpopo Province during June and July 2024 and declare the Limpopo Province a disaster area as the magnitude of this disaster is regarded as the worst in more than 30 years.

It is a common cause that the entire potato-producing area has been devastated, with 181 ha of potatoes partially destroyed or damaged.

Furthermore, 714 ha of trees, 277 ha of vegetables, 243 ha of fruit, 22 ha of tobacco and 385 ha of grazing have been partially destroyed or damaged due to black frost,

strong winds, and veld fires. Therefore, a total of 1,822 ha have been directly affected in Limpopo.

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Member, please remember that you only need to give a notice, and the motion will be considered moving forward.

MS HELM

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I so move.

THE SPEAKER

We will now refer the notice of motion to the Programming Committee and Presiding Officers for consideration, so it can be presented moving forward. Are there any other notices of motions? If there are no further notices of motions, we will then proceed to item 4.

4. MEMBERS'S STATEMENTS

Are there any Members' Statements in terms of House Rule 200? Hon Smalle, you are recognised.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SIXTH ADMINISTRATION'S FAILURE TO PRESENT AN ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT ON THEIR TENURE (Members' Statement)

The Democratic Alliance has noted with concern the inability of the Sixth Administration to present the report on what has been accomplished during their term of office. We have noted the call to action made by the Premier during her Address at the Official Opening of the Seventh Limpopo Legislature, which amongst other things, instructed the MEC for Education in Limpopo to provide a comprehensive report on the remaining school facilities where sanitation is yet to be completed, as well as the eradication of pit latrines.

The DA further notes the Education Facility Management System report by the Department of Basic Education on 21 August 2023, which indicated that out of the 3 649 public ordinary schools in Limpopo, only 74 schools have pit latrines.

We further note another report tabled by the department in Parliament on 03 July 2023, which states that out of 3 622 operational sites, there are 789 public ordinary schools with pit latrines, 1 603 with Enviro Loos, 1 578 with VIP toilets, 760 with flush toilets using septic tanks, 403 with flush toilets connected to municipal systems, nine with chemical toilets, and six with alternative systems.

Hon Premier and honourable MEC for Education, there are systems already in place, driven by the Department of Basic Education, that monitor the progress made in the provision of infrastructure.

The Education Facility Management System report is available as we speak. Will you accept the accuracy of the available data and ensure compliance with the minimum norms and standards in the design, construction, and additions, alterations, and improvements of new schools?

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable Member. Are there any other Members' Statements? Hon Wilson, you are recognised.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

DA'S VISIT TO ALTOOSYD IN LEPHALALE (Members' Statement)

A recent oversight visit to Altoostyd in Lephalale uncovered the most appalling living conditions of the hundreds of people who were moved there some years ago. They were housed in sink, two-bedroom shacks, comprising one small living space and a kitchen area. Up to seven family members are now living in these small, confined spaces.

There is not one workable toilet for the hundreds of people who stay there, not one, so the surrounding bush has become their toilet, posing a significant health risk and creating a huge health hazard. The creche has no shade or proper facilities. When it rains, the entire area becomes inundated with sewage.

The shacks are leaking, have been damaged in storms, and many are without windows. There is no electricity, and just yesterday, we managed to get water connected so that the poor people there do not have to rely on a once-a-week water delivery from the municipality, which was inadequate.

Year after year, plans for the upliftment of this area have appeared in the CoGHSTA planning and budget, but absolutely nothing has been done by province. When efforts were made to install toilets, they started to dig pit toilets for the communities there. It is shocking and not acceptable.

Honourable MEC Makamu, we say time and time again that talk is cheap. This is now the time for urgent action.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Wilson. I will now allow the Members of the Executive Committee to respond to Members' Statements. Honourable MEC Makamu, the floor is yours.

THE MEC FOR COGHSTA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker and thanks to the honourable Members who presented the Members' Statements. The first statement refers to the report of the Sixth Administration's work, which has already been addressed. As I stand here, I am certain that the report by the MEC for Education has been completed and made available to the Premier.

However, it is not only the report of the Sixth Administration on Education that must be consolidated and made available. Each committee should do the same as we conclude the final year of the Sixth Administration.

On the matter of Altoostyd, I agree with Hon Wilson. It is as though you have read the department's plans, and indeed, talk is cheap, I fully agree with you. The Department of CoGHSTA has made some progress in making the lives of the people of Altoostyd, or Joe Slovo, more conducive. Therefore, we are already on course. You will understand that Joe Slovo is an integrated settlement. A substantial amount of money has been utilised for temporary settlement purposes while we are working on plans to ensure both the department and the municipality collaborate to improve the lives of the people of Joe Slovo.

We have already observed that the situation is as bad as you have indicated, and we are taking steps to correct it.

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Makamu. Is there any other MEC who would like to contribute? We must remember that Hon Makamu is the Leader of Government Business, and as and when matters relating to the Executive Council arise, he will ensure that they are taken back to the Exco for consideration.

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

Are there any Executive Statements in terms of Rule 201? There is none.

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

Are there any tablings of committee reports, other reports and papers? There are none.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1 Debate on the Premier's Official Opening Address

I now call upon the Hon Premier, mme moswara thipa ka bogaleng, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba, to respond to the observations made by honourable Members during the debate on Tuesday. [APPLAUSE]

THE PREMIER

Hon Speaker of the Legislature, Ms Makoma Makhurupetje; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Members of the Executive Council; honourable Members of the House; Whippers, led by Hon Essob Mokgonyana, good morning. Avuxeni.

Hon Speaker, we want to appreciate all the Members of this House who participated in this robust debate, once more proving to all and sundry that under the ANC-led government, democracy continues to thrive. We have taken note of the progressive inputs and guidance as presented by both our Chief Whip, Hon Mokgonyana, and Hon Mokaba. Your words of wisdom have not fallen on deaf ears but on men and women who will collectively implement them so that we can decisively win the battle against poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

I would like to particularly thank all the MECs who participated in the debate. Whether it was MEC Florence Radzilani, MEC Dieketseng Mashego, MEC Ernest Rachoene or MEC Basikopo Makamu, they all, in their inputs, committed to strengthening our efforts in implementing programmes, not just of their own respective portfolios, which they are mandated to lead, but of all the clusters within the Seventh Administration.

Hon Speaker, these men and women have already demonstrated their capacity and commitment towards service delivery. Some even shared with us creative initiatives on how to accelerate service delivery. Be it Dikgeregere Wednesday, which is currently operating in full swing, and contrary to you, Hon Mapoulo, in absentia, and Hon Wilson, this progressive initiative, which is improving the quality of life of our people and is appreciated by people from all sectors, be it farmers, school-going children, educators in rural schools, or nurses in our rural clinics, is currently funded from within our fiscal framework. We are utilising our existing budget and using the current yellow fleet operators along with the existing yellow fleet to improve our rural roads.

In his own words, Kgosi Kgabo Moloto III, with whom I spent the entire day at GaMokgehle Village on behalf of Bahlaloga, said: “Selo se gase a ka re se bone. Ka nnete re a leboga. Re le bakgonyana re re tla iterela motse o wa rena, ba sa no re k a go re ditsela tša rena gore di senya dikoloi tša bona. Re a reta. Mmušo wa rena ke wona mmušo wo re o tsebago wa ANC.”

Given this, who are you and I, Hon Mapoulo, not to embrace a programme celebrated by being Mabu, celebrated by His Majesty Maaparankwe, who rules over more than 140 indunas, with each sub-village constituting, on average, 500 households?

Hon Wilson, your continuous negativity and “prophet of doom” mentality is not new to some of us. Perhaps let me remind you of our previous encounter when I was the MEC for Health, and you were part of those in the National Assembly. When we announced the first-ever medical school, you said: “Not in your lifetime.” Today, you are still sitting here, consuming oxygen, and our first group of medical graduates has already

completed their two years of internship. When we announced our first-ever Limpopo Central Academic Hospital, similar questions about budgets were raised, and today construction has begun; yet you remain silent.

We are deeply concerned about the enemies of progress who have mobilised our people, exploiting their unemployment status to disrupt construction. Therefore, we call upon all parties to meet and resolve this matter, as construction must resume for us to meet our deadlines.

Hon Wilson, as if that was not enough, when we announced just last year in this august House that we would procure and commission 566 ambulances, you said we were hallucinating. The 566 ambulances have been procured, and when we commissioned them, you shifted the goalposts and accused us of electioneering. I am now concerned, as a fellow honourable Member; do you still think the people of this province will take you seriously at this rate? Our MECs were directed to review our budgets, and they will do so. We are going to see more yellow fleet vehicles being procured and more operators being appointed.

The soon-to-be-launched initiatives, such as the “Family Revitalisation Programmes” announced by the MEC for Social Development, are further confirmation that we are not neglecting our duties. We are a government at work, one that cares for and loves its people.

We call upon all Members of this House to rally behind this initiative, which is intended to support and rebuild our family units. The root cause of many social ills, manifested in increased violent crime rates, is broken family units.

Equally, Operation Bophelo Pele, as announced by the MEC for Health, will encourage healthy lifestyles amongst our people, starting with us, honourable Members. We must reduce our healthcare costs and heed the call from both MEC Mashego and MEC Maseko to start being physically active. On 09 August 2024, we call on all citizens of this province to join the programmes organised by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture across the province, where everyone can participate in a minimum of an 8 km walk or run, as long as there is some form of physical activity. After tomorrow, don't stop, just continue, and you will thank us later.

Hon Speaker, the Hon Chief Whip is quite right, our economy needs to be improved so that it can create more sustainable jobs. We are aware that our economy is not performing as we had envisaged.

Hon Mapoulo, we are the first to acknowledge when we have not performed well, as in the case of our Musina-Makhado SEZ. We have also provided this House with a way forward on how to turn things around. For both our SEZs, we have directed the MEC for Limpopo Economic Development and Tourism, Hon Tshitereke Matibe, to fast-track the revitalisation of the Musina-Makhado and Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZs. Unfortunately, Hon Mapoulo, listening is a skill that some of us lack. With these imperative and game-changing projects, we will be able to boost economic growth through job creation.

Additionally, the MEC for Agriculture, Hon Nakedi Kekana, and the MEC for LEDET have already visited the Lebowakgomo Abattoir to monitor progress. They know that in two weeks' time, now only a week, the Premier will be receiving the report on-site.

Hon Mapoulo, since our first day in office, we have been committed to driving the job creation agenda. To achieve this, we have met with captains of industry and continue to engage with those who share our vision of building our province's economy. This includes key sectors such as agriculture, mining, and retail. We have already held meetings with captains of industry, including Anglo Platinum Mining Company, De Beers Mining Company, Foskor, and the Phalaborwa Mining Community. One of the key topics discussed was beneficiation, specifically the processing of raw materials within our province.

During these discussions, experts from the platinum group minerals sector raised concerns about the declining market interest in end products like catalytic converters due to the shift towards electric vehicles as part of climate change mitigation. We have encouraged them to explore alternative uses for their resources, such as developing medical devices.

This area of beneficiation has the potential to increase economic growth, development and job creation, which will ultimately improve the livelihoods of our people. Hon Makamu, you were spot on. We are thrilled to have inspired Hon Mapoulo and Hon Lulamile Jack to the extent that they even mentioned other subsistence farmers who are doing very well. That is a testament to the fact that, as a government, we are on the ground. When we say these are our people, it's because we know them and understand their struggles. Therefore, we are now more convinced than ever that we are on the right path in supporting our subsistence farmers in our province.

We are also encouraged by the positive response from commercial farmers who are willing to assist us in developing our subsistence farmers into commercial farmers. Hon Speaker, Hon Wilson of the DA is misled in her divisive approach, especially when dealing with critical issues involving agriculture, which is the backbone of our economy. She and those who share her mentality believe, and even accuse us, that we are not doing enough to engage with our commercial farmers. Let me put it to you, Hon Wilson, that we are not resting on our laurels. While you were probably resting with your family on Saturday, we were meeting with the Modimolle Business Chamber.

Amongst those present was also the chairman of AfriForum and influential commercial farmers who heard our calls during our Friday speech and appreciated our efforts to meet with anyone willing to build this province. They are on board to help us rebuild our economy through agriculture. They raised their own challenges and necessary interventions, and the MEC for Agriculture will be working with them and everyone who is willing to build this province to resolve some of these issues.

Contrary to your perceptions, these farmers have pledged their commitment and willingness to support black farmers. They have also advised us on how we can start a joint programme with organisations like NTK to help our children in rural and township schools begin learning the practical aspects of agriculture at an elementary level. Therefore, unlike your conclusion of whether to laugh or cry after our speech on Friday, the people out there are inspired and have welcomed the invitation to work

with us. Be careful, at the end of the day, you might find yourselves without any constituencies due to your negative energy, because your constituencies want to build the province. People are tired of fighting; they want a thriving economy that will create jobs, reduce unemployment, fight poverty and close the growing inequality gap.

Furthermore, they have indicated that in their efforts to create an enabling environment for collaboration with the government, they have invited me to the provincial Agri-Limpopo conference taking place on 13 August 2024, where I will be addressing them. In their own words, this will be the first time a Premier addresses a gathering of this nature. I have indicated to them that it is the first time Limpopo has a female Premier, so mothers will understand.

My acceptance of this invitation to address the commercial farmers demonstrates that the ANC-led government is an inclusive one, catering to all racial groups; Blacks, Indians, Coloureds, and Whites, unlike you, who prioritise commercial farmers over our Black and emerging farmers. The ANC-led government does not discriminate.

We should also highlight that there are successful Black commercial farmers in the sector, particularly in cattle and strawberry farming. They serve as living testimony and proof that agricultural activities remain an important sector for ensuring sustainable growth. Hunger does not know colour!

On Monday, I will be visiting some of these farmers to see the work they do, accompanied by the MEC. Due to the importance of last week's meeting with the farmers in Waterberg, we have decided, together with the MEC, to hold further engagements with other commercial farmers in all four districts of our province.

Unfortunately, Hon Wilson once again stood before this august House, throwing stones at us and blaming our government for not caring, for failing to respond swiftly to the potato frost disaster that affected mainly Bloubaerg but also parts of Vhembe and Sekhukhune. Hon Wilson, when that disaster struck, I was en route to Cape Town for the Opening of Parliament. However, what you may not know, whether out of ignorance or choice, is that the MEC for Agriculture, Hon Naledi Kekana, visited the affected areas immediately on 17 July 2024 to assess the severity of the potato frost disaster.

This was an unprecedented and proactive response by our government, demonstrating how swiftly we acted on the matter. I can confirm that the MEC and her team have already tabled a report before me on this matter, detailing the steps taken as guided by section 23(1)(b) of the Disaster Management Act and section 12(1)(a) in the case of a provincial disaster. The MEC for CoGHSTA, through the disaster unit, has been assisting the MEC for Agriculture and the Office of the Premier.

As a government, we have acted promptly and followed due process as prescribed by law. We did not want to approach the farmers prematurely and make statements not informed by law. Therefore, we cannot entertain the political grandstanding exhibited by Hon Wilson in this House. It is also unfortunate that Hon Wilson continues to play the blame game and attempts to portray this government as uncaring. For your information, the ANC-led government cares about the citizens of this province,

regardless of colour or gender, because this movement believes in creating a nonracial, nonsexist, democratic and prosperous society.

My advice to you, Hon Wilson, is to learn a thing or two from Hon Maritz, who passionately stood here and made a plea on behalf of those farmers. If it is so difficult for you to do so, I can still use my profession to prescribe Prozac, which may come in handy whenever you take the stage.

Hon Maritz, we can confirm that we have already intervened, and we are awaiting the classification of these two disasters, including the fire in Magoebaskloof and Haenertsburg. When the fire broke out, you woke me in the middle of the night because you care about your people. We had to get the Polokwane Municipality to support the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. That is why the ANC says: "Let's do more together."

The Department of Agriculture will conduct an audit of the total land claimed by communities. This audit will provide a clear indication of the land available for sustainable development. For the land that is currently lying fallow and underutilised, we will develop a programme to invite investors in agriculture who are willing to invest in rural development initiatives. These investors will, in turn, train young and emerging farmers, thus contributing to job creation, which is a key factor of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) priority number one.

Honourable Members, the issue of pit latrines is receiving attention in our province. The report requested on Friday was on my desk by Monday morning from the Department of Education. Most of our schools are currently using enviro-loo units, which are safer. The Department of Basic Education has also made progress regarding pit latrines. Twenty-seven new units are currently under construction to replace old pit latrines, with only eight remaining, if I'm not mistaken.

We can reassure you that these will be eradicated within a short period of time. Hon Kgothatso Mogoane of the EFF referred to a case involving a learner at Lefatane Primary School in GaMakgato Village, who she claimed fell into a pit latrine. Let us correct this misinformation, as relying on street gossip instead of facts is inaccurate. According to the Department of Basic Education, the actual incident involved learners playing behind an enviro-loo, and one was trapped under the cover of that unit outside. Fortunately, no injuries were reported.

The child survived because of the progress we have made towards eradicating pit latrines. Had we still been using pit latrines, we would be discussing a different outcome. Children will always be children and need to play. We have decided to enhance the safety of the enviro-loos by installing mesh wires on the lids.

Let us give credit where it is due. Had this intervention not occurred and we were still using pit latrines, we might be discussing another tragic case involving a learner. Thank you, MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya, and the team for ensuring the eradication of pit latrines.

Honourable Members, when lies become pathological and require medical intervention, it is a sign that one believes in their own lies. Hon Kgothatso Mogoane,

our track record in transforming the Department of Health speaks volumes. We inherited a department that Hon Mapoulo can attest to, as he was there as the Executive Mayor of the Capricorn District; it was under section 100. We were uncertain if we could pay our employees' salaries or our service providers. We were operating from one financial bailout to another. Today, the department can pay all its suppliers within 30 days. The department, once disclaimed, is now being transitioned an unqualified audit opinion. The claim about the 800 doctors is mere street gossip. We are one of the provinces that prioritise our professionals when they complete their community service contractual obligations.

We have appointed our nurses, doctors and other healthcare workers. Our Treasury is now mandated to assist the Department of Social Development in determining how we can appoint more social workers, because the MEC is correct: we need a social worker in every police station, and every ward. By appointing these social workers, we will reduce the number of social ills experienced in our province. You cannot ignore the facts and statistics, as they are available for everyone to see.

Hon Kgothatso Mogoane, you also inquired about our legacy in health, and the answer is simple. The life expectancy of the people in this province has improved under our watch. This province once led in both maternal mortality and child mortality under the age of five. However, according to the latest report announced by the Minister's Advisory Committee on Maternal Health, we are now ranked among the top three performing provinces in reducing maternal and child mortality rates. We can confidently say that when mothers visit hospitals for delivery, they are safer than before.

This is the province that fought COVID-19, despite being rural and poor, and recorded one the fewest number of deaths, comparatively speaking. Even during the Sixth Administration, this august House did not lose a single Member to COVID-19. This does not mean we were not infected, but it reflects that we had men and women within our public facilities working 24 hours a day to care for the people of this province. I reiterate, despite our rural and poor status, we were able to save many lives. Therefore, Hon Mogoana, that is our legacy.

Water provision remains a priority for this seventh administration. In response to dealing with water challenges, Hon Kobodi of the UAT and Hon Mapoulo, I am pleased to update the House on some of the projects that are completed and those nearing completion. Indeed, #HiNwaMatiFridays is a reality that we are going to launch, and you will see it happening.

The Ndindani reticulated and bulk offtake connection is complete. The Ngove B reticulated, and bulk offtake connection is now finished. Seven projects have reached practical completion:

- Mhlaba Willem: 100% reticulated and bulk offtake connection is complete.
- Bambeni: Completed.
- Homu 14A: 100% completed.
- Homu 14B: 100% completed.

As we announced last week, we are taking a bold step with #HiNwaMatiFridays. Every Friday we will launch water projects so that we can tell our own story, Hon Makamu. If we allow others to tell our story, they continuously mislead our people. We heard them on Tuesday creating stories that do not exist.

Let me conclude by addressing Hon Velile Cyril Jack of the MK party. I am disheartened by the honourable Member's statement that we should not talk about our forebears. How can we forget our stalwarts who shaped who we are today? How can I not mention Ms Charlotte Mannya Maxeke, the first woman to graduate with a science degree and the first woman to be accepted into the ANC NEC? Ms Charlotte, from Botlokwa, once said: "Kill that spirit of self and do not live above your people but live with them, and if you rise, bring someone with you." How can I not honour Mama Lydia Komape and all those who, when they rose, made sure they brought others, including many women in this House, with them, living up to the legacy of Ms Charlotte Mannya Maxeke?

They are smiling in their graves, seeing the seeds they planted growing, unlike some who betrayed the movement, the revolution, and the ANC. Despite challenging times, they stood their ground. Their blood remained black, green and gold; hence, when they departed from this earth, they left as true members of the ANC. May their revolutionary souls continue to rest in peace!

On the other hand, Cde Chris Hani and Cde Oliver Tambo must be turning in their graves when they see what you and others like you are attempting to establish, merely an imitation of their organisation. When they see their legacy being used to mobilise our people across tribal lines, it is as if the very demon they fought against their entire lives is being revived.

When Hon Velile Jack proclaimed that the leader of his party should be recorded in the Guinness Book of Records, I wanted to caution him. Failure to fulfil this pronouncement might lead to his surgical removal from this august House. Furthermore, I was reminded that, in the entire world, there has never been a president of an organisation who even went to court to fight to remain a member of another party. On this note, he might succeed because a world record has indeed been set.

As I conclude, Hon Speaker, the ANC-led government is guided by the six priorities of our manifesto, directed by our three GNU priorities, and informed by both the National and Provincial Development Plans, all aimed at improving the lives of our people. This august House, remains committed to driving programmes that foster inclusive growth, create jobs, reduce poverty, tackle the high cost of living, and build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

I reiterate my call to all those with skills, scattered across various places: come and help build your province of birth, or the province of your ancestors. Those villages without water and roads shaped who we are today. It is the schools without proper sanitation that laid the foundation for our ability to read and write, and it is in those clinics with cracked walls where we received our immunisations, escaping death from preventable childhood illnesses. It is time to give back, which is why I always say: "It takes a child to raise a village." I call on the sons and daughters of Limpopo to come

and help transform and improve your villages. It is time for all of us to come together and raise our villages.

I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Premier, for that comprehensive response to the debates.

Malibongwe! Wathint' abafazi!

Thank you very much. We will now proceed to the next item.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are there any announcements, Hon Chair of Chairs?

THE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Hon Speaker, Hon Premier, Members of the Executive Council, and Members of this august House, good morning.

I have a few announcements to make. The first one is to inform you that on your table, you will find a “love letter”, an envelope containing a programme of the Legislature’s activities. Please take a moment to review it.

Additionally, I would like to bring to the attention of honourable Members that, following the conclusion of today's debate on the Premier's official Opening Address and the previous responses to the observations made by honourable Members of this august House, we will proceed with the Second Reading: Presentation of Budget Votes and Schedules of the Limpopo Appropriation Bill 2024. Two Sittings are scheduled for next week, on 13 and 15 August, respectively, to provide MECs with the opportunity to present a synopsis of their Budget Votes.

This will be followed by debates on the Second Reading, scheduled for 20 and 22 August 2024. The Third Reading is scheduled for 27 August 2024.

Lastly, lunch will be served as usual. Bon appétit and bon voyage – safe travels.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Chair of Chairs. I see another hand. Hon Wilson, you are recognised.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Speaker and Members of this House. It is with great sadness that I announce the passing of Hon Doraine Chidi, who left us yesterday after a brief illness. She was deeply loved and respected by her colleagues, her constituencies, and the community.

Hon Doraine Chidi was highly qualified and held in high regard by all who knew her. At present, we do not have details regarding the funeral arrangements. As a member of a royal family, we will honour their customs and provide updates as we receive information from her family. We ask that you keep her in your prayers. May her beautiful soul rest in peace!

THE SPEAKER

It is indeed very sad news. In just two months, we have lost one of our own. I would like to take this opportunity to request that the House stand as we offer our condolences through a moment of silence, praying for comfort for the family of the Member, and remembering Hon Rachoene, who has lost his father. May we all rise to observe a moment of silence for the departed souls.

[SILENCE]

May their souls rest in peace! Thank you.

[SONG].

You may be seated, honourable Members. We will await further details and update the Members accordingly.

Thank you very much, honourable Member from the DA, for bringing this to our attention. It is indeed a difficult day for us after receiving such sad news. However, it is also the birthday of Hon Maila. As we wish him a happy birthday, just as we have wished other Members, including Hon Lebea, Hon Mdaka, Hon Ramathuba, Hon Maseko, Hon Nempumbuluni, Hon Mokoele, Hon Nenguba, and Hon Pheedi, my apologies if I have missed anyone. Let us sing them a happy birthday song.

[SONG]

9. ADJOURNMENT

The House is adjourned to Tuesday, 13 August 2024, at the Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber.

Thank you very much.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
TUESDAY, 13 AUGUST 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now take this opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you so much, we may now be seated.

Good morning. Hon Premier, honourable MECs and honourable Members, we take this opportunity to greet you this morning as we start with the Orders of the Day. In terms of our Order Paper, we are on item 2.

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Are there any motions without notice in terms of Rule 145? Hon Smalle, you are recognised.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Last night, the Programming Committee agreed to suspend items 2–5. That was the agreement in the Programming Committee. I don't know if it was communicated to you, but I just wanted to put it on record. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, I will ask the Deputy Speaker to confirm as the chair of the Programming Committee.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Yes, I confirm.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

[ITEMS 2–5 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

There was a hand from the EFF; they are okay. The House shouldn't be surprised because the matter of the EFF was resolved in the previous Sitting; the decision has not changed. If they continue to disobey the decorum of this House, the Ethics Committee will find its way of handling the matter. Today it is the second day, and they are repeating the same offence. [INTERJECTION]

MS MOGOANE

On a point of order, Hon Speaker!

THE SPEAKER

You are recognised, honourable Member.

MS MOGOANE

Thank you, Hon Speaker, and good morning. I just want to correct something. We don't have a problem with your ruling; we know what must happen if we are dissatisfied with your ruling. However, it would be wrong for you to say this is an issue of the EFF; it cannot be the issue of the EFF.

I am Hon Mogoane. You must wait! You must wait! You said we are disrespecting you while you are doing the same. How are you going to respect people as adults as old as you are? You are interjecting us, for what? If you wanted to address us on anything, it would only be correct for you to address us as individuals because I was not even here last week. For you to assume that we are doing it for the second time it would be wrong.

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Member, you are out of order, may you please sit down.

MS MOGOANE

Okay.

THE SPEAKER

The matter stands as I have ruled, that the previous Sitting made a decision, and the decision stands. We now proceed. [INTERJECTION]

MR MOLAPO

My hand is up.

THE SPEAKER

I am not going to recognise any Member anymore; the matter is not for debate.

MR MOLAPO

Do not suppress me.

THE SPEAKER

On which point are you standing?

MR MOLAPO

On a point of order.

THE SPEAKER

Please read the rule that you are raising a point of order on.

MR MOLAPO

Thank you very much; it is very surprising... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Which rule?

MR MOLAPO

I am rising on a point of order.

THE SPEAKER

We will not allow you, honourable Member, to degenerate this House.

MR MOLAPO

No, you are degenerating yourself; can you allow me to speak.

THE SPEAKER

We all have the rules, I want to focus on the point of order in terms of the rules.

MR MOLAPO

I am saying, I am rising on a point of order; allow me to explain the point of order I'm rising on.

THE SPEAKER

You can proceed.

MR MOLAPO

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, you said Hon Kgothatso Mogoane is out of order. Can you explain the point of order that you are raising on her. You cannot just say a person is out of order and take it as such. You need to explain why you are saying she is out of order. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

In terms of the Order Paper, we are now at item 6.

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER AND PAPERS

Are there any tablings of committee reports, other reports and papers? There are none. We will now proceed to item 7.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1 Second Reading: Presentation of Budget Votes and Schedule of the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B02-2024]

We shall now call upon the Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, to come and present the Budget Speech Vote 01: Office of the Premier. Honourable Premier, the stage is yours.

THE PREMIER

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

(Address by Dr P C Ramathuba, Premier of Limpopo)

Speaker of our Legislature, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje; Deputy Speaker of our Legislature, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the Legislature; our chairpersons of various committees; Members of the Legislature; leaders of political parties; members of the media; our acting DGs and acting HODs who are here, good morning.

Madam Speaker, we are presenting Budget Vote 01 during the August month, which in Tshivenda is called Thangule, in Sepedi is Phato, while in Xitsonga is Mhawuri. The simple interpretation, which is common amongst our three languages, is that this is the month of dispossession and month of getting rid of old chuff in preparation for rebirth in the subsequent months of September and October.

The wind that is associated with August often signifies a process of renewal and being re-energised. Legend has it that in Thangule, Phato or Mhawuri there were great expectations that change will happen. If it doesn't come naturally through the leaves falling, the wind will help in the process to speed up change.

It is not a coincidence that we celebrate Women's Month in August because we have come to associate it with women, our torchbearers who are change-makers in our society, bo-matswara-thipa-ka-bogaleng. That is why we are dedicating this Budget Vote to all the women who are here. Bare tsa etwa ke ya tsadi de ya mafolong.

The role of the Office of the Premier, Hon Speaker, is to provide strategic, ethical and innovative leadership. This is achieved through the mandate of the Office of the Premier to coordinate and support the provincial administration. We do this through key programmes, which are Corporate Management; Institutional Development and Support; and Planning, Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation.

This is a crucial task that for the next five years we should be able to point out as a hallmark of our administration.

Hon Speaker, we have made significant strides in financial management. I am proud to announce that the office has managed to resolve all the matters of emphasis which were raised by the Auditor-General and Internal Audit during the 2023/24 audit cycle. There were no issues which were raised in the recently completed audit cycle for 2023/24. The Auditor-General is yet to announce the audit outcome, but we are positive that the outcome will be a positive one.

The Office has also cleared all unwanted expenditures for prior years. On the other hand, all the Scopa resolutions for the office have been implemented.

During the reporting period, the office was able to successfully spend over 98,5% of its allocated Budget and to ensure that 100% of our supplier invoices were paid within the prescribed timeframe of 30 days.

We have also made strides in employment equity, with women representing 51% of senior management positions, an improvement from 48% and people living with disabilities at 3,2% exceeding the 2% target as stipulated by the employment equity legislation. As the Office of the Premier, there is a need to ensure that provincial departments are assisted to meet the same targets.

As part of digitising the province, the office has introduced the electronic recruitment and leave management systems. The electronic recruitment system will streamline the processes and improve turnaround times in filling of vacancies. The system is finalised and is currently being rolled out for the entire provincial administration.

The electronic leave management system is being rolled out to all provincial departments in the 2024/25 financial year. The system will do away with paper-based applications for leave and will yield positive results.

Madam Speaker, for the 2024/25 financial year, the office has been allocated a total of R506,2 million, a 10% increase from the previous year, with R84 million earmarked for provincial priorities.

Honourable Members, I am laughing because previously we would speak about R23 billion and now we are talking about R506 million.

Hon Speaker, this Budget will be prioritising water provision programmes, recognising the importance of water security in our communities and economic growth. The #HiNwaMati Friday programme will find expression when it is being implemented by the relevant department.

We must appreciate the role of monitoring and evaluation in our administration; it is nothing short of crucial, and this cannot be overemphasised. This is why, through consistent monitoring, the Office of the Premier can keep a close eye on the progress of all our government programmes.

These initiatives are to ensure that every step taken is measured, every resource is used effectively, and every challenge is identified properly – not only the #HiNwaMati Friday programme, equally the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone; Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park and Lebowakgomo Abattoir; and other catalytic projects that have been pronounced during the Opening Address.

We will make sure that we monitor them, and I want to emphasise that monitoring and evaluation is not merely about looking back at what we have achieved. It is about fostering a culture of continuous improvement within our administration and the community benefitting from service provision.

That is why, the Office of the Premier will continue to fulfil its strategic role in overseeing the implementation of government priorities across all departments.

It is with great privilege and responsibility that I stand before you today outlining our commitment to building a capable and developmental state in line with the priorities of the Seventh Administration. Central to our mandate is the imperative to enhance the capacity of the state, ensuring that our public service is equipped to deliver efficient and effective services to the people of Limpopo.

The Cabinet approved the National Framework Towards Professionalisation of the Public Sector on 19 October 2022, which seeks to create a state that better serves its citizens, one free from excessive political meddling and one where appointments are based on merit.

The framework recognises the importance of a professional and competent public sector in addressing complex societal challenges, promoting transparency and accountability, and fostering public trust. It emphasises the need for continuous learning, career development, and the adoption of professional standards and codes of conduct.

The Office of the Premier plays a pivotal role in building state capacity through various initiatives and partnerships aimed at strengthening the skills and capabilities of our public servants. One of our key focus areas is the induction of Members of the Executive Council, their offices, and critical officials, providing them with the necessary tools and knowledge to accomplish their roles effectively.

In collaboration with the Public Service Education and Training Authority, we have engaged the University of Stellenbosch to develop the Limpopo Public Service Sector

Skills Plan, which will serve as the foundation for the Limpopo Human Resource Development Public Sector Plan/Strategy.

This strategic approach will ensure that our province has the requisite capacity to meet the demands of public service delivery. Furthermore, we have initiated a scientific study to understand the factors driving the size of the cost of employees in Limpopo, with the aim of implementing shared services to streamline operations and reduce costs.

Consequence management directives and guidelines have been issued to strengthen accountability and build capacity within departments. The collaboration between the Office of the Premier and Provincial Treasury is geared towards supporting departments in executing their mandates effectively, while ensuring that vacant heads of department positions are filled promptly.

The five vacant heads of Department positions have been advertised and are closing on 17 August 2024, thus enabling them to be filled promptly.

As we forge ahead in our mission to build a capable and developmental state, I urge all stakeholders to join hands in realising our vision of a more efficient, transparent, and responsive public service. Together, we can propel Limpopo towards a brighter future where every citizen benefits from a government that is equipped to meet their needs.

Hon Speaker, in our quest for economic sustainability, we have focused on ensuring that our provincial business enterprises, or Schedule 3D entities, are self-sustainable. Following the adoption of Scopa resolutions, we have developed and implemented a turnaround strategy, guided by a multi-stakeholder steering committee chaired by the Director-General.

Hon Speaker, our office has been actively working towards enhancing the quality of life for vulnerable groups, including women, youth, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and military veterans. Efforts to support military veterans have also been intensified, with the military veterans' development plan being a focal point in our agenda.

Madam Speaker, the importance of international relations in advancing the socioeconomic development agenda of the Limpopo province cannot be overemphasised. As we navigate the complexities of a globalised world, it is imperative that we leverage strategic partnerships and collaborations to unlock opportunities for growth.

The establishment of Aids councils across all districts and municipalities, in alignment with the South African National Aids Council guidelines, demonstrates effective local governance and community engagement towards an HIV-free generation and stand against stigma.

I am pleased to announce that the province has concluded the development of the 30-year review document.

Equally important, we have commenced with the administrative process of crafting Limpopo Development Plan, with a clear roadmap in place to guide us through this crucial endeavour. The process is set to conclude in February 2025.

Let me conclude by saying, our journey towards a more efficient, accountable, and service-oriented public administration is on course. The initiatives outlined today are a testament to our commitment to the people of Limpopo, and we shall strive towards making each a reality to improve the lives of our people. As we work together to do more, let us all focus our minds and energies towards building a better Limpopo. Let us continue to shape Limpopo that is prosperous, inclusive, nonracist, nonsexist and, most importantly, reflective of the aspirations of all its citizens.

It is my honour to table before this august House, the 2024/25 Budget Vote 01 of the Office of the Premier for appropriation.

The medium-term estimates are as follows: 2024/25 is R506,194 million; 2025/26 is R515,450 million; and 2026/27 is R533,515 million.

Earmarked projects, which I will not mention all of them, include shared disaster recovery dataline, which is R3,5 million; enterprise content management, R20 million; digital signature, R3,2 million. The total allocation in terms of the MTEF period is R84,144 million for 2024/25, R72,666 million for the 2025/26 financial year, and R73,506 million for 2026/27.

I thank you, Madam Speaker. Ndo livhuwa. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Premier, you have set the right precedent. I think the honourable MECs are now in trouble; the Hon Premier has managed her time so well. Thank you very much, Hon Premier.

The Budget Speech together with its Annual Performance Plan of Vote 01 is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration for consideration and report back to the House.

We shall now call upon the MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Mahoai K E to present the Budget Speech for Vote 05: Department of Provincial Treasury. Over to you, honourable MEC.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

BUDGET SPEECH FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL TREASURY

(Address by Mr K E Mahoai, MEC for Provincial Treasury)

Speaker of our provincial Legislature, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje; Deputy Speaker of the Legislature, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Hon Premier of our province, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; my fellow honourable Members of the Executive Council; honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature in your various capacities: Chief Whip, Deputy Chief Whip, Chair of Chairs; Director-General of the province and all heads of

department in all your proxies; all guests present; ladies and gentlemen, good morning. Avuxeni.

It is with great honour and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand here before this august House today to deliver a brief of a Provincial Treasury Vote 05, Budget of the Seventh Administration. While this occasion marks the beginning of another era, it is equally important for me to acknowledge the efforts of all my eight predecessors, and Hon Sekoati in particular, who all ensured that the Limpopo Provincial Treasury performs as expected and I inherit a department that is distinguished by the reputation of sound financial management and accountability – the legacy that we are proud of.

This new chapter of the administration that we have entered is defined by a renewed commitment to transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility. With unequivocal marching orders from both President Ramaphosa and Premier Ramathuba, we are tasked with continuing to pursue programmes that will foster inclusive economic growth and employment equity; protect and uphold the hard-won rights of workers; and continually strive to improve their working conditions. The President's vision in this regard is clear: "Inclusive growth demands that we affirm the position of women and youth in the economy."

This mandate serves as our guiding principle as we work to build a more equitable and prosperous future for all. As we embark on this journey, we also pledge to maintain the good audit profile of our department and pride ourselves that from the look of things, we will be able to restore it to its former glory of clean audits. This is a commitment not only to financial rectitude but also to the people of Limpopo, as we recognise that the trust bestowed upon us by the citizens is very paramount to us. We, therefore, undertake to rebuild that trust through decisive actions, corrective measures, and an unwavering focus on accountability.

Hon Speaker, allow me to table the 2024/25 Budget Vote 05 of the Limpopo Provincial Treasury for consideration by this august House. Our overall Budget for Vote 05 has been allocated at an amount of R478 million, which is an increase of 4,5% when compared to the Main Appropriation of R457,7 million tabled for the previous financial year.

The departmental economic classification allocation is thus as follows:

- Compensation of employees increases to R337,9 million in the current financial year and this allocation will be used to fund current filled posts and reprioritised critical vacant posts.
- Goods and services increases by 10,9% from R115,9 million in 2023/24 to R128,7 million in the current financial year, also due to reprioritisation of the budget to fund contractual obligations and key accounts.
- Transfer and subsidies increases to R4,8 million in the current financial year due to an increased number of officials that are due to retire during the current financial year.

- Payment for capital assets decreases by 21,2% from R8,4 million in 2023/24 to R6,6 million in the current financial year and will then increase over the MTEF period to R12,9 million in 2026/27. The allocation will cater for the procurement of IT equipment and other necessary tools of trade.

The key focus in the current financial year remains to strengthen the Provincial Treasury to improve its strategies to support departments, municipalities, and public entities as well as exercise control over the implementation of the provincial Budget, among others. This is its statutory obligation. This is meant to ensure that we improve compliance to the PFMA, MFMA and other policies and legislations, hence our commitment to rebuilding the public trust.

Regarding own revenue generation, a very thorny subject indeed, the Provincial Treasury continues to support departments and public entities in maximising provincial own revenue collection and implementing the Provincial Revenue Enhancement and Retention Strategy.

Quarterly bilateral meetings will continue to be held to monitor progress of annual target collections and identify new revenue collection opportunities. Provincial Treasury aims to collect R320 million in the current financial year, growing to R349,5 million over the MTEF period, with the primary source being interest received on positive cash balances.

Managing provincial spending on compensation of employees is another cost driver that needs care. The provincial Personnel Management Framework adopted by Limpopo Provincial Executive Council in 2016 has proved to be very instrumental in ensuring that only critical posts are filled and that such appointments are restricted within the available resources, leading to a reduction in the provincial wage bill to 64,7% of the total provincial adjusted Budget in 2023/24, down from over 72% in previous years.

Despite this notable progress, the expenditure on compensation of employees remains high compared to the national average of 61%, indicating a need for continued efforts to further manage this spending trend.

The national fiscal consolidation over the MTEF period requires the Provincial Treasury to maintain strategies to curb compensation of employees spending. In response thereto, Provincial Treasury, as the Premier has also alluded thereto, is collaborating with the Office of the Premier and the result is that there has been a review process for implementation in the current financial year and over the MTEF period. The framework was also reviewed to expedite the turnaround time in the filing of vacant funded critical posts within a reasonable period.

On the other hand, we continue to have bilateral meetings to assess the financial performance of provincial departments and public entities. The Provincial Treasury gives support to help these departments and public entities submit catch-up plans to ensure funds are spent at the end of each financial year and on intended programmes and projects, especially earmarked funds and conditional grants.

As a result, spending on conditional grants improved to 98,2% by the end of this previous financial year, compared to 96,1% in the previous year, same period.

Another important matter is support to municipalities. Provincial Treasury has beefed up personnel in its Municipal Finance Component to ensure that we improve our capacity and performance to support municipalities in the 2024/25 financial year. In this regard, a support programme has already commenced during the third quarter of the previous financial year, as we build our capacity and capability.

We also continue to work closely with the department of CoGHSTA and the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) to reform the quarterly Municipal Infrastructure Grant Forum in order to start focusing more on basic services such as water, especially other areas where municipalities have to play their key role.

Honourable Members, the budget details of our department are as follows:

Our budget structure is composed of five programmes that operate as branches of the department , and their allocations are outlined as follows:

In the interest of time, I will just pick up the most salient parts of thereof.

Programme 1, Administration, is allocated R207,8 million to provide effective and efficient strategic management, administrative support, and sound financial management to the Provincial Treasury. Through this programme, the department has appointed 30 interns for 24 months and appointed another 21 experiential learners, whose stipend is paid through Sector Education and Training Authorities.

We continue to implement the Business Continuity Plan, which takes a comprehensive approach to identify potential threats to the department and institution. This plan provides a framework for building resilience and ensuring an effective response, safeguarding the interest of the department's key stakeholders.

Programme 2, Sustainable Resources Management, receives an allocation of R80,8 million and is used to fund financial resource allocation, manage the provincial budget, as well as support and monitor provincial departments.

Programme 3, Assets and Liabilities Management, receives an allocation of only R49,7 million. The allocation will be used to provide policy direction and facilitate the effective and efficient management of assets, liabilities, and provincial supply chain management processes in all our departments and public entities.

Supply chain management remains one of the important instruments in the department which is used to transform the provincial economic patterns by encouraging departments and public entities to ensure that they prioritise and support procurement from local SMMEs, as well as encouraging participation by historically disadvantaged individuals and groups in the provincial supply chain opportunities.

Together with our team of capable men and women in the department, Hon Premier, we are sure that the target to achieve 30% procurement spend to support local production by SMMEs and cooperatives, as well as the payment of suppliers within 30

days that you mandated us with during the Opening Address will surely be realised without fail.

Programme 4 goes to Financial Governance, and it receives an allocation of R81,3 million. The unit's main purpose is to build trust among stakeholders by enhancing accountability and compliance with financial norms and standards.

Hon Speaker, I am pleased to announce that with the support of this Financial Governance Unit, the province is improving its audit profile. In this regard, the province revised the Limpopo 2025 Audit Improvement Strategy to identify control deficiencies and proposed measures to attain and retain clean audit outcomes in the coming and future audit cycles.

The last programme is Shared Provincial Internal Audit, and I must elaborate a little bit on this because globally, centralisation of audit functions has been recognised as the best practice in public sector governance, leading to improved oversight and enhanced capacity to detect and prevent financial irregularities.

This is the case with the provincial government, and I am imploring my colleague that we should look into the municipal or local government sphere. Why do I say so? It is because it is clear that the shared provincial internal audit service has done wonders, and it continues to do wonders, and it is done on a central basis.

Therefore, during this current financial year, learners will be recruited on the Internal Auditor Technician Programme, facilitated by the Institute of Internal Auditors. After completing this programme, these learners will be ready for the job market. We say this because it is one way of increasing capacity where we can so that we can have more qualified and competent employees to support this shared service of internal auditors.

As I conclude, Hon Speaker, allow me to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Provincial Treasury staff led by the HOD, Mr Gavin Pratt, for their firm commitment and affirmation to support this Seventh Administration. I can confidently say to team Provincial Treasury, their dedication is the cornerstone of our collective success.

Ndza khensa. Ke a leboga. Ndo livhuwa. Dankie. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, MEC, Hon Mahoai K.

The Budget Speech Vote 05, together with its Annual Performance Plan, is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration and report back to the House.

Those that are following have seen the trend; the Hon Premier has started and the MEC for Provincial Treasury followed. We shall see. [LAUGHTER]

We shall now call upon the MEC, Hon Lerule-Ramakhanya M, to present the Budget Speech Vote 03: Department of Education.

It's over to you, MEC.

THE MEC FOR EDUCATION

BUDGET SPEECH FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(Address by Ms M M Lerule-Ramakhanya, MEC for Education)

Thank you, Hon Speaker, at least you gave my five minutes. The directive from the Premier is do not cut corners; present the department as it is.

Speaker, Hon Makhurupetje; Deputy Speaker, Hon Mamorobela; our Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; colleagues in the Executive Council; Members of our Provincial Legislature; chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Education; Chair of Chairs; leadership of the African National Congress; leadership of the opposition parties in this House; stakeholders in education sector; acting HOD of the department and other members of team education who are here; distinguished guests; members of the media, ndi matsheloni.

Hon Speaker, we come together here today, fully aware of the fact that the people of our province, the country, and the diaspora have commemorated the heroines of 1956. In the same vein today, we should give recognition to all young and old women who continue to play a critical role in their various roles in our society. These women that we continue to celebrate are members of our school governing bodies.

Honourable Members, we are meeting here again fully aware of the fact that our learners and educators have just represented the people of our province on the national stage of school choir competition.

I am thrilled to announce that our school choirs have made us proud in the recent competition, for which we obtained six positions as compared to last year when we had two positions obtained by two schools. The ABC Motsepe South African School Eisteddfod (SASCE) National Championships were held from 07 to 10 August in Gauteng. I want to announce that our learners and educators have made us proud of this occasion.

Hon Speaker, allow me to commend all the schools that participated in this competition and took us to the national stage. I want to convey my special congratulatory messages to the following schools that obtained different positions in different categories:

- Sepedi Primary School, position 1 in Folklore;
- Rethabile Primary School, position 3 in Mixed Choirs;
- Setotolwane Primary School, position 2 in Any Voice Combination;
- Makgoka High School, position 3 in Tenor;
- Tjetje Secondary School, position 1 in Folklore; and
- Modubatse Secondary School, position 3.

It is my sincere gratitude; thank you so much. I want to congratulate team Education Limpopo for delivering us this overwhelming victory.

In our programme of reading with understanding, Hon Speaker, to make reading enjoyable, we have created reading corners in all our primary schools in the province. Reading corners are used as an enrichment centre for learners who struggle to read with understanding.

We also provided 45 433 readers in English, Sepedi, isiZulu and isiNdebele in primary schools. We have introduced digitisation (reading assistive technology) and e-books to enhance reading capabilities to learners with reading problems.

With regard to the 2024 mid-year NSC performance, yesterday we had a privilege to be honoured by the presence of our Premier on the occasion of a meet-and-greet session with all our high school principals, circuit managers, and district directors from across the length and breadth of Limpopo province. With regard to the presentation made on learners' performance of both term 1 and term 2, the Premier can attest that, we are moving in the right direction for the 2024 academic year.

We can confirm that we no longer confide in "thinking inside the box", but indeed, Hon Premier, "we are kicking the box". The school calendar year is at an advanced stage, and we had an opportunity to interact with our district teams to check and also make sure that truly no sunrise will find us where sunset left us.

On e-learning, Hon Speaker, we are invested in our quest towards a paperless strategy. This is observable in our aggressive roll-out of tablets for our Grades 1–8 for the 2024 cohort of learners. For the 2024 budget, we must re-emphasise that we intend to procure tablets for the FET band, especially for Grades 10 and 11. We have witnessed the magnificent developments of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and now into the Fifth Industrial Revolution, which will require commitment from us in ensuring that we ready our learners to compete with the best of the best in the world.

We can confirm that Mark Shuttleworth and Elon Musk are not accidents by history but products of deliberate efforts that we embedded in the system of teaching that they were privileged to enjoy. We remain ambitious in our request for R300 million for e-learning strategy towards procurement of tablets even though we have accepted the R100 million granted, as we hope.

The Honourable Premier has announced the priorities for the province in the coming five years, and the foundation of that will be advanced technological pedagogical prowess built by the department.

On inclusive education, honourable Members, disability is not inability. With these words, we want to ask for your continued support of our learners living with disabilities. Today I am wearing a hat from Grace and Hope Special School made by learners with disability, hence we say disability is not inability. [APPLAUSE]

For them to perform well, we ought to continue providing them with resources that will aid them in their day-to-day activities. When we visited various schools, we saw how gifted they are in creating beautiful artefacts.

The R100 million put aside in the intervention of this critical area will go a long way in paving an accessible environment for our learners and educators alike. Like the poem done by one of our learners, Hon Premier, they said, “I am not a product of witchcraft but just born differently.”

On capacity building of SMTs in underperforming schools, Hon Speaker, over the years we have invested in capacitating staff at all levels for better results. Looking forward, in the 2024/25 financial year, the R23 million will continue servicing the current cohort of 332 interns while beginning the processes of recruiting a new cohort for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.

The amount of R13,179 million has been set aside for the training of administrative support staff at all levels; R42,9 million has been set aside for the training of different categories of educators; and R21,4 million has been set aside for the Initial Teacher Education, including investing in the Early Childhood Development sector and our ECD Practitioners.

On the educator-post basket and school-based promotion posts, the department has, despite the challenging and unfavourable economic conditions, retained in the 2024 academic year the post basket of 51 752 posts for the past eight academic years. It is worth noting that the Limpopo Provincial Treasury had approved the filling of 2 550 promotion posts in schools, 506 principals, 400 deputy principals and 1 644 departmental heads.

It is my pleasure to announce to the House that as the department, we have advertised these very important posts.

Honourable Speaker, the department continues to build capability within the Infrastructure and Physical Resource Unit by recruiting key professionals to the units.

On Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign – Stakeholder Management, the province will be hosting the QLTC inter-provincial meeting in the first week of September. This is a body that needs all our stakeholders to participate in so that we are able to create conducive environments for teaching and learning.

On Early Childhood Development Centres and Funding and Registration of ECD Centres, Early Childhood Development remains a top education priority of the government for 2024. We continue to draw our attention on expanding access to early childhood development. We continue to place a huge focus on the integration of our happy feet because we appreciate the need to nurture them whilst they are still young.

On our HIV and Aids Life Skills programme, honourable Members, the prevention and reduction of learner pregnancy, prevention of bullying and substance abuse, and prevention of GBV remain critical. As such, we continue to allocate resources to the programme to combat the ills our children find themselves entangled in. Care and support for teaching and learning, and prevention of learner suicide will help us to manage the rates undesirable as any one life lost is one too many.

With regard to our National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), the department is continuing with the school nutrition programme for learners from quantiles 1–3 schools

in the province. Since the implementation of the NSNP, learner attendance and punctuality improvement has been recorded.

Hon Speaker, part of the NSNP objective is to encourage schools to advance sustainable food production. This is done through the collaboration with the department of agriculture. Schools that participate in this programme are encouraged to enter the best school awards competition which is hosted from district to national level.

On scholar transport, we reported in the 2023/24 budget, that the department provided learner transport to a total of 59 905 learners across the Limpopo province. The numbers have since increased to 70 000 learners in this academic year.

The programme continues in assisting the minimisation of absenteeism and late coming. The budget allocation of just over R361,6 million for the 2024/25 academic year.

On infrastructure provisioning, I must indicate to honourable Members that infrastructure is very key to our mandate. It is worth emphasising that the Hon Premier in her speech in this august House indicated that the provision of infrastructure will enable us to focus more on teaching and learning.

We continue to make huge progress in some of the schools that were provided with infrastructure. The Education Infrastructure Grant budget allocated for infrastructure development in this financial year is R1,4 billion. The department has received an additional of R100 million to attend to storm-damaged schools. The total infrastructure development budget amounts to R1,533 billion, that is for enhancement of our teaching and learning. The department has received an additional allocation of R89 million as part of the performance-based incentive system. The allocation will be used to provide the much-needed infrastructure upgrades at schools.

Hon Speaker, it is my singular honour to present to you the 2024/25 Vote 03: Budget for the Limpopo Department of Education. The department received a total of Budget of R40,029 billion in the 2024/25 financial year, which is made up of equitable share of R35,654 billion, conditional grant of R3,614 billion, and own revenue of R760,498 million. This represents an increase of 2,5% of R992,6 million from R39,037 billion adjusted appropriations in 2023/24.

The allocation has been broken down per economic classification item as follows:

- Compensation of employees : R30,641 billion;
- Goods and services : R4,333 billion;
- Transfer and subsidies : R3,6 billion; and
- Payment for capital assets : R1,4 billion, respectively.

The compensation of employees' item receives the biggest share of 76,5 % of the total departmental Budget for both equitable share and conditional grant. Equitable share CoE accounts for R30,5 billion, which is R85,6 billion of the total equitable allocation of R35,654 billion. Out of this amount, R27,773 billion or 90,9% is meant for educators' salaries.

Let me take this opportunity once again to thank all the stakeholders in the sector who have been working tirelessly to support us to realise our mandate in delivering quality basic education to all our children in the province and the sector unions for your unwavering support and the journey we travelled together in the past two years. We are today walking tall because of your contribution and interest in what the education sector does in the Limpopo province.

I, therefore, submit, Hon Speaker. Thank you. Ndo livhuwa. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Indeed, you can hear that this department has more than R40 billion appropriation. Thank you so much, MEC; the Budget Speech together with its Annual Performance Plan Vote 03... [NOISE] Order, Members! Order! I haven't called anyone yet. MEC Susan Mathye, order in the House! Thank you so much.

We will refer the Budget Speech Vote 03 and its Annual Performance Plan to the Portfolio Committee on Education for consideration and report back to the House.

We shall now call upon the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Hon Nakedi Kekana to present the Budget Speech Vote 04: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Over to you, honourable MEC.

THE MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

BUDGET SPEECH FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

(Address by Ms N G Kekana, MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development)

Speaker of the Legislature, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the Legislature, Hon Essop Mokgonyana; Chair of Chairs... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

My apologies, honourable MEC. Honourable Members, we have welcomed our guest, but we are being disrupted by those who are taking pictures and videos. Please let's respect the House. You are warmly welcome as our guests, but as and when you take pictures, you are interrupting the proceedings of the House. Thank you. Honourable MEC, you can proceed.

THE MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

...honourable Members of the Legislature; Leader of the Opposition, Hon Lawrence Mapoulo; our esteemed traditional leaders; Director-General; head of department; members of the media and business communities, including members of the

commercial farmers present here; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, thobela.

I stand before you today, not so new in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Weeks have gone by, and we can safely state that we have adjusted the machinery, and we are working as oiled as this machinery could be. In the heart of Limpopo's vast and diverse landscape lies an intrinsic part of its identity, agriculture.

This sector not only feeds the nation but also supports a significant portion of the population, underscoring its pivotal role in ensuring food security and rural development. As Nelson Mandela famously said: "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

This sentiment is particularly resonant when considering the challenges faced by South Africa's agricultural sector and the broader rural economy. That came because of the impact of COVID-19 and the recent disasters that are continuing to make sure that the agricultural sector bears the brand.

Hon Speaker, Agriculture has long been the backbone of Limpopo's society, deeply rooted in its history and cultural fabric. The Seventh Administration under President Cyril Ramaphosa and the Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, has recognised this urgency and is poised to focus on crucial areas such as job creation, business sustainability, agroprocessing, and farmer aid.

We are now living in times of unity in the country, that which the governance forces us to work together for the betterment of our country. In this National Government of Unity, we look to drive inclusive growth and job creation, reduce poverty and tackle the high costs of living, while at the same time, building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

Hon Speaker, just a fortnight ago, the Premier gave our department a directive that it leads the reopening of the Lebowa kgomo Chicken Abattoir urgently. Together with my Economic Development Environment and Tourism counterpart, Hon Matibe Tshitereke, it will happen. We have visited the abattoir, and we can attest to that. We are proudly saying that the work is well underway to ensure the reopening before December of this year. [APPLAUSE]

In anticipation of this beautiful project that will now see the light of day, I have instructed the department to engage in a broiler house assessment programme which has been carried out within a 100 km radius of the abattoir. Its outcome indicates that the total cost needed to refurbish government broilers to full functionality is estimated at R13 million, and the programme will thus benefit existing broilers in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality at large, creating at least 1 000 jobs, while at the same time increasing business for same broilers.

Together with the Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, we are going to meet Minister Steenhuisen today, and we are going to highlight this matter so that he can assist us with funds. [APPLAUSE]

The Seventh Administration under President Cyril Ramaphosa has placed a strong emphasis on revitalising the agricultural sector and rural economy.

Hon Speaker, the fruit and vegetables of Limpopo form an important part of South Africa's export basket. More than 45% of the annual turnover of the Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market originates from Limpopo province. The province is the biggest producer of avocados. Of the current crop of about 120 000 cartons per year countrywide, about half is produced in two Limpopo regions, i.e., Letaba and Tzaneen. Exports are rising exponentially.

In response to this demand, and the potential of the Chinese market, almost 1 000 hectares per year of new land is being planted with avocados and largely coming from Limpopo. We have a memorandum of understanding signed with the Asian market in relation to the export of the avocados and red meat.

In the same breath, the same amount of new macadamia planting is underway every year, according to Macadamias South Africa. The other big sellers are mangoes and tomatoes. Limpopo grows three quarters of South Africa's mangoes and two-thirds of its tomatoes. Capricorn District has potatoes in abundance, while Vhembe District in the north specialises in citrus and subtropical fruits together with Mopani District while Sekhukhune District produces grain and cottons.

Hon Speaker, Our Sustainable Resource Management programme is allocated an amount of 125 million for the 2024/25 financial year. This programme remains the cornerstone of agricultural practices since it is about caring for the very soil agriculture is derived from and the provision of infrastructure to support farming activities.

As part of investment in infrastructure, the department will implement 54 agricultural projects, which include livestock, water and other agricultural inputs. In 2024/25, a total of 36 irrigation projects will be implemented, and 257 smallholder producers will benefit from this programme.

Regarding the revitalisation of small-scale irrigation schemes, we pronounced in the 2023/24 Budget Speech that notable progress had been made in four irrigation schemes through the revitalisation of infrastructure development. The development of Mogalatšane, in Sekhukhune, irrigation scheme infrastructure is 100% complete and 40 hectares are now planted with cotton.

Significant progress has been achieved at Hereford Irrigation Scheme, owned by Tafelkop Farmers Association. A total of 15 producers, each received full support package of irrigation scheme and other agricultural inputs that will assist them to comply with South African GAP market requirements. This intervention by the department has resulted in the creation of 64 permanent jobs and 320 seasonal jobs. Two schemes could not be implemented due to community conflicts.

The department will rehabilitate about 1 400 hectares of degradation, clear 1 400 hectares from alien and invasive plants. Vhumatshelo Holdings and Projects is one of those that we have supported, and they are doing very well to make sure that agriculture conservation is preserved, and it is owned by youth for that matter. Through the policy advocacy of our national department, the department of Agriculture, Land

Reform and Rural Development, within the auspices of the Land Care conditional grant, has yielded the benefits of increased production and environmental management.

The department has allocated R13,6 million rand to Land Care to spur efforts of combating soil erosion, and thus improving agricultural productivity. Likewise, the MEC for Education who came before me has said on the issue of investing on ECD, we will make sure that as part of the Land Care, we manage the environment and avoid all negative impact that comes as a result of climate change. We will start with the programme at the ECD level, and I'll be working with the MEC for Education.

As highlighted, one of the strategic priorities is that of having a radical investment in job creation. In responding to the investment of jobs, reduction of poverty and tackling the cost of living, we will make sure that within the next 5 years, we create 2500 job opportunities as alluded to by the President of this country.

The department is utilising the expanded public works programme conditional grant to bridge the gap of unemployment through creation of temporary work opportunities and training. To continue this quest, the department was allocated R4,753 million incentive allocation for 2024/25 with the target of creating 1 520 job opportunities.

Madam Speaker, Our Agriculture Development and Farmer Support programme has been allocated R759,217 million, which constitutes 42,6% of the departmental Budget.

Smallholder producers to the total of 2 795 will be supported and 10 370 subsistence farmers will be supported. A smallholder producer is defined as an individual or business entity, and their support will include, amongst others, on and off farm infrastructure, technical and advisory services and development training.

Hon Speaker, the department has intensified its effort to develop the skills and knowledge required for a successful agricultural sector. Through the agricultural graduates' programme, a total of 140 agricultural graduates were appointed and placed on 35 smallholder and commercial projects across the province. A further 300 graduates, in responding to the quest for making sure that the issue of unemployment, which is hurting our youth, the unemployed graduates specifically, were placed on farms through a collaborative partnership with Brucol Global.

Tumiso Ngoepe from GaMatlala, who graduated from Sir Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural High School in 2005 and was awarded a bursary by the department to study Agricultural Engineering, holds an honours degree attained in 2010, and she has been a professional engineer since 2020. Tumiso was the first female engineer to be appointed by the department in 2011. She is the brain behind Rahlagane Table Grapes project design and implementation in GaSekhukhune, ga bo Hon Bella Kupa and Jerry Maseko.

Hon Speaker, in responding to building a capable, ethical and developmental state, the department is marching towards achieving this uncompromising priority. The department has already implemented the functional organisational structure. The purpose of the review was to reposition the department to respond to the needs of the farming community by placing the right people with required skills like Tumiso, as I've

already indicated, qualifications and adequate requirements to boost our service delivery model of agroecological zones.

Madam Speaker, we had our challenges in recent days, among them, the much-talked about black frost and veld fires. Provincial Disaster Management Centre has requested the head of the National Disaster Management Centre to classify veldfire and black frost damage in line with section 23(1)(b) of the Disaster Management Act, and section 12(1)(a) as a provincial disaster.

On 24 July, the Provincial Disaster Management Centre presented the black frost and veld fires incidents at the National Joint Coordination Committee to inform the members about the damage based on the preliminary report.

Subsequently, as I'm standing here, our department has consolidated the damage report on black frost representing a significant number of farmers affected. A signed report will be sent to the Provincial Disaster Management Centre today to enable the provincial head of the centre to send to their national counterpart for further classification. Once that is finalised to the full satisfaction of the committee, it is then that the Premier may declare a disaster.

Honourable Members, to mitigate such risks, we are encouraging the farmers, especially the commercial farmers, to insure their crops as per industry standards. We hopeful of that we will have positive outcomes so that the resources could be able to assist the farmers who lost dearly, some of whom are still recovering from COVID-19, and ultimately put on the cushion for consumers who may later feel the brunt with escalated prices and job losses.

Hon Speaker, the department continues to enhance and improve the quality services in ensuring good governance guided by the national framework towards professionalisation of public services. We took cognisance of the elements of professional conduct as captured in the Batho Pele principles. During the 2023/24 financial year, the department received unqualified audit opinion. The action plan for 2024/25 has been developed to ensure credible, reliable performance reporting against predetermined objectives and compliance.

Hon Speaker, the department continues to enhance and improve the quality service in ensuring good governance guided by the national framework. As a result of the cannabis industry developments, the department is continuing to unlock the potential of the cannabis industry in the Limpopo province. The Limpopo Cannabis Forum has been established, and this brings all stakeholders together, including the law enforcement agencies.

Hon Speaker, the Veterinary Services programme has been allocated R216,059 million. This budget allocation will assist in fighting food-and-mouth disease. I am delighted to report to this august House that the last reported case of food-and-mouth disease outbreak in the province was in 2019. Since 2022 to date, there has been no reported case of food-and-mouth disease in Limpopo province. The department, through Veterinary Services, has managed to control the spread of foot-and-mouth disease through vaccination and strict animal movement control in the red line zones,

especially in Mopani and Vhembe, because they are the ones closer to Kruger National Park and the boarder gates of Mozambique.

I, therefore, wish to make a clarion call to all farmers, livestock owners and the people of the province to stay on high alert and know how to recognise food-and-mouth disease symptoms and implement strong biosecurity measures.

Hon Speaker, in support of the operation thibela malwetši temong initiative to manage crop and animal disease, the department will continue to implement biosecurity measures to control both crop and livestock diseases. You'll see me there every Friday. The department has allocated R4,9 million under the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programmes Crop Protection pillar aimed at supporting an estimated 800 farmers.

Madam Speaker, In the fight against stock theft, we would like to reiterate our commitment to working with the South African Police Service and Organised Agriculture to fight the stock theft scourge. We have strong collaborations with SAPS Stock Theft Unit, and we envisage the establishment of one livestock pound in Mopani District – Greater Letaba Municipality – as one of the stock theft hot spot areas.

Agricultural Education and Training has been allocated R149,031 million for the two colleges of agriculture in the province, being Madzivhandila and Tompi Seleka.

In the 2024/25 financial year, the Agricultural Economics Services programme has been allocated R68,414 million to provide timely and relevant agricultural economic services to the sector in support of sustainable agricultural and agribusiness development to increase economic growth, which will then assist in making sure that jobs are created, and we address the triple challenges that we are facing.

RAAVC projects are under various stages of implementation with over 300 jobs created and about 1 000 000 beneficiaries benefiting from the initiative. The 2024/25 RAAVC projects are a combination of continued projects as multiyear projects and new ones, which are as follows:

Majeje Citrus in Mopani District, which is a R130 million rand programme. In conjunction with the private sector, a total area of 466 hectares has been debushed in this project, and the solar plant and other agricultural inputs were supported to that project.

Hon Speaker, mošomo o tšhaba diatla. Premier, dilo di tšhentšhitše. Hydrological assessment at Zebediela Estate in Capricorn District, as you have mentioned in your address, has been completed and the refurbishment of water infrastructure will continue during the 2024/25 financial year with the allocated budget of R3 million.

The revitalisation of Zebediela Estate is gaining momentum with the imminent finalisation of the costed agriculture master plan. It is the intent of the department to explore the possibility of submitting the implementation of the master plan as regards the infrastructure development to the budget facility for infrastructure at National Treasury for consideration.

Madam Speaker, Monyetla Hatchery in Modimolle District is allocated R10 million and will be developed in line with the white meat cluster. Kgarose Kgaros is looking into agroprocessing in Capricorn District, and R4 million has been set aside, and this project is the project that is implementing the agroprocessing. I can attest that this morning I've eaten the yoghurt that is processed out of the sweet potatoes.

The department is in the process of developing and implementing a model to cluster and focus on RAAVC projects per district per financial year to maximise impact. As regards access to markets, which is important, the department is continuing to work with the Perishable Products Export Control Board to audit farms for South African Global Gap (Good Agricultural Practices) compliance purposes.

Through the 2023 BRICS Summit, delegates from Saudi Arabia, China and Iran visited South Africa to audit facilities to export meat to their countries. All three countries have opened the markets for the exportation of South African beef. Only the food-and-mouth disease control areas were excluded then, but now that we have complied with Gap practices, all the districts in the province are now free from food-and-mouth disease.

The department continues to integrate rural development as a cross-cutting element of all the programmes and projects to deal with rural poverty effectively through an integrated agrarian transformation and the strategic investment in agricultural infrastructure that will benefit farmers in rural communities. There is R6,287 million to cater for administration and coordination of rural development activities that have been set aside.

Madam Speaker, following the constituting of the Seventh Administration the department continues to enhance and improve the quality services in ensuring good governance guided by the national framework.

In conclusion, the path forward for South African agriculture and rural development involves a concerted effort to address historical injustices, support smallholder farmers, and promote sustainable practices.

It is worth noting that agriculture as a school subject of choice is beginning to take the spotlight among the new generation across the province. This global school subject has long been termed too "unattractive and for the lower class and not for the youth". We have taken a stance to make it fashionable and trendy to the youth.

In 2024/25, the other two projects will also be supported: Shadtonez Project, led by a woman, will be supported with the development of 10 hectares and other agricultural inputs.

Let me give the summary of the 2024/25 budget allocation. To implement our strategic priorities, the department's Main Appropriation for 2024/25 amounts to R1,782 billion. This is an increase from R11,8 million or 0,7% from the 2023/24 financial year.

I wish to extend my sincere thank you to the chairperson, the Acting Head of Department Mr Jethro Nowata, the chief director, together with team Agriculture and the ANC as the organisation that deployed me to this position, including my family.

So, the Budget for the 2024/25 financial year for Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is R1,782,612 with equitable share of R1,461,652 million and the conditional grant of R320,960 million, which makes the total of R1,782,612 billion. I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, ge ba lema gora go re, re tlile go ba le dijo. The Budget Speech together with the Annual Performance Plan is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development for consideration and report back to the House.

Thank you so much. We now proceed to item 7.1.5. We shall now call upon the MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Hon Tshitereke Matibe, to present the Budget Speech for Vote 06: Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism.

Over to you, Hon Baldwin Tshitereke Matibe.

THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

BUDGET SPEECH FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

(Address by Mr T B Matibe, MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism)

Thank you so much, Hon Speaker, Makoma Makhurupetje; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Hon Premier; Members of the Executive Council; honourable Members; Chief Whip; leadership of the opposition; distinguished guests; members of the media. Ndaa.

Allow me to take this opportunity on my maiden address to this august House as MEC for LEDET to express my profound honour and gratitude to our Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba. The African National Congress and the wonderful people of Limpopo for adorning me with this humbling opportunity to serve.

As we celebrate 30 years of our country's coveted democracy. We observe the dawn of this 7th administration with a deep sense of hope in the promise for a better, nonracial, nonsexist, democratic, united, and a successful South Africa. Our province, in particular, stands itself on the precipice of monumental positive developmental change. A change set to disrupt the poverty, inequality and unemployment that impedes on our people's wellbeing.

It is a change adequately captured by our Hon Premier during her opening of the Legislature recently under the theme: "A Changed Limpopo Through Socioeconomic Transformation". We are focussed on the ultimate price. Hon Premier, which is realising the vision of our constitution in leading a transformation agenda that opens a path to inclusive economic growth and transformation.

Hon Speaker, the provincial economy showed good resilience in the last two quarters of 2023 by manifesting confident growth. We are happy to report that this positive

growth performance trajectory is expected to continue. According to the latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey released by Stats SA, Limpopo province recorded a decrease of 0,5 percentage points in the official unemployment rate.

Although this is not a sizable margin, given the myriads of domestic internationally stimulated economic challenges. It presents a glimmer of hope that tomorrow will indeed be better than yesterday.

Limpopo economic growth pattern is steadily changing for the better, underpinned by our people acting in unison to intensify the reconstruction and recovery project. Our department, through the Enterprise Development and Economic Empowerment Directorate has designed the Limpopo Township and Rural Business Support Programme to strengthen and empower local enterprises, SMMEs and cooperatives with access to funding opportunities and business operational equipment.

We have begun mainstreaming the coordination of enterprise development institutions' products and services to leverage available resources from both the public and private sector. Through this process, we intend to contribute towards the support of local enterprises, emphasising the targeted groups of youth, women, people with disabilities, and military veterans. This will also allow the department to continue collaborating with brands such as Coca-Cola Beverage South Africa, supporting 45 enterprises from the township and rural areas in this 2024/25 financial year in the process.

This programme leverages heavily on a public and private partnership willingness to grow capacity among young people. It relies on the available resources, both technical and financial from all relevant stakeholders. With these workshops, the department intends to build capacity for an additional 30 cooperatives on venture creation in collaboration with the South African National Apex Cooperatives Organisation and Financial and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority (FASSET).

Hon Premier, The Allan Gray Makers Entrepreneurship Inter-College Competition initiative has been rolled out in all TVET colleges in the province and encourages learners to enrol and pitch their business ideas to a panel of industry champions for a reward and top spot. Alongside the initiative, there is a Starters-up Funding Programme, which prepares learners for technical industry readiness, market readiness and funding access to empower participating entrepreneurs.

On LED interventions to municipalities, the department has initiated the Local Economic Development Capacity-Building Programme in collaboration with Salga, municipalities and the University of Johannesburg. Hon Premier, this programme will empower LED practitioners. We want to move away from a situation where anybody who is not wanted in the office of the Mayor is sent to LED. We want LED to be supported so that it can create employment opportunities for our people.

This programme will empower LED practitioners with requisite economic development acumen to effectively and efficiently develop and support enterprises to contribute towards growing the local economies. Economy can only grow starting from local level.

According to Stats SA's provincial GDP experimental estimates released in September 2023, the provincial economy grew by 1% in 2022. The province's economic contribution to the national economy grew from 7,3% to 7,7% in 2022, retaining its fifth spot in GDP contributions among other provinces. This is a positive sign of notable growth and improvement. As a province, we are optimistic that the long-term industrialisation measures set in motion by provincial government will continue to yield better results and a desired change in the future.

On special economic zones, the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone completed the designation phase and began the implementation of bulk infrastructure projects such as internal roads and storm water developments on the North Site. In her speech, the Hon Premier pointed out the glaring hurdles this project had met and directed me to construct a six-month turnaround plan. In ensuring that the reimagined dream is achieved on both the North and South Site, respectively, for the coming six months the focus will be on the following:

- MMSEZ North Site (Musina): Security of Land Tenure

In August and September 2024, we have directed the board to work around the clock to secure a power of attorney and conclude the signing of the outstanding land development agreement with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, giving the MMSEZ the absolute right to develop the SEZ on the Artonvilla site. This agreement will be followed by the signing of the long-term land lease agreement for the land by no later than 15 December 2024.

- Closing off Suspensive Conditions of Township Establishment on the MMSEZ North Site (Musina)

Hon Premier, the Municipal Planning Tribunal of the Musina Local Municipality has given us 24 suspensive conditions for township establishment that should be carried out by ourselves as the SEZ, and we have put the target of 31 January 2025 so that this can pave way for the final township establishment.

- Construction of Bulk Infrastructure in MMSEZ North Site

The construction of the awarded contracts for bulk sewer infrastructure will commence by no later than 30 October 2024, after obtaining the necessary design approvals from relevant authorities. We have directed the board and MMSEZ that the commencement of construction of other bulk infrastructure projects will follow in the period from 30 October 2024 to 31 January 2025.

- Application for Township Establishment in South Site

MMSEZ to township establishment application to Makhado Local Municipality for approval in line with requirements of individual industrial plants by 30 October 2024

- The Operation of Implementation Plan

The South Site SEZ has its own challenges, but we will be submitting the implementation plan which will be used as monitoring mechanisms for progress on the

service level agreement. We mandated them to submit the implementation plan by 30 August 2024.

Hon Premier, the last item on the SEZ is that we are in the process of appointing the chief executive officer and we have given the board three months to finalise the appointment of the CEO, and we will be advertising during the week.

On the Fetakgomo Tubatse SEZ, the management of Fetakgomo Tubatse SEZ Industrial Park submitted an application for designation of the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Special Economic Zone to the department of Trade, Industry and Competition during the 2023/24 financial year.

Land for development of the SEZ was acquired through a long-term lease with Dithamaga Trust. While the application for the designation of Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ is being considered, the industrial park will continue to implement critical infrastructure projects, and these will be done in phases, ensuring that infrastructure development is aligned with occupation by industrial tenants.

Hon Speaker, the department runs a Manufacturing Support Centre through the Limpopo Tooling Initiative, situated in the Nkowankowa Industrial Park. The centre is equipped with state-of-the-art machinery that will assist in the development of that industrial park. In the previous financial year, the centre managed to develop 10 apprentices to becoming qualified artisans, and in the coming financial year 6 apprentices will be capacitated to become tool-, jik- and die- artisans.

On mining, we continue to experience challenges in issues relating to illegal mining otherwise called zama zamas. This is troubling the mining communities, especially in the platinum belt of Sekhukhune. The most devastating effect is that the money generated out of this activity is not accounted for. This, therefore, has a negative impact on the provincial fiscus because of tax evasion. This money is mostly used to fund illicit and money laundering activities, which pose a serious risk and threat to national security.

However, we applaud the good work done by the task team responsible for illegal mining, which has so far recorded considerable progress in arresting alleged suspects and seizing the machinery used in the commission of this crime. This task team comprises the South African Police Service, and the Defence Force. We thank you Hon Violet Mathye.

Hon Speaker, Limpopo province has given us mineral wealth under her belly to address the challenges we are faced with and to create a better a future for our people. The entire country is looking at us as a growth point. We are a beacon of hope. For the 2024/25 financial year on Corridor Mining Resources, we have identified two investors for partnership, which are Tshepong Chrome Mine and Fumani Greenstone Mine.

Madam Speaker, On business registration, as the MEC responsible for LEDET, it is my responsibility to assign and designate municipalities as business registration centres in the province in terms of section 126 of the Constitution as well as the Limpopo Business Registration Act.

To date, a total of 19 out of 22 local municipalities have been designated as such. Continuous engagements are taking place with the remaining three municipalities that are not yet designated as business registration centres, viz., Polokwane, Mogalakwena, and Blouberg Local Municipalities.

Hon Premier, on liquor affairs and business regulations, Hon Mabotja has been troubling me. In the 2023/24 financial year, the department established the liquor structures as required by the Limpopo Liquor Act, 2009, as amended by Limpopo Liquor Amendment Act 2015. We have started the work to revise our liquor regulations to fast-track economic transformation, and we therefore call upon all liquor stakeholders to work with us on this task.

The province continues to work towards converting all old licences to the new Liquor Act. Therefore, I have extended the conversion of the old liquor licences from the end of July 2024 to the end of December 2024, allowing more time for outlets to participate.

I hereby make a clarion call to all liquor licence holders to convert their old licences to the new Liquor Act on or before 31 December 2024. I think I'm bailed out from Hon Mabotja, because I asked him what his interest was, and he said he was representing the consumers.

On biodiversity and conservation, being a mega-biologically diverse and unique province presents us with an opportunity to establish mechanisms that will feed off these factors and contribute towards addressing the vicious cycle of the three economic ills: unemployment, poverty and inequality.

The department has concluded the development of feasibility studies to determine the optimal economic benefits that communities can derive from their communal areas and development associated business plans for the 10 identified biodiversity economy nodes. We have identified biodiversity economy nodes in the province which are Greater Blouberg, Greater Letaba, Greater Makuya, Greater Masebe, Greater Schuinsdraai, Greater Nwanedi, Great Witvinger and Makapan Valley World Heritage Site.

These nodes will link provincially protected areas to core conservation areas. Hon Premier, through the office of Hon Makamu, we must ensure that all biodiversity rangers who used to be situated in traditional leaders' offices are reinstated to protect biodiversity. Of course, it'll require resources from Hon Mahoai. On revenue enhancement and infrastructure refurbishment... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Hold on, honourable MEC.

THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

As I move towards conclusion...

THE SPEAKER

No, no, you are still in order. I'm just calling on Hon Lebogo and them that if they need to talk, they need to do it not during the Sitting.

THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

Alright, I thought I have run out of time.

THE SPEAKER

No, you are still on time.

THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

Hon Premier and Hon Speaker, let me quickly run through our entities. On Great North Transport, we have put the capital budget of 104 million for acquisition of new buses for the 2024/25 financial year. [APPLAUSE]

GNT will build a business case to justify unlocking empowerment opportunities to local small bus operators, particularly women and people with disabilities, to provide commuter services in routes that are contracted to GNT but currently not being serviced.

On Risima, we are working with the department of Cooperative Governance. We have started a project to assist beneficiaries earning between R3 500 and R22 000 to secure housing finance. To this end, we have used R10 million.

Hon Speaker, on New Era, LEDA as the main shareholder, recapitalised New Era at an amount of R15 million, ensuring that its minimum capital ratio is met more than 2 times. We want it to assist and to be found in our 5 districts.

The tourism sector, which is Limpopo Tourism Agency, is an entity that is assisting us in promoting tourism. To this end, we have allocated them funds to ensure that Limpopo is seen as tourism destination of choice.

Hon Speaker, on Limpopo Gambling Board, the Limpopo gambling industry has contributed an amount of R12,990,508 for the 2023/24 financial year for various corporate social investment projects in different municipalities in the province. These projects include Education, Health Safety and Security, Economic Growth and Employment and Rural Development.

Together with SAPS, we are busy ensuring that we deal with illegal gambling machines. The LGB to this end has destroyed 616 illegal gambling machines in the 2023/24 financial year, and the total of 329 computers, which were used for illegal online gambling, were confiscated, working together with Hon Violet Mathye.

Honourable Members, as I move towards conclusion, the total Budget for LEDET that I present for the 2024 financial year is R1,866 billion to implement all its priorities and targets.

It is allocated to these programmes:

Programme 1: Administration	: R379,814 million;
Programme 2: Integrated Economic Development Services	: R978,338 million;
Programme 3: Environmental Affairs	: R398,298 million; and
Programme 4: Tourism	: R109,055 million.

This includes the transfers to Agency Limpopo as follow:

Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA)	: R834,656 million;
Limpopo Tourism Agency (LTA)	: R82,864 million; and
Limpopo Gambling Board (LGB)	: R68,592 million;

In conclusion, when I began this address, I did so acknowledging the period of heightened positive transformation our province finds itself in. We hold our heads high with pride and hope as we traverse this new journey with an esteemed captain steering our ship forward. Our change is personified in the first female Premier of our province, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba.

Premier, you have demonstrated that this is not going to be business as usual, and we are here to follow you march. As we break new ground under your leadership in economic development, environment and our vibrant tourism offerings, we pledge to do so with enthusiasm, focus and determination to serve our people diligently. I thank you

THE SPEAKER

Ro livhuwa, Vho Tshitereke Matibe. Ndi ngoho vhathu vhashu vha do wana mishumo. Ro livhuwa. The Budget Speech Vote 6 together with the Annual Performance Plan is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism for consideration and report back to the House.

We now proceed to item 7.1.6. We shall now call upon the MEC for Transport and Community Safety, Hon Susan Violet Mathye, to present the Budget Speech for Vote 08: Department of Transport and Community Safety.

Manana Mathye, nkarhi i wa n'wina.

THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

BUDGET SPEECH FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

(Address by Ms S V Mathye, MEC for Transport and Community Safety)

Inkomu, Manana Xipikara. Hon Speaker of the Legislature, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje, the time you called my name, I started to think that you miss me because we used to sit next to each other; Hon Deputy Speaker, Mamorobela; Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, honourable Members; and fellow colleagues in the Executive, allow me to stand on the protocols that have already been observed by my predecessors on this podium. Avuxeni. Ndi matsheloni. Ndi masiari. Inhlukanhi. This

Budget presentation signifies the great strides that had been underscored and achieved by the democratic state in the past 30 years.

It coincides with the momentous Women's Month festivities, a period to highlight the plight of women in this country, and celebrate their accomplishments as they toiled hard, towards the attainment of a free South Africa. With the leadership of the Seventh Provincial Administration, the ANC has demonstrated its unwavering devotion towards creating an equal society, where all citizens can enjoy equal rights.

Hon Speaker, when we say, as per the slogan of our Premier, *dilo di tšhentšitše*, *swilo swi hundzukile*, *zwithu zwo shanduka*, we mean it, in the truest sense of the dictum. The appointment of Dr Phophi Ramathuba as the first female Premier of this province, and the affirmation of many other women into various positions of power, is no act of favour, but a deliberate process that sees no gender and which is meant to embrace skill and capacity.

Hon Speaker, during her Official Opening Address on Friday, 02 August 2024, the Premier of the province, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, directed us as the Department of Transport and Community Safety together with our counterparts from Social Development, Health and the South African Police Service to formulate strategies that will heighten the safety of the vulnerable groups.

We will set a process in motion to ensure that we undertake this collaborative work, to ensure that perpetrators of gender-based violence and other crimes against the vulnerable groups, meet the wrath of the might of the law. Go and tell them that the three sheriffs are in town. Some will ask who they are: The first female sheriff is the Hon Premier, the second is Mathye Susan Violet, the third is our provincial Commissioner. We are in town. [APPLAUSE] For our part as the Department of Transport and Community Safety, we shall be embarking on a series of programmes to raise awareness on the safety and security of our people, with much emphasis placed on gender-based violence and femicide.

Hon Speaker, this Budget provision represents over 80% of our total allocation for the 2024/25 financial year, as it reflects what has already been committed in the first quarter. The department remains the highest revenue collector, which is almost 47% of the total collection in the provincial revenue. In the 2023/24 financial year, we collected R828,060 million, which was 99,4% of the target. For this financial year, we are projecting to collect around R890,655 million.

Our revenue for the 2025/26 financial year is projected at R930,288 million. In this financial year, our Budget allocation stands at R2,610,612 billion. A great portion of our budget allocation goes towards compensation of employees, and we have already spent about 25% of the allocated R1,191 billion across all programmes.

On programme 1, we have already committed 23% against an allocation of R600 million. On the acquisition of goods and services, we are at 22% of the allocated R339,7 million, which represents an underspending of 1,9%.

On transfers and subsidies, we had anticipated a 19,5% spending, at this time of the financial year, and with a R190 million spent thus far, we are confident that our spending pattern is within target.

On programme 2, Transport Operations, which is our biggest programme, together with our other expanded public works programmes, this forms the basis of the department's conditional grants allocation. It largely incorporates activities within the public transport sector, which are bus subsidies, regulation of the taxi industry, the finalisation of integrated transport plans in municipalities, and the activities of the Gateway Airports Authority Limited.

Our bus subsidies programme is an economic enabler, whose value chain is not only limited to bus operators. It includes hawkers, petrol attendants, marshals, bus cleaners and other ancillary jobs, within the bus industry. A part of this budget will also be channelled towards the completion of the Thohoyandou Intermodal Facility, which is long overdue.

I will be visiting the facility in the next few days, as part of my first 100 days in office, and I am confident that I will furnish this House with a good report after the visit. Honourable Members, we are also looking into several ways to make the Gateway Airports Authority Limited self-reliant, and I am informed that the board is making inroads towards this objective. [APPLAUSE] During the recent airshow, held at the Polokwane International Airport, there were indications by some participants of establishing an aviation school in the province.

We are in constant contact with these potential investors, and we are confident that in the not-so-distant future, we shall be making pronouncements about this development in this august House. Of the allocated R1,060 billion, we have spent around a R190 million, which is 18,7% of the total allocation.

Programme 3, Transport Regulations: One of the core functions of this department is to maintain and promote road safety. We are confident that upon completion of their learnership at the end of this calendar year, the 150 candidates enrolled at the Limpopo Traffic College will be a positive injection into the numbers of our traffic officials on our roads. This will be a quantum leap towards our goal of reducing fatalities on our roads. We are most certainly concerned with the 9,1% fatality increase that was recorded in the past financial year.

We have also noted a spike in pedestrian fatalities throughout the various parts of our province, and we have made a resolve to heighten our road safety campaigns towards them. We have spent 26% of our allocated budget, which is R234,4 million against the allocated budget of R881,9 million.

Hon Speaker, programme 4 is the Secretariat for Police Services. Section 206 of the Constitution of the Republic mandates the department to oversee the efficacy of the police services. With an allocation of R630,677 million, this programme has employed at least 1 790 candidates through its various expanded public works programmes.

We have the best model and the most functional system of community police forums in our province. We have CPFs in all the 104 police stations. We are involved in

ongoing engagements with various municipalities throughout the province to conclude the establishment of community safety forums, which is another programme that aims to swell the ground and suffocate various forms of crime.

Hon Speaker, Josiah Stamp, an English industrialist, writer and economist, reminds us “It is easy to dodge our responsibilities, but we cannot dodge the consequences of dodging our responsibilities.” [APPLAUSE] We shall do everything possible to ensure that public funds are spend in the most responsible and accountable manner. Our services are not only impactful, but they are executed at the right time, at the right place, at the right cost to government.

Honourable Members and Hon Speaker, before I go and sit down, allow me to send my words of appreciation to all the staff members of the department under the stewardship of Mr Matjena, the HOD, for their unwavering support.

I, therefore, table this 2024/25 Budget allocation for the Department of Transport and Community Safety. I thank you. Inkomu.

THE SPEAKER

Ha khensa. Re a leboga. Hi khensile manana Mathye. The Budget Speech together with the Annual Performance Plan of Vote 08 is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Transport and Community Safety for consideration and report back to the House. Va ha tshama hansi manana Mathye.

I really miss you; I miss our talk. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Hon Premier for the professional way in which you have led from the front today with all your MECs. You’ve set the standard, and we need to keep the standard. I’m raising this point so that those who will be presenting their Budget Speeches on Thursday may follow in the footsteps of our own Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, and all the MEC that presented today. Well done, you have kept the time as we have requested you to do. [APPLAUSE]

We will now proceed to item 8.

8. MOTION FOR THE RECONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND THEIR MEMBERS

I would request the Deputy Speaker to present the motion for the reconstitution of committees and their members.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. With regard to the motion for the reconstitution of committees and their members, the Rules Committee met on Tuesday, 13 August 2024 to consider the reconstitution of committees and their members in compliance with Rule 52 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Limpopo Legislature. The Rules Committee adopted the reconstituted committees and their Members, referred to the ATC and recommended before this House that the

reconstituted committees and their members be considered as the committees of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature.

I, therefore, move that this august House adopts the reconstituted committees and their members as the committees of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature.

I move accordingly, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

The committees are being reconstituted in line with the new rules that indicate that the maximum number of committee members is 13. These committees will be distributed immediately after the Sitting as have been distributed in the ATC. We expect committees as from tomorrow to hit the ground running, but can I request the seconder to the motion. Hon Chief Whip, you are recognised.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I was not raising a hand to second. I wanted to remind you that it must be seconded, but you play your cards differently. Let me second the motion presented by the Deputy Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Can I call for the seconder of the motion. Hon Member, you are recognised.

MR NKONYANA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I, Bongani Nkonyana, second the motion. Thank you

THE SPEAKER

The committees have been formally adopted by this august House. Like I've indicated, immediately after the Sitting, all of you will know in which committee to participate, and we have referred all the Budget Speeches and the Annual Performance Plans for your consideration with immediate effect.

Thank you so much, we now move to item 9.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are there any announcements, Deputy Speaker? Over to you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I can see that the Premier and the Leader of Government Business are expecting me to make the announcement of food to be the first item. They thought we are eating.

Hon Members, immediately after the Sitting, we will join the Speaker to the family of Hon Chidi to send condolences of the House. The location and address was sent to Legislature whatsapp group. We will continue with Budget presentations on Thursday and tributes to the late Chidi, so we will do the memorial service on Thursday. The luncheon will be served in the Committees' Main "Bedroom" [LAUGHTER] My apologies.

THE SPEAKER

It's a slip of a tongue. Can we allow the DS to finish her announcement.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

At least, Hon Speaker, I gave the House something to go home with and laugh at. It is the Committees' Main Boardroom; it was a slip of a tongue. I see Hon Mathye is excited about "main bedroom". Tomorrow, the IT team will be at the Parliamentary Village from 10:00 to connect WiFi and printers for the honourable Members. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

I thought you'll clap hands for announcements. Thank you so much.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The House is adjourned to Thursday, 15 August 2024 at Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber at 10:00. Thank you so much.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
THURSDAY, 15 AUGUST 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you, honourable Members. You may all be seated. We shall defer items 2–6 to the next Sitting.

[ITEMS 2–6 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1 The Presentation of Budget Votes and Schedule of the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024. Budget Speech Vote 10: Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

We shall now call upon the MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, Hon Maseko Jerry, to come and present the Budget Speech.

THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

Thank you, Hon Speaker; Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Hon Premier of our province, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba; colleagues in the Executive; Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip; Chair of Chairs and Deputy Chair of Chairs; Leader of the Opposition; Chairperson of our Portfolio Committee, Hon Falaza Mdaka; esteemed Members of the House ... [INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon Maseko, just a second. Hon Chief Whip, is that an order?

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. Whatever I was rising for has been rectified. Thank you very much. I was rising on a point of order that Hon Mapoulo was wearing a cap in the House, but he took it off. Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Chief Whip. Hon Maseko, you may continue.

THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

Thanks. Team DSAC; members of various statutory and non-statutory bodies of the department; special guests; members of the media fraternity; ladies and gentlemen.

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

(Address by Mr J F Maseko, MEC for Sport Arts and Culture)

Hon Speaker, the Budget Vote for the department is tabled during this month of August when the country is celebrating the 1956 Women's struggle against colonialism and patriarchy. This year's theme pays tribute to the 30th Anniversary of democracy towards women's development, and it is used to reflect on our achievements to promote women's rights as part of the basic fundamental human rights.

During this month, we celebrated women as active agents for change, social cohesion, social transformation, and nation-building. In celebration of Women's Month, the department engaged women in all five districts through participation in the active and healthy "9898" Women's Walk, which means 09 (which is the day), and 08 (which is the month of August). All these walks started at 09:00 in the morning, and they all walked for 8 km in all districts. [APPLAUSE]

The provincial event was led by the Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, and we really appreciate and feel motivated by her presence. The walks are meant to promote an active citizenry and healthy lifestyle in the lives of women. As a result, a woman who walks is a woman who strengthens her heart and, therefore, it is a woman who will increase her lifespan!

This annual "9898" Women's Walk attracted more than 4,000 people, or women, who participated with vigour and a spirit of victory in the emancipation of women over 30 years of democracy. As part of ensuring that we become a walking province, we have introduced the Walk for Health programme every Wednesday. We, therefore, make a clarion call to communities and departments to join this programme. We further intend to cascade it to various municipalities across the length and breadth of the province.

We are well coordinated and well supported by the Office of the Premier, and the more we do that, the more we will make sure that we reduce the high volume of patients in hospitals, Hon Mashego.

Ge re tla ra kitima, ra sepela kamoka ga rena bjalo ka profentse. Balwetši kua sepetele ba tla fokotšega. Re a lekopela etlang le tlo pšhatla makhura a a lena le se ke la ya

diopareišeneng. We will have sufficient beds in private hospitals and public hospitals every Wednesday.

As we gather here now, let me remind compatriots about the reflection of the President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, during the Opening of Parliament. He said: “We, South Africans, are a diverse nation with different histories, beliefs, cultures and languages. Yet, we are one people, and we share a common destiny. It is this common destiny that the people of South Africa have charged this Parliament and this government to consolidate and advance”

Under the visionary leadership of the President, he also stated that the Government of National Unity has resolved to dedicate the next five years to actions that will advance three strategic priorities:

- Firstly, to drive inclusive growth and job creation;
- Secondly, to reduce poverty and tackle high cost of living; and
- Lastly, to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

Hon Speaker, as we share this crucial budget for the advancement of our sport, arts, culture and heritage in our province, we would like the House to note that the department is striving to build a capable, ethical and developmental state. Hence, just recently, we received good news from the Auditor-General that we have a clean audit outcome for the financial year 2023/2024. [APPLAUSE]

We are proud to announce that after multiple years of unqualified audit outcomes, the department received a clean audit outcome. We would like to take this opportunity, in particular, to appreciate and thank my predecessor, the Hon Nakedi Grace Sibanda-Kekana. We want to give you special thanks for that achievement. We are not going to tell lies by claiming easy victories. You were there at the political helm during this financial year and thank you very much.

We would also want to thank all our oversight portfolio committees, such as Scopa, our internal auditors, the hardworking DSAC Team under the leadership of a very humble HOD, Ms Mapula Daphne Ramokgopa. Our intent is to sustain the outcomes through the systems that are put in place.

During the opening of the Seventh Administration, Limpopo Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, emphasised the importance of social cohesion and nation-building. She said, “Limpopo province is one of the most diverse provinces of South Africa, with the population consisting of seven different ethnic groupings. Therefore, it is important and critical for this Seventh Administration to promote social cohesion and find innovative ways through the implementation of arts, culture and heritage programmes.”

Therefore, Madam Speaker, allow me to present the Budget allocation for the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture for the 2024/25 financial year. The overall Budget allocation for this financial year increased from R621,867 million to R827, 099 million, which translates to an increase of 33%, which is a massive increment. I think

we will utilise this increment effectively and in a more responsible manner, based on the capacity and skills of the personnel that manage finances of the department.

The Budget comprises of Equitable Shares of R596,025 million which takes up 72% of the overall Budget, and the remaining 28% relates to the amount of R231,074 million allocated to Conditional Grants. Within the overall Budget:

- Administration takes R200,270 million;
- Cultural Affairs is allocated R273,300 million;
- Library and Archive Services receives R242,358 million; and
- Sport and Recreation is allocated R111,171 million.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, in alignment with the African National Congress manifesto, emphasis is on job creation and skills development. Programmes are developed to support growth of creative industries, providing opportunities for artists, performers and athletes to thrive and contribute to the province's economic vitality.

In response to that, allow me to report that the department is planning to accelerate procurement spending on Black-owned companies, woman-owned companies, youth-owned companies and persons with disability and military veterans. These are the target groups where the bulk of the capital budget is going to be directed.

The department is committed to strengthening its human resource capacity through the filling of vacant posts at senior management level. It should be noted that the department is at an advanced stage of filling posts at key managerial level, which will maximise our service delivery.

The department has employed 195 librarians and library assistants permanently to manage and spearhead programmes in 106 libraries in the province. The department is working tirelessly to reduce the number of contract workers and increase the number of permanent staff in the sector. We want to do away with the issue of contract workers. We are moving towards making sure that all contract workers are permanently employed so that they can have a living wage and take care of their families.

With regard to employment equity, Hon Speaker, allow me to indicate that through the allocated grants, the department has strengthened its capacity to deliver sport, recreation and library services. In our employment equity, we currently have 2,2% as far as the persons with disability ratio is concerned, and we aspire to achieve a 4% target by 2026 and a 7% target by 2030, as directed by the national government. We are focusing more on people who are living with disability and ensuring that their percentages, in terms of representation within the organisational structures, go up as directed by the national policy.

We are at an advanced stage of closing the gender parity gap as far as senior management posts are concerned. We are currently sitting at 45% of senior managers being women, which is still an issue that we are going to address because we want to

move this figure to 50% and above. Out of the total workforce of the department, at least 64% of the total personnel are women.

In promoting Social Cohesion and Nation Building programmes, we continued to commemorate and celebrate significant days such as Freedom Day and Africa Day, where we create opportunities for small, micro and medium enterprises to benefit.

Allow me to indicate that more than 3,000 people were reached through the celebration of Africa Day in partnership with the University of Limpopo and the Department of Education. We are collaborating with these two institutions to ensure that we celebrate Africa Day together.

With regard to Heritage Month, which is next year, we are planning a celebration activity that will be a provincial event at Molemole Municipality in the Capricorn District, Botlokwa, at Ramokgopa Stadium. The celebration will be marked by a heritage walk. You are also invited to join that walk. There will be a cultural parade and performances to showcase the diverse culture and heritage of the province.

In curbing the challenges of racialism facing our communities, we rolled out a massive Social Cohesion programme and Nation Building programme, which embrace all ethnic groups. This is evident in the Mapungubwe Rugby Cup that was held recently at the old Peter Mokaba Stadium. The event was attended by diverse ethnic groups and different racial groups in Limpopo, making sure that we promote social cohesion and nation-building.

This was one of the first rugby games in 20 or 28 years in the province, and thanks to the Vodacom Bulls and the Griquas for honouring the invitation from the department. Let's continue to promote social cohesion.

The rare and unique artistic talents of Limpopo artists are being unearthed through the Mapungubwe Arts and Cultural programme, which encompasses, among others, the Mapungubwe Theatre, Film and Video Festival; Choral Festival; Youth and Diva Festival; Comedy Night and Marathon, etc. This is one programme that we want to make sure each and every stakeholder participates in, as it is a very important heritage programme.

The department will continue to provide capacity-building opportunities to arts practitioners in authorship, business and funding, writing skills, product packaging, product development and product marketing. Allow me to report that the much-anticipated provincial theatre project has commenced. I remember, I'm sure in three consecutive terms, we were talking about the provincial theatre. At long last the project has started. [APPLAUSE]

The theatre construction project is currently at 15% completion, and we are envisaging that it might reach 40% by the end of this financial year. The completion of the project is intended to grow artistic and theatrical projects in the province, thus contributing to economic growth and the creative industry. Let me give special thanks to the MEC for Dikgerekgere. There were some challenges and distractions in the implementation of the project, and we went there together last time to fulfil our oversight role.

Yesterday, there was a challenge around the issue of construction by the local contractors, and through his leadership, he was able to resolve the matter. Now, they are continuing to build the theatre. Thanks very much.

Allow me to report to this House about three Resistance, Heritage and Liberation Routes identified. Those are: Tshiřangadzimeni Battlefield, which is the battlefield of Mutale, as known within my church, the University of Limpopo and the Tjate Heritage Site. These are the three main heritage programmes that we are envisaging to implement and commemorate in this financial year.

At Tshiřangadzimeni, a commemorative wall will be constructed to honour the fallen heroes and heroines of the liberation struggle, and at Tjate, we will have a large fence to preserve the nature and biodiversity of the site.

A mini library and museum are planned to be constructed at the site for the preservation of the heritage of the Sekhukhune Kingship. The project will be implemented through a partnership with Fetakgomo-Tubatse Municipality and the mining houses. There is a clear commitment from both the municipality and the mining houses, as well as ourselves, and we are going to make sure that these projects are implemented.

Madam Speaker, it should be noted that the department is finalising the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Heritage Council (NHC) for the Budget to be transferred to the province. Before the Budget kicks in, the implementation will be rolled out to ensure that our people get the necessary services.

In terms of infrastructure development for library services, the department heartily appreciates the contributions from the mining sector in Fetakgomo-Tubatse Municipality for the construction of the Twickenham Library and from the Masia Traditional Authority for the construction of the Ha-Masia Library. These are two state-of-art libraries that are being built by the Ha-Masia Traditional Authority, the mines, and Fetakgomo-Tubatse Municipality.

We are going to support these libraries by providing them with materials, staff and other equipment, as well as security, as a department, because this is a core business to make sure that these libraries are getting served, and have the right personnel to execute their different responsibilities.

We will continue with the construction of four libraries: Vleifontein Library, Tshaulu Library, Botshabelo Library and Mampane Library. By the end of July this year, after conducting a physical visit as the office and the department, we realised that Tshaulu Library was at 42% completion, and we are not happy. We have instructed both the Department of Public Works personnel and our personnel to exert pressure on the construction team to make sure that they complete the project. Mampane Library is at 70% completion, Vleifontein Library is at 82% completion, and Botshabelo Library is at 90% completion.

We have physically visited all these projects. We are paying oversight visits to make sure that quality work is being executed in terms of our infrastructure so that there is value for money. The department has conducted interventions through site visits,

which were led by the MEC and officials from Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure to all those projects, as I have said. We are also going to handover contractors, not very long from now, to the following new libraries; Bungeni Library, Moutse West Library and Makhuva Library.

We have already appointed contractors through the Department of Public Works. I, myself, together with the MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, will be handing over these contractors to the communities. We want to call upon our municipalities to be vigilant. Let's play our oversight role to make sure that quality services are provided in our infrastructure development.

The Limpopo Sport Confederation has committed to taking sports back to the communities by introducing games at ward levels, with the possibility of partnering with our local municipalities. What we have realised since joining the department is that the structures of sport confederation exist only at provincial and district levels and we don't have such structures at municipal and ward levels; where sports are being played across the board.

Therefore, we are going to make sure that we zoom into that space and establish structures, and clubs must affiliate with these structures so that we can use our budget to support them with equipment, particularly for different sporting codes.

Madam Speaker, by this financial year, 25,000 learners will benefit from School Sport programmes in 16 prioritised sporting codes at different district levels. Two departments, we and the Department of Education, are currently in discussions on how to improve school sports participation. We all know that school sports have gradually found its unnecessary death and our task is to begin resuscitating school sports in collaboration with the department. They are in discussions.

Once we are able to resuscitate school sports, we will be able to unearth the talent of young people in this province at the earliest possible stage, and we will give them the opportunity to participate and compete nationally and internationally.

As I speak, the department also supported a mini cricket festival, which was attended by 1,000 learners from all five districts. More than 81 schools participated in the District Pan African U15 School Football Games for both women's men's soccer. Proudly, I want to announce here that we participated in the Provincial Pan African U15 School Football Tournament, which was held in Gauteng, and in the U15 women soccer category three of our girls were selected to represent the country in Namibia from 09 to 12 September ...[INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

As you conclude, Hon Maseko. You have taken more than 27 minutes.

THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, allow me to join the community in celebrating Kgothatso Montjane and Makhadzi. We are here to report that both Kgothatso Montjane and Sheryl James will fly to Paris for the Paris Paralympic Games. We need your prayers.

We call upon everyone in Limpopo to rally behind them so that they can bring the trophy home. Ngiyabonga. Izinto zitjhentjhile. Hon Speaker, thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Maseko. The Budget Speech, together with the Annual Performance Plan for Vote 10, is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture for consideration and to report back to the House. Budget Speech Vote 09: Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure

I call upon the MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Hon Rachoene Tonny.

THE MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

(Address by Mr E S Rachoene, MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure)

Hon Speaker, before I go any further, allow me to join the people of Limpopo in wishing the first citizen of this province, the Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, a happy birthday. [APPLAUSE]

Hon Speaker; Hon Deputy Speaker; Premier of the province, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; Leader of Government Business, Mr Basikopo Makamu; colleagues in the Executive Council; Chief Whip and the Deputy Chief Whip of the African National Congress; chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure; special greetings to the women of Limpopo as we continue to celebrate Women's Month. Ke re kgotsong. Thobela. Ndi Matsheloni. Avuxeni.

Hon Speaker, it is my honour and privilege to stand before this august House to present the Budget Vote of the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure. One of our responsibilities is to ensure that the provincial government works, through infrastructure development, by ensuring that freight and people move effortlessly as they contribute to economic growth. The department has been allocated R5,2 billion for the current financial year for the overall departmental operations, as tabled on 26 March 2024.

Of the allocated Budget, the department has already transferred R2,557 billion to the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL), resulting in the department remaining with R2,715 billion. The allocation to the entity is comprised of an equitable share of R1,152 billion and a Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant (PRMG) of R1,406 billion.

Expenditure at RAL to date stands at 35% of the overall allocation from the department as at 31 July 2024. Thus far, 40% of the R2,557 billion has been transferred to RAL to date. We will continue to monitor and ensure that the budget is spent in a prudent manner, as our people are eagerly waiting for the projects that are currently running to be fully implemented.

It has been five months since the tabling of the Budget Vote, and I can confirm that work is continuing on the ground, as far as the pronouncements of the 2024/25

financial year are concerned. This includes the management of provincial government land and buildings, the construction of new school projects, the construction of traditional council offices, responding to the infrastructure needs of our client departments as well as the provision and management of road infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, the recent launch of the Dikgerekgere Wednesday service delivery initiative, which is aimed at making our gravel roads drivable, is well in progress. This service delivery initiative is about the full utilisation of government-owned earth, moving heavy machinery to blade and regravell roads in the province, as part of showcasing the capacity of the department to do work in-house. Currently, the department has about 532 yellow fleet units to discharge work on the ground. This compels the department to fast-track the appointment of staff members to operate these machines, which are deployed across our 36 cost centres in the province.

Madam Speaker, please allow me to reiterate the Premier's sentiments that our strategic focus on road infrastructure is underpinned by the pressing need to address the substantial backlog in road upgrades within the province. The province's vast road network spans 19 800 km, of which 66% remain unpaved or gravelled. The biggest challenge with these gravel roads is not necessarily that they are unpaved. However, the fact that we have neglected to blade, regravell and maintain them is what makes us not sleep at night.

After the Dikgerekgere activations, work continues on the ground as we strive to deal with the gravel road maintenance backlog. We are currently in the process of procuring more earth-moving fleet to add to the current capacity, and this will continue in the 2025/26 financial year, with the earmarked funding for the yellow fleet already pronounced by the Provincial Treasury during the tabling of the provincial Budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

We have advertised permanent posts to improve the department's ability to deliver services, and some of these posts are directly linked to road infrastructure. We will continue to engage with the Provincial Treasury, as the Premier instructed, on this matter. To date, the programme has been launched in four districts by our Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba. About 631 km of gravel roads have been bladed, and about 20 km of the 14 roads have been regravelled.

We will soon touch base with the Sekhukhune District and launch the Dikgerekgere Wednesday initiative on road D4225, between Manganeng and Marulaneng villages.

Madam Speaker, the significance of this project is to improve road infrastructure by gradually grading and regravelling roads as well as debushing road reserves to ensure the safety of road users. The programme further responds to the socioeconomic needs of the people of Limpopo, as the improvement of roads will assist communities to easily access clinics, schools and other service centres.

On Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL), as the shareholder of the roads implementing agency of the department, I have used the opportunity of my first days in office to look at the work done and related expenditures. It was a grave concern to me to find that RAL had an overcommitment of projects amounting to about R355 million, which might even be underestimated. This could be a classic case of committing to projects linked

to a budget that we do not necessarily have. The problem with this act is that it gives the public the impression that the government and this department have “stolen” money meant for the upgrades of roads, thereby tarnishing the image of the province and its leadership.

To this effect, we are in the process of setting up a new board for the purpose of taking the work done by RAL forward. We will be publishing an advert to recruit interested and reputable individuals to apply for consideration for appointment as we work towards establishing a new board of directors for the entity.

Honourable Members, the provision of quality road infrastructure and the administrative work behind it is quite a serious matter, as these assets affect every sector of society, from the development and economic growth, which is at a high level, as well as the day-to-day life of an ordinary citizen.

One other responsibility of the department is the management and provision of infrastructure to our people and client departments. As the department is carrying out this responsibility, it is faced with serious challenges regarding our properties. Some of these challenges speak to the hijacking of state infrastructure, including buildings and land.

The Hon Premier of the province, in her address during the opening of the Legislature, assured the people of Limpopo that things have changed. Ke nnete. Dilo dišhentšhitše. This also speaks true to what needs to be done in relation to government properties. I have, as part of my 100 days in office, instructed the department to attend to issues concerning illegally occupied government land and buildings as we work towards launching “Operation Vhuyisa Thundu dza Muvhuso”. I welcomed the Premier’s pronouncement on this matter, which prompts us to reclaim our mandate as the landlord of the provincial government. Landlord ke nna.

The Government Immovable Asset Management Act (GIAMA), Act No. 19 of 2007, gives the department, as the custodian of provincial government land and buildings, the powers to efficiently manage immovable assets, which includes ensuring that the management of the portfolio throughout its value chain supports service delivery objectives.

Several cases of hijacked properties have been reported to the police as we work towards the enforcement of law through evictions. The province is losing millions in revenue to criminals due to this practice, and this cannot be allowed to continue. Plans are in place to recover what is in illegal hands as we work together with other state organs. We reiterate the clarion call by our Hon Premier to all who know that they are occupying government assets to peacefully vacate before we get to you.

On job creation, it is important for the department, as the coordinator of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), to drive the exploration of work opportunities through the implementing bodies, an opportunity that is high of value and can lead to the absorption of beneficiaries by industries. It is important that as we recruit into the programme, to impart skills to our people and also have a clear exit strategy.

Next month, we will be launching Phase 5 of the EPWP and also celebrating 20 years of the existence of this key government initiative, which contributes to government policy priorities in terms of decent work and sustainable livelihoods, education, health, rural development, food security and land reform.

Madam Speaker, to further strengthen our collaborative efforts, we are working structurally with several municipalities and mining houses, targeting infrastructure provision to support the movement of goods and people, especially in the mining, agriculture, and tourism sectors. There is also a specific focus on special economic zones (SEZs) and our fastest-growing towns and municipalities.

People often ask what is different now in 2024. The difference is that the provincial administration explicitly recognises that it cannot do it alone and involves the private sector, both on technical and financial matters. This then implores all of us to improve our private-public partnerships. We, therefore, urge all role players to come and work with us as we drive economic investment.

The Hon Premier has rightfully said that our significant investors in mining, retail, property development and agroprocessing are instrumental in driving the desired growth. Therefore, we should transform investment commitments into tangible outcomes for our people in the form of jobs and the production of wealth through ownership, revenue, and business growth.

We are very clear that we want uninterrupted service delivery in our communities. As the Department of Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure, we are on course. Job creation is part of the transformation programme, and we are relentless in pursuing BEE initiatives, emerging contractor support, EPWP, and empowering women and the youth.

Thousands of jobs have been created through our projects of building schools, clinics, traditional authority houses, and libraries, as well as maintenance programmes, including through the now famous “Operation Thiba Mekoti Ditseleng,” which was spearheaded by my predecessor, Hon Nkakareng Rakgoale.

Our programmes are strategically targeted and directed at eradicating poverty. The basics are sound, Hon Premier, but the delivery mechanisms and the visible impact on poverty are not as clear-cut as they could be. Nevertheless, we are impacting poverty alleviation. *Re fenyā tlala ka nnete Tonakgolo. Mošomo o tšhaba diatla.* The measures we are implementing are well coordinated to integrate relevant programmes and create linkages for operational efficiency. We need to tackle and deal decisively with poverty and unemployment. The department is strategically placed to contribute positively in this regard.

In conclusion, honourable Members, as I descend from this podium, please remember that we are solely focused on creating job opportunities, sustainable livelihoods and skills development, particularly, for the poor and unemployed. We drive our programmes through labour-absorption methods in construction.

We must intensify our efforts to build bridges through the Welisizwe Rural Bridges programme to provide accessibility to communities that are often cut-off from the rest

of the world during rainy seasons. Fellow citizens, the struggle for socioeconomic transformation remains essential to realising a truly nonracial, non-gendered and prosperous society.

High levels of unemployment and poverty require our resolute efforts focused on decisive and practical interventions. This requires the engagement of all stakeholders, especially government, public servants, the private sector and civil society. The Seventh Administration is better placed to ensure that all this is realised. The ANC-led government has a brighter future with our people to renew our vows to be in selfless service to serve the people of Limpopo province.

Hon Speaker, all the work that needs to be done in this department is dependent on capable warm bodies attached to an organisational structure in place. To this end, we are implementing the recruitment plan to ensure that vacant positions are filled in order to service the province better. The department recently advertised about 300 jobs, and we anticipate to fill the positions by December this year. This is one department where natural attrition is high, and it becomes important to move with speed in this regard.

We are focused on ensuring that the capacity we get is able to contribute to the drive towards implementing clean audit strategy and eventually move forward to a better audit outcome.

In terms of financial performance, the department has been improving expenditure over the years, having moved from an overall 89% expenditure in the 2019/20 financial year to 97% in the 2022/23 financial year. In the 2023/24 financial year, we also spent 97% of the allocated Budget, and we are confident that expenditure in the 2024/25 financial year will continue to be on an upward trajectory.

The allocation to the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure for the 2024/25 financial year is R5,272 billion. Le a nkwa, akere.

The allocation is distributed as follows:

- Programme 1: Administration – R458 million;
- Programme 2: Infrastructure Operations – R1,053 billion;
- Programme 3: EPWP – R74 million; and
- Programme 4: Road Infrastructure – R3,647 billion.

Lastly, Madam Speaker, I am looking forward to working jointly with the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, as chaired by Hon Khathu Netshifhefhe, as well as the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, as chaired by Hon “Mbokodo” Ester Mokoale, and the Office of the Auditor-General of South Africa and other Chapter 9 institutions, as we work towards delivering quality services to the people of Limpopo province.

Thanks very much. Ke a leboga. Kgotso ebe le lena.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Rachoene. You took 19 minutes to show that we are really launching the EPWP programme. The Budget Speech together with the Annual Performance Plan for Vote 09, is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure for consideration and to report back to the House.

Budget Speech Vote 07: Department of Health. We are going to call upon the MEC for Health, Hon Mashego Dieketseng, to come and present the Budget Speech. [APPLAUSE]

THE MEC FOR HEALTH

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT HEALTH

(Address by Ms D M Mashego, MEC for Health)

Hon Speaker and Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; colleagues in the Executive Council; Hon Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip of the ruling party; Chair of Chairs; Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health, Dr Malebana; Leader of the Official Opposition; honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature (MPLs); Director-General of the province and all HODs; invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, thobela. Ndi Matsheloni. Goeie mōre. Lotjhani. Good morning. Avuxeni.

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to my predecessor, our capable Premier, Hon Ramathuba, who set the bar very high and succeeded in taking the department to new heights, which I have to reach and go beyond. To the Hon Premier, happy birthday, “Mbokodo”, ungesabi. Ni vhe na ðuvha ðavhuði.

Ours is to ensure that we do not only maintain the standard but also strive to improve on areas that are still lagging behind. While the previous term ensured that the building blocks of our health system, i.e., human resources, infrastructure (buildings and ambulances), financial systems, health technology and commodities, are all in place, the next chapter will focus on ensuring that all these resources are utilised effectively, efficiently and economically in pursuit of the vision of the department – a long and healthy life for the people in Limpopo province.

Hon Speaker, we are enthused by the priorities of the ruling party, the African National Congress, which President Ramaphosa further gave effect to through his pronouncements of the plan of action of the Government of National Unity that the ANC is leading.

Building Block 1: Human Resources Management: The onset of the economic downswing has had a negative impact on the department’s plan to maintain its momentum when it comes to employment of personnel, such that a 4,9% reduction of fulltime employees was experienced from a total of 30 533 in February 2023 to 29,119 currently. Medical specialists also reduced by 1,4% from 143 in the previous financial year to 141 currently. The same goes for professional nurses, where there was a reduction of 3,2% from 8 784 in the previous financial year to 8 511 currently.

While this may also be seen as a saving that was intended by the austerity measures implemented during the previous financial year, in health, there are always risks associated with the nonfilling of posts. However, we have now seen and appreciate a

relaxation of the austerity measures and have no doubt that this will improve the department's ability to stem the tide against depletion in the current financial year.

Our department's social sector EPWP programme has created 778 work opportunities during the previous financial year for community health worker assistants, general workers for food services, U-filing assistants and data capturers. It is expected that the sector will create work opportunities for 448 EPWP cadres for the current financial year. The reduction in the number of job opportunities for EPWP employees is due to the reduced grant allocation of R22 million for this financial year, compared to the allocation of R33 million in the previous one.

During the 2023/24 financial year, the department successfully appointed three heads of Clinical Units for General Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Public Health Medicine. Additionally, 28 medical specialists were appointed, bringing the total number of medical specialists in the province to 143. One of the critical appointments was two nephrology subspecialists as well as a vascular surgeon, appointments that come at a time when the department is currently in the process of decentralising acute and chronic dialysis.

Letaba and Tshilidzini Hospitals' Renal Dialysis Units are to be commissioned before the end of this financial year, with the aim of bringing service closer to the people of the two districts of Mopani and Vhembe, where the scourge of chronic renal failure is at its highest.

Furthermore, during the first quarter of the current financial year, the department managed to appoint nine medical specialists in the following disciplines: Anaesthesia, orthodontics, orthopaedics, paediatric surgery, paediatrics, diagnostic radiology, nephrology and neurosurgery. These appointments will improve access to tertiary services and strengthen the training platform in the province.

Building Block 2: Infrastructure: It is worth mentioning that we have completed two alternative built-technology Neonatal Units at Elim and Tshilidzini Hospitals, as part of the in-kind grant assistance provided by the national Department of Health. The unit at Elim will officially be opened at the end of the second quarter, as it has now received its Occupation Certificate from the Makhado Local Municipality. Conversely, the Tshilidzini Unit is still awaiting the Occupation Certificate from the Thulamela Local Municipality, Hon Basikopo Makamu.

Another important milestone is that my predecessor, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, did come to this august House and promised a computer-aided dispatch system that will help the department to have sight of all its ambulances and, therefore, dispatch the closest ambulance to where it is needed. It is my pleasure to announce that the system has been procured, and the process of its installation is underway. This will obviously improve our response times, which will positively impact the adverse events that lead to medicolegal cases, amongst other negative things.

The department will also be in a better position to monitor ambulances to ensure that they are used for their intended purpose and are not abused. The past financial year was pronounced provincially as the year of Primary Healthcare. With that in mind, great efforts were exerted to strengthen the Primary Healthcare platform in preparation

for accreditation by the Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC) and, therefore, readiness for the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI). To date, the number of primary healthcare facilities that are certified as compliant by the Office of Health Standard Compliance is 207, which represents 43% of the province's PHC facilities.

The number of clinics that were activated to render 24-hour services has increased from 50 to 217 through the combination of straight shifts and on-call systems. Hon Speaker, security breaches at the PHC facilities remain a hinderance, as we have seen some of our facilities rendering a 24-hour service stop due to burglary and violent attacks from criminals. Criminal activities against the health system are extending to other areas. For instance, just last month, a security guard at the Musina Emergency Medical Service Station was gunned down when two armed men attacked the facility. This instils fear and traumatises our staff members.

We continue to make the very same call we made in this House for community leaders, as well as law enforcement agencies, to be vigilant in supporting and safeguarding the department in its entirety so that all services can be rendered without hinderances. While the provision of health services is the responsibility of the government, the role of communities in achieving this cannot be overemphasised. It is only through strong partnerships that the goal, "Health for All", can be achieved.

Building Block 3: Health Technology: In addition to the two Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) units at Mankweng and Pietersburg Hospitals, the Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan (PET/CT scan) that was ordered is now in the country, awaiting delivery and installation at Pietersburg Hospital. Once installed, our patients will no longer have to travel to Gauteng, and, in addition, the waiting time for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer will be reduced. The infrastructural alterations are in process to prepare for the installation of the PET/CT scan. In this financial year, we will see our last regional hospital, Philadelphia Hospital, getting its PET/CT scan, completing the plan of strengthening tertiary services platforms in all districts.

We have completed the refurbishment and upgrades of the EMS station at Ladana, which includes the Communication Centre for the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch System) for ambulances. As part of embracing the President's call to build a capable state, we are strengthening internal capacity that allows us, as government, to solve many of our challenges using our own available resources. We are proud to indicate that, without outsourcing, we have managed to fix boreholes and restore water in 99 facilities through the use of our own Technical Support Staff team: all that from April to July 2024.

Building Block 4: Health Financial Systems: With the decline in provincial allocations, we continue to emphasise revenue generation. In the 2023/24 financial year, we surpassed our revenue target by collecting R222 million. We are optimistic about meeting future revenue targets.

While primary healthcare services remain free, we encourage those who can, to contribute towards the cost of health services by paying for what they enjoy at our hospitals. To this end, it is important that people provide accurate information in facilities to support this quest for improved revenue generation as well as for effective

service delivery in general. This Budget Speech cannot be concluded without making a commitment to the Premier's directive to this department, that is, maintaining compliance with paying suppliers within 30 days.

Regarding our audit outcome, it is with a sense of accomplishment and gratitude that I stand before you today to reflect on our department's progress in financial management. In the 2023/24 financial year, our audit outcome was a qualification due to misstatements in respect of contingent liabilities. This was a challenging period for us as we navigated the complexities of financial reporting in this regard. However, I am proud to announce that in the 2023/24 financial year, our department has received an unqualified audit opinion. This is a significant improvement from the prior year, and it reflects the hard work and dedication of our team to enhance the accuracy and transparency of our financial management practices.

Hon Speaker, the Budget breakdown for Vote 07 (Health) is as follows:

The overall Budget for Health has increased by 3,6% from the financial year 2023/24 Main Appropriation, and also increased by 0,1% from the Adjusted Appropriation. Within this allocation, the equitable share grew by 3,5%, whereas conditional grants decreased by 4,1%. The Equitable Share decreased by 1% from the 2023/24 adjusted allocation, whereas Conditional Grants increased by 5,8 % from the 2023/24 adjusted allocation.

In monetary terms, the total Budget increases from R23,8 billion in 2023/24 to R24,6 billion in the 2024/25 financial year. The total allocation increases by an average of 4,9% over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). Honourable Members, I am therefore honoured and indeed privileged to table to this noble House the Budget for Health Vote 07 for the year 2024/25 to the value of R24,6 billion, which consists of R20,3 billion equitable share, R4,1 billion conditional grants and R220,6 million for own revenue.

The Budget has been allocated to fund the following key priorities of the department:

- Strengthening District Health Services (which is Primary Healthcare) and District Hospital Delivery Systems by R12,8 billion. This shows an increase of 2% from the 2023/24 financial year. This is the backbone of the health delivery system and is therefore allocated 52,9% of the total Budget of the department. The budget of this priority grows by an average of 5,3% over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).
- An amount of R3 billion has been allocated for Regional and Psychiatric Hospitals. This allocation is important for the provision of specialised health services not primarily rendered in District Hospital Services, as well as Primary Healthcare.
- Malaria Control Services are allocated R87,9 million in equitable share. Furthermore, an amount of R72 million has been allocated within the Conditional Grant Framework in order to prevent and control malaria in the affected areas of this province.

- Comprehensive HIV and Aids programme funding, including TB services, has been provided at R2 billion.
- An amount of R1,1 billion has been set aside for the running of Emergency Medical Services in the province.
- Tertiary Services in the province have been provided for at R2,2 billion. These services continue to be provided in Pietersburg and Mankweng Tertiary Hospitals.
- An amount of R848,2 million has been allocated to the Health Infrastructure programme. This allocation will be used mainly for health facilities' revitalisation. as well as building and equipment maintenance.
- An amount of R666,2 million has been set aside mainly for the Training of Health Professionals as part of our commitment to reduce the vacancy rate in this category.
- Hon Speaker, in order to maintain the stock levels at our clinics, health centres and hospitals across the province, a R1,7 billion medicine allocation has been provided. This includes an amount of R615,9 million for the provision of ARVs (antiretroviral drugs) to HIV-positive patients and R347,2 million for vaccines to reduce infant and child mortality.

Madam Speaker, before I step down, I would like to address a rather sensitive issue of medicolegal cases that has contributed to the significant balance in our contingent liabilities. These cases have been a longstanding challenge for our department, both in terms of the financial impact and the strain they place on our resources. I am also aware that the executive, medical specialists and the legal teams are currently hard at work devising measures to reduce the occurrence of adverse events that lead to these cases, while also strengthening strategies to defend them.

Hon Speaker, I wish to thank my team at the Department of Health, under the leadership of the Acting HOD, Dr Ndwamato, for the sterling work that they are doing to advance the objectives of our department and government in general. We thank you, HOD, and your team. [APPLAUSE] Above all, let me take this opportunity to thank you all, honourable Members. Re a leboga. Siyathokoza. Hi khensile. Inkomu. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mashego. The Budget Speech together with the Annual Performance Plan for Vote 07, is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Health for consideration and to report back to the House.

Budget Speech Vote 02: Limpopo Legislature. We shall call upon the Speaker, Hon Makhurupetje.

THE SPEAKER

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE

(Address by Ms M G Makhurupetje, Speaker to the Limpopo Legislature)

Presiding Officer, Deputy Speaker, Ms Tebogo Mamorobela; Premier of the province, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the House, Mr Essob Mokgonyana; Leader of Government Business, Hon Basikopo Makamu; Leaders of the Opposition; Chairperson of Committees, Mr Mokone and your Deputy, Mr Ngobeni, let me also take this opportunity to greet and welcome the chairperson of the Oversight Mechanism Committee, Vhothovhele Prince Midiavhathu Kennedy Tshivhase; honourable Members of this House; distinguished guests; people of Limpopo who are following these proceedings on radio and social platforms; ladies and gentlemen; guests that are sitting in the gallery. Thobela. Ndi matsheloni. Avuxeni. Lotjhani.

We table the 2024/25 Budget Speech of the Limpopo Legislature Vote 02 after successful provincial and national elections, which were held on 29 May 2024. This was a critical milestone in our democracy, and our province has done well in those elections, as the outcomes were declared free and fair by the IEC in the country. They have exercised their democratic right to elect the people who should represent their interests in this august House.

The outcome of those elections saw the African National Congress having the majority representation in this House. This is a clear indication that the people of Limpopo have overwhelmingly renewed the mandate of the ANC to govern and oversee the affairs of the province on their behalf. For the first time in the history of our province we are led by a woman Premier; Dr Phophi Ramathuba.

This is history in the making and a great progressive move in addressing gender inequalities. It is indeed a great progress for women's emancipation in our lifetime. As the Limpopo Legislature, we assure the Premier of our full support during the Seventh Administration but at the same time, without compromising our constitutional mandate. The 2024/25 Budget Speech is delivered as we celebrate National Women's Month. As a province, we have celebrated and joined in a very successful Women's Month event at Thononda, Vhembe District, led by the energetic first citizen of the province, the first female Premier of Limpopo, our number one, on her birthday today, Dr Constance Phophi Ramathuba. Happy birthday, Madam! We have commemorated the contribution of great women leaders like Ms Charlotte Maxeke, Ms Lilian Ngoyi, Ms Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Ms Lydia Komape-Ngwenya, Ms Joyce Mashamba, Ms Thembi Nwendamutswu, Ms Joy Matshoge and others who contributed immensely to our democracy.

Indeed, they did not die but multiplied. In their spirit, they are happy that Limpopo's Seventh Administration is led by a woman. We dare not disappoint them.

The people of Limpopo continue to celebrate three decades of our democracy; the democracy that has brought new hope, cherished by nonracial, nonsexist and democratic elections held since 1994. In his Parliament Opening Address in July 2024, the President of the country, His Excellency Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, alluded to this in line with the celebration of 30 years of our democracy: "Despite the achievements of 30 years of democracy and the work undertaken over the last five

years to rebuild our economy and our society, millions of South Africans remain poor, unemployed and live in a highly unequal society.”

On the same note, our own Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, further indicated the role of the Legislature in her Official Opening Address when she said, “As we run the gauntlet of the ensuing five years, we are on course with a cogent plan to achieve more rapid, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and job creation to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living, to build a capable, ethical and developmental state. These three priorities are the mainstays of the democratic administration. The Limpopo Legislature stands ready to ensure that these priorities are converted into actions that will inform our endeavour to create a better life for all.”

Honourable Members, in light of the challenges still facing our society 30 years after democracy, the role of legislatures in changing the lives of the people remains unavoidable. This role is clearly articulated in the words of former President Nelson Mandela, the first democratic President, when he delivered a moving speech during the final Sitting of the first democratically elected Parliament on 26 March 1999, when he said, “It is in the legislatures that instruments have been fashioned to create a better life for all. It is here that oversight of government has been exercised. It is here that our society in all its formations has had an opportunity to influence policy and its implementation. In brief, we have laid the foundation for a better life for all. Things that were unimaginable a few years ago have become everyday reality. And of this, we must be proud.”

The Limpopo Legislature amplifies this responsibility by stating that we remain a vanguard of people’s aspirations and interests towards a democratic, nonsexist, nonracial, united and prosperous society.

Indeed, it is common knowledge that the hopes and aspirations of the people who voted lie in the Legislature, as evident from the projects and programmes achieved in the sixth term through robust oversight, effective public participation and laws enacted to address societal challenges.

Just now, Hon Mashego, the MEC for Health, alluded to how the audit outcomes improved. I can stand here and affirm the work that has been done by Scopa in the previous administration and say that I want to thank that team for doing such credible work in the previous oversight. The Legislature is constitutionally expected to hold the Executive accountable on behalf of the people who voted for us. In the theory of the principal-agent relationship, which defines the relationship between the Legislature and the citizens, it is clearly stated as “one authorises the other” to perform actions on their behalf.

This implies that the principals are the citizens who provide instructions to the agent, which is the Legislature, to act on their behalf. An agent’s duties include acting in a principal’s best interests and adhering to legal regulations or social contract agreed upon during elections.

Comparatively speaking, the Legislature stands in a unique position in relation to other structures and entities in society. The powers bestowed on it to exercise lawmaking, oversight and public participation should be held sacred by all of us in this House as

we continue to represent our various constituencies in a more diligent and faithful manner.

Drawing from the work done by the Sixth Administration, the Limpopo Legislature has relentlessly continued with its mission of oversight without fail. Even as the term was drawing to an end, the committees of the Legislature actively engaged in their responsibilities. In the year under review, the Legislature successfully exercised oversight over the Executive Authority in the province by scrutinising the budgets and performance plans of the departments and entities. The Legislature has also concluded a series of engagements with the Executive and conducted oversight visits to several projects across the province.

Standing on the shoulders of giants and icons like former President Nelson Mandela and looking back at what has been done before us, we can proudly speak like Nelson Mandela when he said: “Look at the work of the committees that have scrutinised legislation and improved it, posed difficult questions to the Executive and given the public insight and oversight of government as never before.” This is the foundation on which the Seventh Administration must build and improve to ensure a better life for the people. There is no better time or historical epoch than this to work towards change that will yield meaningful results for the citizens of Limpopo.

Honourable Members, in striving to make the lives of people better, it is important that the Legislature prioritises service delivery issues when exercising oversight over the Executive. Informed by this imperative, it is our undertaking as the Legislature to prioritise projects and programmes that drive the economy of the province, which will be monitored to ensure that people’s lives are changed for the better.

Matters of deliberations in committee meetings must be meaningful and aimed at creating a better life for all, rather than engagements which may be lacking the necessary drive to transform our society and communities. The priority areas mentioned in various Budget Speeches by departments in this House will inform our oversight priorities and strategies as we engage in focused oversight aimed at improving people’s lives.

Looking back, and looking ahead, our committees will intensify oversight efforts over the coming year with a specific focus on projects that are poised to catalyse a significant turnaround in the province’s economy. Public participation continues to organise relevant stakeholders and different sectors through public hearings, enabling them to make inputs on different Bills. In intensifying public participation, the Legislature committees will continue to mobilise different sectors of society and sectoral parliaments, spearheaded by the Standing Committee on Quality of Life, Status of Women, Youth and People with Disability.

In maximising public participation in the lawmaking process, public hearings will be conducted across the length and breadth of our province, targeting relevant stakeholders to improve the quality of inputs and inform the public to partake in the proposed Bill amendments. Public participation continues to organise relevant stakeholders and different sectors through public hearings.

It is worth noting that the Legislature has scrutinised critical Bills, such as the Appropriation Bill that lapsed at the end of the Sixth Administration, to ensure that departments have access to the budget so that they can deliver services to the people.

The petition process has further provided interventions to solve and resolve challenges facing communities. It has inspired hope and confidence in our citizens by intervening and handling petitions. The Legislature provides interventions and resolves challenges through petitions received, and the processes have unblocked many abandoned and unfinished projects, among other issues. It enables individuals and communities to be considered and heard, and many of the issues are resolved amicably by departments and other entities.

In our engagements, as the Legislature, with the Auditor-General, it has emerged that the impact of work projects by departments on the lives of our people, communities and ordinary people is becoming increasingly important and a key area of focus for the Auditor-General. We will continue, as the Legislature, to make sure that we build a strong relationship between the committees and the AG when they are doing their work.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Seventh Administration has just commenced, and capacity building remains one of our key priorities. The goal is to ascertain that Members of the Legislature are well equipped to ensure that they perform their responsibilities effectively. The Legislature has arranged several capacity-building programmes to train Members. We are aware that the first programme has taken place already from 01 to 04 July 2024, which was an induction. We are planning the second induction, which will take place during the first week of September 2024, to ensure that committees are able to do their work effectively.

As we table this Budget for consideration by this august House, let us not forget that we still have an obligation to fulfil our responsibility of ensuring that the strategic plans for the Seventh Administration are prepared and tabled within six months of the elections as per the requirements of the Public Finance Management Act and the Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act. It is a well-known fact that the seats in the Limpopo Legislature have increased from 49 to 64 as per the IEC determination, which was informed by the population dynamics of the province over the years.

This is a positive development, indeed. However, it has brought some pressures to the existing budget provision, honourable MEC for Treasury, which is not sufficient to cover the needs and demands of a developing institution. The following are some of the budget pressures; thus, the Legislature will be working with the Provincial Treasury so that it can deal with them:

- Salaries for additional Members in the House;
- Vehicles to cater for the additional Members as they are doing their oversight work;
- Accommodation for Members is still an issue; Members are still worried about it;

- Fleet, repairs and maintenance;
- Committee work – we need more staff to make sure that committees are able to do their work and are supported effectively;
- NCOP office rentals and other expenses relating to Members when they are attending the NCOP activities; and
- Our security services need further attention, especially with the incident that happened recently.

Honourable Members, I hope Hon Mapoulo was not listening, having outlined some of the existing gaps and pressures, let me state that the total Budget allocation for Limpopo Legislature in the 2024/25 financial year is R549,516 million of the equitable share. For the financial year 2025/26, it is R542,082 million, and for the financial year 2026/2027, it is R626,182 million.

The Budget, as presented, covers employee costs, goods and services, capital expenditure, as well as support to political parties. The Budget is distributed across the three main programmes of the Legislature as follows:

Programme 1: Administration	: R173,208 million;
Programme 2: Facilities for Members and Political Party Support	:R244,205 million;
and	
Programme 3: Parliamentary Services	:R132,103 million.

As I conclude, let me express my appreciation to my revolutionary movement, the African National Congress, in this august House for entrusting me with these responsibilities. I as well want to appreciate the Members of this Legislature and its staff, led by the Acting Secretary, Dr Nkuna, and your management, as well as our Chief of Staff, Dr Makhado. It is important that I also appreciate Ms Tlou, my personal assistant. I thank you so much, Ms Tlou; you are doing a great job. I really appreciate that, as well as your team and their unwavering support and commitment in this important task of serving the people of Limpopo. Honourable Members, it is my honour and privilege to table the Limpopo Legislature 2024/25 Budget Vote to this House.

Thank You. Ndo Livhuwa. Kea Leboga. Ndza Khensa. Baie dankie.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Makhurupetje. The Budget Speech, together with the Annual Performance Plan for Vote 02, is referred to the Oversight Mechanism Committee for consideration and to report back to the House.

Budget Speech Vote 11: Department of CoGHSTA. We shall call upon Mr Basikopo Rogers Makamu to come and deliver the speech for the Department of CoGHSTA. Thank you.

THE MEC FOR COGHSTA

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COGHSTA

(Address by Mr R B Makamu, MEC for CoGHSTA)

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House; our Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip of the Legislature; my colleagues in the Executive Council; honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature; Your Worship Executive Mayors and Mayors of our municipalities who are here; leadership of Salga in our province; Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, including the Executive; leadership of Contralesa; our esteemed Majesties and Royal Highnesses present here; leadership of the African National Congress, representatives of NHBRC, Risima and HDA; CoGHSTA staff led by the HOD, Dr M Malahlela; members of the media; comrades; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

As we gather here today in the month of August, we reflect on the significant strides that women have made in our society. It was in this very month in 1956 that women from all walks of life united in the Great Women's March to the Union Buildings, where they fearlessly demanded an end to the oppressive pass laws. These women not only carried the aspirations of their own generation but also laid the groundwork for the freedom we enjoy today.

Fast forward to 2024, we celebrate not only the achievements of women in our society but also their leadership. It is a point of pride that we have a woman Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, and a woman Speaker, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje, presiding over this esteemed House. These advancements are a testament to the 30 years of freedom and democracy that our country has enjoyed and continues to enjoy, as we also celebrate the birthday of our Premier today.

As I alluded to in the previous Budget Speech in this august House in March this year, the Seventh Administration of the Limpopo Provincial Government is finally upon us. This presents us with an opportunity to roll out programmes and projects that will transform the lives of our people in our province. As we roll out our programmes, we must, at all material times, ensure that they contribute massively to the economic growth and development of our province and the people, as alluded to by the Hon Premier, who put economic development at the top of our priority list.

On programme 1, Administration, during his Opening Address of Parliament, President Ramaphosa said, "We remain on course to build a capable and professional civil service that delivers on its mandate and is accountable to the South African people..." The department is continuing with capacity building internally in order to have a stable and well-functioning organisation that is able to deliver on its mandate. We have, in the current financial year advertised 55 vacant positions, which include two Deputy Director General (DDG) positions for branches on Traditional Affairs and Cooperative Governance. Filling these two DDG positions will assist us to continue to focusing on supporting and improving the performance of municipalities and strengthening our support to traditional leadership in the province.

The department has attained an unqualified audit opinion with findings from the Auditor-General. Honourable Members must take note that, although the audit

outcomes have not changed, the department has, however, improved based on the reduction in matters of emphasis in the Auditor's report. The department has also achieved fair presentation of the annual financial statements without material misstatements. This translates to a clean bill of health for our financial statements for the 2023/24 financial year.

On programme 2, Integrated Human Settlements, the Freedom Charter says, "There shall be houses, security and comfort." Housing remains a cornerstone of human dignity and a key indicator of a society's progress. Our commitment to breaking new ground in integrated human settlements has led to significant strides in providing housing for all, particularly for vulnerable groups such as military veterans. On asbestos removal and replacement, we have made notable progress in eradicating mud houses, replacing asbestos roofing and ensuring that our people live in safe and healthy environments.

The second phase of the removal and replacement of 755 asbestos roofs has commenced. To date, 20 roofs have been replaced in the first quarter of the current financial year. Unlike somewhere in other provinces, you can visit Seshego now; you will see the work in progress.

The principal agent has been appointed to finalise Phase 4 of our CRUs, which are:

- The Tzaneen-Talana CRU project. Hon Velile Jack, which comprises 452 units. The detailed designs have been provisionally approved, and the PA is now in the process of finalising the design for review. You will no longer see those mikhukhu that you spoke about here.
- The Makhado-Tshikota CRU project, which consists of 118 units, has completed 50% of the earthworks, with sewer and water installations at 21% and 7%, respectively. Our expectation is that, by the end of this financial year, extensive work would have been done. The people of Tshikota have been waiting for this life-changing project, and we promise to deliver it to them.
- The Marapong CRU project, which has been delayed, comprises 514 units and is currently at 81% completion, with 419 units roofed. However, the project has faced delays due to the transition of responsibilities from the principal agent (PA) to the project review team (PRT) for management. Additionally, the contractor's poor performance, which has now been put on terms, is delaying us. The department and the National Housing Finance Corporation will develop a model and project for Altoostyd, popularly known as the Joe Slovo Integrated Human Settlements Development in Lephalale.

Out of 26 bulk infrastructure projects, 12 are located in Region A, which comprises Sekhukhune, Capricorn and Waterberg District Municipalities. In Lebowakgomo Unit F, also known as Makotse, the contractor is actively engaged in earthworks for the installation of sewer pipes and manholes. The Masakaneng Bulk Water and Sewer Infrastructure project at Elias Motsoaledi is at 95% completion, and Rossenekal Geohydrological Study, Borehole Refurbishment and Mapping projects is at 98% completion.

On title deeds, additionally, we are focused on the transfer of title deeds, which is a significant milestone in our work to empower communities. By giving our people ownership of their homes, we are not just providing them with a place to live; we are giving them a stake in property ownership in this country. Our people can use a title deed as collateral at the bank to apply for a loan for economic activities.

On our mining towns, the department is actively supporting the revitalisation of five designated mining towns, which are Lephalale, Thabazimbi, Mogalakwena, Elias Motsoaledi, and Fetakgomo-Tubatse. Our primary focus is on the development of essential water and sanitation infrastructure within these municipalities. For the 2024/25 financial year, an allocation exceeding R200 million has been earmarked for projects across these towns. These projects are at various stages of implementation, with Motetema Wastewater Treatment Works successfully completed in the first quarter of the financial year at a cost of R26,7 million.

On military veterans, the construction of 132 houses for military veterans is underway, with 22 of these homes successfully completed in the first quarter of this financial year. That is where Hon Velile Jack belongs; among those 22 houses that have been completed and handed over successfully. Each completed house not only provides shelter but also serves as a heartfelt gesture of gratitude, ensuring that our veterans have a place to call home as a token of appreciation for their courage and dedication.

On land acquisition, the department has set a target of acquiring 20 ha of land in the 2024/25 financial year, with R12,6 million allocated to secure suitably located land for integrated, sustainable human settlements, with a special focus on Priority Human Settlements and Housing Development Areas (PHSHDAs) and special economic zones (SEZs). Land has been identified in Makhado and Polokwane, which will support the PHSHDAs and SEZ developments, respectively. The Housing Development Agency has been mandated to assess and acquire these land portions. Additionally, the department has received a response from the Treasury on the Musina land acquisition. Continued engagements between the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, and the Housing Development Agency are progressing very well to agree on the valuation method.

On the formalisation of informal settlements, the department has set a target to formalise seven informal settlements in the 2024/25 financial year, with a budget of R8,4 million. This will be done in Mogalakwena, Fetakgomo-Tubatse, Maruleng, Greater Tzaneen and Modimolle-Mookgophong Municipalities.

On programme 3, Cooperative Governance, President Ramaphosa had this to say, “In the design of our democratic unitary state, we introduced cooperative governance to ensure that the three spheres of government worked together to meet the needs of the people.”

Our focus on cooperative governance is aimed at ensuring that all municipalities are well governed to deliver all basic services to the communities of our province. The improvement in spending on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant is a testament to our commitment to building better communities. At the end of June 2024, R3,148 billion had been spent, translating to 94,4%. This expenditure is higher than in June 2023,

which was 88,3%, reflecting an increase of 6,1%. An amount of R186,316 million will remain unspent, and municipalities will be advised to submit applications for rollovers.

The institutionalisation of the District Development Model (DDM) continues to be a priority, as it fosters greater collaboration between all levels of government by ensuring that resources are utilised efficiently. On the state of our municipalities, we must acknowledge both the progress made and the challenges that remain. The importance of effective local governance cannot be overstated, as municipalities are the closest level of government to our people. Municipalities are responsible for fostering development in our communities, as His Excellency, President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, emphasised during the Opening of Parliament: “Our municipalities must become both the providers of social services and facilitators of inclusive economic growth.”

The Hon Premier made it clear in this august House that the provision of water to our communities should occupy centre stage. The ‘Hi Nwa Mati Fridays’ initiative will be launched tomorrow at Homu 14a in the Greater Giyani Municipality. I must indicate that someone once took this podium and asked where we would get the additional funds to make sure that ‘Hi Nwa Mati Fridays happens’. It is just an attitude! The Premier has brought this Seventh Administration to focus on how fast we should be able to deliver services without additional funding. So, tomorrow, we are inviting honourable Members who are available to join the Premier as we open a tap in most areas that people talk about here, such as Giyani, which has been without water.

The Homu people, N’wakhuwana people, Shivulana people and Nwazekudzeku people are starting to realise that the much-awaited water projects are being delivered. Honourable Members can also, during their spare time – I may not talk because I come from there) – visit the area I am talking about. They will be able to see water coming out.

Going forward, municipalities are expected to submit their individual annual financial statements by the end of August 2024.

Over the past year, we have taken significant steps to improve the performance of our municipalities in areas such as Thabazimbi, Musina and others. We have introduced targeted interventions that have already begun to bear fruit. However, I must indicate that Thabazimbi still remains a major challenge, both administratively and politically. Hence, yesterday, the Premier made the pronouncement of the intention of this Executive Council to intervene in the state of that municipality.

This intervention is not based on any political will, and we will come to the House to update you, as required by law, on what is transpiring in that municipality. You can’t have a municipality that fails to appoint a single qualified manager, from the Municipal Manager down to the last director. We will not allow that. Hence, we agree that swilo swi cincile, Mr Mapoulo.

We will engage regularly with external auditors regarding their findings, and the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) will monitor progress. It is crucial for municipalities to comply with legislative prescripts governing municipalities. Of serious concern is the high reliance on consultants by municipalities. It is on this basis that we

concur with the President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency, Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, when he said, “We will put in place systems to ensure that capable and qualified people are appointed on senior positions in municipalities.” Together with the Provincial Treasury, we are working to address this issue so that, with qualified people employed, municipal funds used for consultants can instead be directed towards addressing service delivery challenges faced by our communities.

On Disaster Management, we cannot stop natural disasters, but we can arm ourselves with knowledge: so many lives wouldn't have to be lost if there was enough disaster preparedness.” “Some people don't like change, but you need to embrace change if the alternative is disaster.”

Rampant fires are raging across the province, causing extensive damage in areas such as Tzaneen, Waterberg, Modjadjiskloof mountains and other regions. Our disaster management teams have been hard at work, responding to emergencies and ensuring that our communities are fire-wise, encouraging a culture of risk avoidance in the face of these challenges. We have issued appeals to the public to remain vigilant, take necessary precautions, and cooperate with emergency services to minimise the impact of these devastating fires.

On Traditional Affairs, the Hon Premier has mandated me to continue the work that began in the Sixth Administration of supporting the institution of traditional affairs. I declare here and now that the preservation of our traditional and cultural heritage is a vital part of our work, and I will do whatever it takes to move the institution of traditional leadership towards a brighter future. Over the past year, we have invested in building and rehabilitating traditional council offices, by ensuring that our traditional leaders have the infrastructure they need to serve their communities effectively. For this financial year, we plan to construct four traditional council offices. Contractors are expected to take site soon. Procurement for the construction of the Mapela Traditional Council office is being attended to by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure.

We have also procured and delivered 163 vehicles in the previous financial year, unlike what was said in this House; that we are electioneering. About 108 vehicles have been handed over to senior traditional leaders, while 56 more will be processed. There are no elections now, but we will continue with the programme. These vehicles will be procured and delivered before the end of this financial year. These vehicles are provided to the senior traditional leaders to enable them to carry out their duties with the dignity and respect they deserve.

For the 2024 financial year, we have set a target to procure furniture for 24 traditional council offices. We are prepared to deliver them as soon as all assessments are finalised. We applaud and congratulate our traditional leaders for the successful hosting and completion of the 2024 traditional initiation school season. This is a source of pride for us, as it demonstrates our commitment to preserving our customs and traditions in a safe and respectful manner.

The constitution and reconstitution of traditional councils have been conducted with transparency and inclusivity, ensuring that these bodies truly represent the communities they serve.

As I conclude, first and foremost, I must thank my family for their unwavering support; the African National Congress, under whose banner we serve the people of this province, whose support we don't take for granted. To the Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; and my colleagues in the Executive Council, your collaboration and dedication have made our collective efforts possible. I also wish to acknowledge the Members of the Oversight Committee; my chairperson, Hon Sepuru.

A special thank you goes to the Head of Department, Dr Modjadji Malahlela; and his dedicated staff of the Department of CoGHSTA. Your hard work and commitment are the backbone of the achievements we celebrate today.

In conclusion, Hon Deputy Speaker, I am proud to stand before this House today to present the Budget Vote 11 for the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs. This Budget is not merely a financial document; it is a blueprint for building a better future for all the people of South Africa and Limpopo in particular. Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. Khanimambo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Makamu. The Budget Speech, together with the Annual Performance Plan for Vote 11, is referred to the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA for consideration and to report back to the House.

Budget Speech Vote 12: Department of Social Development. I will call on the MEC for Social Development, Hon Fulufhelo Radzilani.

THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

(Address by Ms F F Radzilani, MEC for Social Development)

Lotsha, Muhulisei Vho Mapoulo. Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker and Hon Speaker of this august House; Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba; esteemed Members of the Executive Council; Leader of Government Business, Hon Rogers Basikopo Makamu; Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip of this august House; Chair of Chairs and Deputy Chair of Chairs; leaders of opposition parties; chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development, Hon Simon Mathe, and all portfolio committee members; Members of this august House; management of the department, led by the Acting HOD; members of the media; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen. A very good morning to you all, and a happy, blessed birthday to our Hon Premier.

We are grateful, Hon Premier, as the Department for Social Development, that you chose Kgaogelong Disability Care Centre to celebrate your special day with some of special people in our society. We feel very much honoured as the department. [APPLAUSE] It is my pleasure and great honour to debate the Budget Vote for Social Development in this august House on behalf of the African National Congress (ANC) in its quest to transform the lives of the Limpopo general populace for the better.

I stand before you during a significant moment in our journey as a nation and a province, reflecting on the promise of a new dawn heralded by the Seventh Administration. This is a pivotal time for us as we embrace the importance of change that is not only necessary but inevitable as we navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Despite the significant gains we have made since the democratic breakthrough, we are still sitting with challenges where our people struggle to provide for their families, inequality remains widespread, and joblessness continues to haunt our people, particularly the youth, women, children, the elderly and people living with disability.

These challenges are at the centre of the priorities we have set ourselves as the African National Congress, which were informed by the priorities outlined in our election manifesto, key and central to this vote, but are not limited to:

- Strengthening our comprehensive social security system to reduce poverty, vulnerability, social exclusion and inequality through social assistance.
- Investing in our people through strengthening the role of families in supporting both younger and older citizens and giving special attention to the responsibilities of families in raising children.
- Strengthening the quality of services provided to older persons, including community-based and residential care facilities, and afford them the necessary consideration and respect by society.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as we gather here during August, a month dedicated to celebrating the strength and resilience of women, we would like to extend our heartfelt acknowledgment to the energetic and inspiring Premier of our province, Dr Phophi Ramathuba. Her elevation to the high position of Premier will be written in the annals of history, as she became the first woman to hold this esteemed position in Limpopo. Her leadership symbolises a significant milestone in our province's journey towards equality and empowerment.

Hon Deputy Speaker, on older persons, the concerning incidents of abuse and sexual attacks of older persons fortify the need to strengthen our capacity in caring for these vulnerable members of our society. We appreciate the importance of providing appropriate conditions for our older persons.

Consequently, a total of 542 older persons will access residential facilities, while 13 900 older persons will access community-based care and support services for the 2024/2025 financial year. We believe that through these facilities, they will enjoy safety, care and support, which are in line with the preservation of their human rights.

From 28 October to 01 November 2024, our province will participate in the National Active Aging games, popularly known as the Golden Games, in the North West province. As Limpopo province, we consistently participate in these games, as we acknowledge their importance in the promotion of active aging and improving quality of life for older persons.

Regarding persons with disability, a total of 294 people living with disability will be provided with access to residential facilities, while 3 510 will access protective workshops in the 2024/2025 financial year. The newly appointed service provider at Shiluvana Frail Care Centre – the centre that I'm fully aware the Hon Premier has a keen interest in – continues to render services to our frail patients, bringing stability and comfort to frail patients in the province.

In relation to services to families, a few weeks after I assumed my responsibility, I observed a concerning hike in social ills. Social ills ranging from domestic violence, gender-based violence, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and attacks of older persons, among others, which, in my view, were unacceptably escalating. We consequently resolved to launch a Family Revitalisation Programme, whose objective is to revitalise dysfunctional families while striving for stable families and communities.

Through this programme, we will visit identified dysfunctional families through our social work services and provide support and advisory services. Through this programme, we believe that many social ills will be eradicated because a village filled with functional families is a village free of negative social ills. We call upon the people of Limpopo, including honourable Members of this House, to welcome us into their families so that we can restore the family as the basic unit of society.

On Child Care and Protection Services, the subsidy amount for children in Child and Youth Care Centres has increased from R3 500 to R4 000 per child per month. Currently, 824 individuals are placed in Child and Youth Care Centres. There are 15 Child and Youth Care Centres, of which five are run by government.

Hon Deputy Speaker, on our focus on social crime, during her maiden speech, the Premier issued a directive that our department and the Department of Transport and Community Safety, as Hon Mathye alluded to when she was delivering the Budget Speech, the Department of Health, the Department of Police, the National Prosecution Authority and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development must convene a consultative forum to fight crime, which she correctly described as a pandemic.

We will start in earnest the preparations for this forum, which we concede is long overdue. The forum is certainly destined to make a definite impact in the fight against crime. We will take this consultative forum to all districts to give a voice to our people so that, together, we can wage war against crime. We have no doubt, Hon Premier, that a crime-free Limpopo is achievable.

With regard to the Victim Empowerment Programme, the department has planned to reach 11 230 victims of violence and crime during this financial year. To make this a reality, our department, together with our national counterparts as well as the European Union, has partnered with three nonprofit making organisations in Sekhukhune, Vhembe and Waterberg Districts to renovate three victim empowerment houses that will be used as shelters. These initiatives will provide comfort to victims of gender-based violence as well as providing hope for them that the government cares for them and that tomorrow will be better.

Substance abuse requires our full attention. The abuse of drugs, particularly by young men and women, is escalating at a concerning rate. This compels us to act with agility in rescuing our youth from this scourge. In this financial year, we will reach out to 49 280 individuals through our campaigns, and we remain hopeful that we will make the desired impact.

We are in the process of finalising a partnership agreement with Northam Mines to build a new treatment centre in Sekhukhune District to cater largely for young people addicted to drugs. The Provincial Substance Abuse Forum, which is constituted by stakeholders from different departments, NPOs and members of the Central Drug Authority (CDA), continues to add value to our efforts to fight this pandemic. Hon Deputy Speaker, poverty alleviation and sustainable development remain our focus areas.

During the Legislature's Opening Address, Hon Premier declared poverty and hunger as enemy number one. The Premier's declaration forms part of our commitment that no money will be surrendered to Treasury for as long as throngs of our people continue to be trapped in the sea of poverty.

In line with the Premier's directive, we will increase the number of vulnerable households accessing food from the current 4 550 to 7 200 through the department's food security programmes. We will leave no one behind. No child must go to bed on an empty stomach under our government. Hon Premier, next week Wednesday, 21 August 2024, I will be joining Thovhele Vho Mulima, together with all traditional leaders vhane vha wela fhasi ha Vhothovhele Vho Mulima. Ri do vha ri tshi khou netshedza zwiliwa kha zwisiwana zwi swikaho 150. Ro thoma u shuma, Hon Premier. During this financial year under review, the department is planning to create 2 500 EPWP job opportunities as one of the government's key programmes aimed at alleviating poverty and providing income relief through temporary work for the poor and unemployed.

Our efforts on Institutional Capacity Building and Support for NPOs are on course. Nonprofit organisations continue to play a pivotal role in the execution of social services to communities. We deliver a major part of our mandate as a department through NPOs that get funding and support from us. We have, therefore, planned to capacitate 3 200 NPOs to ensure that they become compliant and thereby able to receive the much-needed funding.

We will be implementing the monitoring and evaluation drive for all NPOs to ensure that there is value for the money we spend as the department, and capacitate those that are struggling, and deregister those that are non-compliant. We are grateful for the pronouncement made by the Minister for Social Development during the tabling of the Departmental Vote on 17 July 2024, to collaborate with provincial departments to deal with capacity building of nonprofit making organisations.

She asserted that "Non-Profit Organisations are also negatively impacted due to significant reduction in funding. I will be engaging with the MECs in all provinces to determine how best we can resolve these two challenges. As mandated by the NPO Act, we will commence with the de-registration of non-compliant NPOs and further briefings on this will be held to advise on the details on how the phased-in approach

will be managed. We will do this, not turning a blind eye to the critical role many of these NPOs play as a service delivery partner of government.”

On Youth Development, the department will afford 600 youth the opportunity to participate in skills development programmes in collaboration with Vaal University of Technology, as well as Human Capital Learning Solutions, and other training partners. This is an endeavour to fight the high levels of youth unemployment. The development and empowerment of women is non-negotiable.

We continue to be deliberate in our course to empower women and attain equity without procrastination. During the 2024/2025 financial year, the department is planning to continue empowering 17 000 women through programmes such as Women in Agriculture, Business Management, Business Start-up, Emerging Young Women in Agriculture and Parenting programmes. We believe that this intervention will propel women to their desired heights and aspirations.

Regarding Equity Targets and Job Creation, one of the disconcerting realities of our department, which immediately caught my attention when I assumed my responsibility, was the fact that we are operating at a staff complement of 48%. This immediately tells you that our capacity is highly compromised and, therefore, service delivery is negatively impacted. I have immediately instructed the Acting HOD that all funded vacant posts be advertised in order to increase our capacity, enhance service delivery, and create much-needed jobs.

The department is planning to conduct one research project on teenage pregnancy. The objective of the research is to measure the level of teenage pregnancy in the province, which will, in future, help us better understand how to prevent it and rescue our teenagers from this social ill.

In a significant move to enhance service delivery and strengthen community engagement, the Premier has instructed all MECs to leave their offices and immerse themselves in areas where service delivery takes place. This directive emphasises the importance of direct interaction with the public in ensuring that government services are accessible and effectively meet the needs of the community. To facilitate this initiative, the department will collaborate with its agencies, including the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the National Development Agency (NDA).

By bringing these agencies along, the department aims to provide people with immediate access to essential services, fostering a more responsive and accountable government that prioritises the wellbeing of its citizens. This hands-on approach not only denotes a commitment to service excellence but also encourages greater transparency and trust within the communities we serve.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as government, we are obliged to effectively and efficiently execute our service delivery mandate through intergovernmental platforms, which encourage us to work with other spheres of government and involve social forces through stakeholder relations and collaborations. I have, therefore, designed a special project that I will lead in the coming three months to assist the department in expediting its core mandate and engender conversations on topical issues within the purview of the department.

The Kha ri Ambe Social Dialogue, named Project Nyambedzano, is a special project driven and led by the MEC to start meaningful conversations with communities served by the department. Whilst the department has solid and specific plans to execute its mandate and provide services, a need has arisen to take a different approach with a deliberate project that will keep the province talking while highlighting and dealing with key issues confronting members of society, particularly the most vulnerable.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this is a behavioural modification crusade aimed at reducing violence and abuse meted out to the elderly, persons with disability, youth and children. It is irrefutable that, in most cases, such mayhem is often perpetrated by those known to the victims. Project Nyambedzano will also focus on the following priorities, collaborating with key stakeholders to attain the following objectives:

- To inform, educate and actively engage departmental internal and external stakeholders;
- To market and promote the department's key programmes;
- To positively influence public opinion about the department and position it as a caring organisation to improve its reputation; and
- To elevate identified topics and have meaningful conversations with communities.

The introduction of the MEC's Social Dialogues is premised on the need to continuously engage with various stakeholders served by the Department of Social Development in the province and address particular topical issues.

Hon Speaker, as a point of departure, at the provincial level, I will be joining hands with the MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture to collaborate on some of the key plans of the project, especially on issues of social cohesion, nation-building and the elimination of social ills, including juvenile delinquency, which are the cross-cutting departmental functions that we can easily collaborate on, together with the respective districts and other stakeholders.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I therefore present the 2024/2025 Budget allocations as follows:

- Programme 1: Administration is allocated R392,475 million. The expenditure to date is at 30,3%.
- Programme 2: Social Welfare Services is allocated R522,671 million. The expenditure to date is at 30,8%.
- Programme 3: Children and Families is allocated R687,165 million. The expenditure to date is at 30,8%.
- Programme 4: Restorative Services is allocated R233,436 million. The expenditure to date is at 32,6%.

- Programme 5: Development Research is allocated R237,934 million. The expenditure to date is at 26,9%.

These allocations, therefore, bring the total Budget of our department to R2,076,681 billion. The expenditure of the overall Budget is at 30,5%.

Hon Deputy Speaker, as we stand together in the spirit of unity and determination, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to confront the harsh realities of poverty and hunger, recognising them as our enemy number one. Our government pledges to enhance efficient service delivery, ensuring that every initiative launched is executed with diligence and purpose. I would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to our Premier for providing exemplary leadership infused with high energy and enthusiasm. We will follow your path and drink from your well of wisdom in the service of our people.

Many thanks to the Acting Head of the Department, Ms Dudu Setlatjile, and the entire departmental staff for holding the fort and maintaining a high level of corporate governance in the administration of our department. We owe the people of Limpopo nothing but the best from each one of us, sparing no effort. Together, let us forge ahead, united in our fight against the adversities that besiege us and committed to a brighter and more equitable future for all. May God bless us all. Thank you so much, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Radzilani. The Budget Speech, together with the Annual Performance Plan for the Department for Social Development Vote 12, is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Social Development for consideration and to report back to the House. We shall adjourn the House for 10 minutes to allow the family of Hon Chidi to join us for the second session.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
TUESDAY, 27 AUGUST 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you. We may all be seated. Good morning honourable Members. Please note that items 2–6 are deferred to the next Sitting.

[ITEMS 2–6 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1 Second Reading: Presentation of Budget Votes and Schedule of the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024.

Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration. I shall now call upon the committee chairperson.

MR PHOKANE

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, allow me to venture greetings to you, and the Hon Premier; the Hon Chief Whip, honourable Members from different parties, chairpersons of committees, as well as the House at large. The committees of this House are explicitly obliged to act in the best interests of the public in the exercise of their work as instructed by section 114 of the Constitution of the Republic read with Rule 81(1b)(c) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Limpopo Legislature.

These provisions require the House committees to monitor, inquire into, and make necessary recommendations regarding departmental Budgets, strategic plans, restructuring, and rationalisation, amongst other things. In this way, the Office of the

Premier is held accountable and ensures that they spend the voted amounts accordingly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

My apologies for the interjection, honourable chairperson. Please table the report and not debate it.

MR PHOKANE

Hon Deputy Speaker, I hereby present the report of the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration on the Annual Performance Plan and the Budget of the Office of the Premier for the 2024/25 financial year for consideration and adoption by this august House. I move accordingly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable chairperson. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Matlou.

MR MATLOU

Inkomu mufambisi wa ntirho, mina Joshua Leswafo Matlou ndzi yima ku seketela mhaka leyi va yi vulavuleke mutshamaxitulu. Inkomu.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ndza khensa, Hon Matlou. I shall now call upon Hon Mmetle-Ramohlola.

MS MMETLE-RAMOHLOLA

Deputy Speaker, Hon Mamorobela; Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; Hon Chief Whip of the Legislature; chairpersons of committees; and honourable Members from various political parties present in this House, receive my revolutionary greetings.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the provincial Legislature plays an important role in exercising its legislative mandate of oversight to ensure that all provincial executive organs of the state in the province are held accountable. Like any other committee, the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration derives its mandate from section 114(2)(a) and (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Section 215 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, further calls on the provincial legislatures to promote transparency and accountability during the budgetary process, which is what the committee is executing over the Office of the Premier.

In considering the Annual Performance Plan, the committee had to ensure that plans and Budget allocations of the Office of the Premier are in line with the MTEF 2019/24. Budget allocations serve as a key instrument of the department to promote socioeconomic development and to make its activities operational towards the achievement of its intended priorities.

The committee has an inherent obligation to ensure that Budget allocations are utilised prudently and within the confines of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999). As you would know, this piece of legislation delineates the standard of expenditure, accounting and reporting to public entities. Hon Deputy Speaker, because of the above, on 26 August 2024, the committee had a meeting to consider a presentation on the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget allocations of the Office of the Premier.

The Office of the Premier has programmes and areas of focus. The first programme is Administration, whose main function is to provide support to the Premier and the Director-General and to manage the financial administration, as well as the supply chain management.

The second programme is Institutional Development, which fundamentally deals with the coordination of provincial resources in terms of human capital, minerals, food security and supply. This will integrate a support system inclusive of economic development, health and welfare of the people of Limpopo.

The third programme is Governance and Policy, which aims to enable the Office of the Premier to implement its mandate of planning, monitoring and evaluation, initiation and development of policies to achieve sustainable growth development. Hon Deputy Speaker, in the previous year and its last reporting period, the Office of the Premier spent over 98% of its allocated Budget. It ensured that the suppliers were paid within 30 days as the stipulated and accepted timeframe.

By doing so, the Office of the Premier supported small and medium businesses and capacitated their cash flow. This also ensured that funds allocated to all programmes are spent accordingly. The Office of the Premier obtained an unqualified audit report without findings, which is a clean audit outcome. [APPLAUSE]

This is a welcomed improvement on the audit outcome from the prior year of unqualified report with findings. Hon Speaker, we are confident that the current leadership will continue with the impressive progress and showcase to all departments how to use public funds responsibly. We would like to congratulate the Office of the Premier on this achievement and recognise that it was achieved through commitment and dedication from the accounting officer, management and all oversight bodies to a clean provincial administration accountability and good governance.

Hon Speaker, as the portfolio committee, we, therefore, recommend the following to the Office of the Premier:

- To maintain a clean audit outcome and encourage other departments to work on improving their audit outcomes;
- To make sure that the clean audit outcome, as achieved, is equated to the service rendered to the people of Limpopo;
- To make sure that all the challenges that were outlined in the Premier's Official Opening Speech are attended to, for example; water supply, road challenges, crime prevention, sanitary issues, gender-based violence and femicide which is increasing at an alarming rate in the province; and

- To make sure that there is compliance with and monitoring of the implementation of equity policy and preferential procurement.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we want to thank you for granting us this rare opportunity to participate in this debate in this august House. We do so fully cautious of the mammoth task we carry as Members of the House but equally the responsibility we shoulder on behalf of the millions of the people of Limpopo.

In conclusion, with the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration, having considered and supported the Annual Performance Plan and Budget for Vote 1 for the 2024/25 financial year, I hereby move that the report be adopted as the report of this august House.

I so move, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mmetle-Ramohlola. I shall now call upon Hon Wilson.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Premier, the departments with large Budgets and significant roles to play in the upliftment of the poor and vulnerable in Limpopo, are the worst performing. Public Works, Education, and Health, which you oversaw as the MEC, have yet again produced qualified audits, and considerable concerns from the Auditor-General.

So where is the problem, Hon Premier? The Auditor-General is clear on this and it is a lack of monitoring and evaluation, the failure to ensure consequence management and holding those responsible for bad governance and irresponsible behaviour to account.

We still await the reports on the awaited action plans for each of the water service authorities, requested almost a year ago by the Human Rights Commission, as well as those from your office and those from CoGHSTA.

Premier, it is easy to go and open a tap in a village each Friday, but without those reports on the overall functionality of the water authorities, they cannot be effectively monitored or evaluated. This is a function of this House, Premier, not just your office. We must see them; we must do the relevant oversights, and we must hold them to account; that is why we all sit here. While your speeches often say, "Not under my watch", let us not forget that these fall under our watch too, as do you.

Failing municipalities and entities, as well as departments, also fall under our watch. We are here to hold this government to account. We may not have a GNU in Limpopo, and that is fine by us. However, let us not forget that nationally there is a GNU and if you or your MECs don't live up to your promises and the expectations of the departments, we are currently assured of a fallback position.

While we are discussing the MECs, please advise, Premier, if you have done key performance indicators with your MECs, and if so, are you willing to share them with this House? After all, they are accountable to this House too. Are you prepared to do lifestyle audits on the MECs, Hon Premier? Given the ongoing reports of corruption and maladministration, as well as the astronomical irregular expenditure some departments are accountable for, you would be wise to do so. It has been done very effectively in the Western Cape.

Of great concern in the province is ongoing reports and complaints from municipalities, as well as departments and entities, on the illegal appointment of senior managers and staff. Premier, this cannot be. The regulations with regard to the appointment of any personnel, especially senior personnel, are clear, particularly in terms of experience and qualifications. There are problems around the scrutiny of applicants, their backgrounds, the reasons for leaving last employment, reasons for resigning etc.

These regulations apply across the board and must be adhered to. However, we are inundated with information, court rulings, and reports about fraudulent qualifications. It is serious. Cadre deployment and jobs for friends are not on. Please advise us what you are going to do with regard to actioning proper procedures to prevent unscrupulous appointments in the future.

Hon Premier, you, all the Members and I are here to hold this House accountable for performance. That will include sticking to the regulations regarding responses to written questions, the right to oral questions, and the programming of motions with notice. We ask you to please monitor this and ensure that this happens. If you are serious about ensuring that everything goes well under your watch, please ensure that MECs are prepared to adhere to this House's rules.

This is the start of the new Seventh Administration, Premier. There is a saying that a new broom sweeps clean. We are hopeful that you will stick to your word, promises and plans to protect and grow the people of this promise. We are holding you to it.

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Wilson. We shall now call upon Hon Kgothatso Mogoane. I'm told she is not in the House; therefore, I shall call upon Hon Phokane.

MR PHOKANE

Deputy Speaker, Hon Mamorobela Tebogo Portia; Hon Premier, Dr Constance Phophi Ramathuba; Chief Whip of the Legislature, Hon Essob Mokgonyana; chairpersons of committees and all Members of the Legislature from all political parties represented in the Legislature, accept my heartfelt greetings to you.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration is one of the committees established by the Legislature in response to the provisions of section 114(2)(a)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa read with Rule 80 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Limpopo Legislature. In the address of its

responsibilities and functions, as prescribed by Rule 81(b)(c)(d)(e), the Committee on Public Administration oversees the executive department of the Office of the Premier, which is Vote 1.

The Office of the Premier is accountable to the Legislature in terms of section 133(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa through the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration. Hon Deputy Speaker, on 20 August 2024, the Office of the Premier availed itself to give a presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration on its 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget in adherence to section 133(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as hinted above.

It should be noted that the APP, as was presented, has been crafted in a manner that reflects the performance targets of the 2024/25 financial year and as being aligned with the Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2019–2024. Hon Speaker, it beholds me as the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration to applaud and appreciate the Premier for having considered availing herself despite competing critical assignments that she might have had.

That, in itself, is the demonstration of the seriousness that the Premier accords to her work. Being accountable is the hallmark of a great leader. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Office of the Premier, amongst other responsibilities, has a mandate to monitor and evaluate other departments on their performances regarding their audit outcomes, departmental vacancy rates, plans to fill those vacancies, implementation of government priorities and a plethora of other related critical tasks.

In ensuring that the Office of the Premier can execute its functions and responsibilities, it has been allocated a Budget of R506,2 million for the 2024/25 financial year. This Budget also includes R83,1 million, which has been earmarked for funding ICT-related projects in the province, disaster recovery service, and review of the Limpopo Development Plan for the seventh term of administration, Limpopo SMS capacity-building programme and other related programmes.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Office of the Premier is overseeing the attainment of the audit outcomes in the 2022/23 financial year; two clean audit outcomes, which were obtained by LEDET and the Legislature; seven unqualified audit outcomes received by the Office of the Premier, Limpopo Provincial Treasury, Department of Agriculture, Department of Transport and Community Safety, Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, Department of CoGHSTA, Department of Social Development; and three qualified audit outcomes received by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure; the Department of Education and the Department of Health. There were public entities that performed as follows:

The Limpopo Gambling Board received a clean audit, LTA and RAL achieved unqualified audit outcomes, and LEDA also achieved a qualified audit outcome.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is worth noting that the Office of the Premier has indicated that it has made significant strides in financial management to the extent that in addition to other matters of financial significance, it has resolved all matters of emphasis raised by the AG and internal audit during the 2024/24 audit cycle.

This has been attested to by the report from the audit committee. That is a notable achievement by the Office of the Premier, but we expect such to be translated into other departments that have been stagnating either on unqualified or qualified audit outcomes. This can be achieved if the Office of the Premier religiously monitors the implementation of both the internal and external audit recommendations by the departments and municipalities. Hon Deputy Speaker, still on the effective and efficient financial management services, the Office of the Premier intends to monitor the payment of suppliers' invoices in 30 days in compliance with the PFMA and that there is a production of quarterly expenditure reports and revenue management reports.

It is worth noting that with regard to complying with the payment of legitimate suppliers' invoices within 30 days, the Office of the Premier managed to achieve that even in the previous financial year. It beholds the Office of the Premier to ensure that it maintains this fit even in the coming financial years and also ensure that the entirety of government in Limpopo achieves that.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Office of the Premier is obligated to develop capable responsive skills to support an inclusive growth creation in response to the strategic imperatives of economic development and industrialisation. It should develop a provincial human resource strategy that is geared towards the fulfilment of appropriate skills to support economic development. The focus will then be on ensuring that quarterly reports of the implementation of the adopted Limpopo Human Capital Investment Strategy are produced.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the provincial government is obligated to develop capable and responsive skills to support inclusive growth and job creation in response to the strategic imperatives of economic development and industrialisation as postulated in the Limpopo Development Plan. This demands the development of provincial humans towards the fulfilment of appropriate skills to support sustainable economic growth.

The main focus of the Office of the Premier will be to ensure that quarterly reports on the implementation of the adopted Limpopo Human Capital Investment Strategy are produced. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Office of the Premier also intends to put a hawk's eye on the implementation of Musina-Makhado and Fetakgomo-Tubatse Special Economic Zones as projects that hold significant potential for driving economic transformation and job creation to eradicate poverty in our province.

The Office of the Premier conceived the valuation on those designated special economic zones aimed to ensure that this critical initiative delivers the intended benefits and, where necessary, adjustments required will be made to maximise their impact. The Office of the Premier will manage to monitor through a number of performance analysis reports on the implementation of government priorities with a special focus on priority number two, which is economic transformation and job creation.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Office of the Premier is set to issue consequence management directives and guidelines to strengthen accountability and build capacity within departments. These efforts by the Office of the Premier will also ensure that strategic vacancies are promptly filled as a way of supporting departments in executing their mandates with effectiveness. The monitoring of the departments, as well as

municipalities, in ensuring that the proper human resource plans that provide for an effective and efficient corporate management system that accords with demand and supply needs will consequently lead to the employment of people with the requisite skills and thus the attainment of the acceptable and recommended vacancy rate that is at 10%.

Such will play a critical role in building a capable, ethical and developmental state. Such a posture will serve to strengthen efficacy in all the departments and municipalities and aid in the effective, efficient and sustainable provision of services to the people of Limpopo. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Office of the Premier, as the Office of the Executive Authority in the province, should demonstrably remain an epitome of excellence, integrity, efficiency and ethical leadership to inspire confidence in society.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I must agree with Hon Wilson that our Hon Premier has outlined what she is going to do in order to address the challenges that the government of Limpopo has been facing previously, and that we will hold the Premier accountable even as the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration.

The recommendations that we have conceived here are that the Office of the Premier should monitor the implementation of the directive plan to enhance better audit outcomes, ensure that there is more transparency in the implementation of the Equity Act and preferential procurement across all departments, monitor departments and municipalities to ensure they implement consequence management by taking actions against transgressors to enhance stability in the province and enforce accountability.

Hon Deputy Speaker, with the powers vested in me as the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration, I hereby move for the adoption of the 2024/25 APP and Budget Vote of the Office of the Premier as reports of this honourable House.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Phokane. We shall now call upon the Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba, to respond to the debate made by honourable Members.

THE PREMIER

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker; Hon Chief Whip; honourable Members of the Executive Council; honourable Members; chairpersons of different portfolio committees as led by Hon Chair of Chairs, Hon Mokone; our honourable chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration, Hon Maudu Johannes Phokane.

Hon Deputy Speaker, let me appreciate the inputs that all the honourable Members who stood here in this august House have made, and more especially the recommendations that have been provided by all our honourable Members. Let me also indicate that, yes, indeed, as the provincial government, the Office of the Premier is responsible for making sure that monitoring and evaluation of and compliance with all the legislations, whether in terms of equity or service delivery itself, is adhered to.

Hon Mmetle, you're quite right; there is, no way that the clean audit that the Office of the Premier has just gained back this time around is not maintained.

Hence, we will heed your call to ensure that we continue on this path of living by example. That will make life easy in ensuring that all these other departments follow suit towards a clean audit, but equally what you've raised, which is very critical, is that a clean audit for Nyamukamadi, when she doesn't have water, is meaningless.

You're quite right that a clean audit to N'wa Gezani, when she doesn't have that RDP house that she has been promised, means nothing. Therefore, we will make sure that the clean audit that we are fighting and striving to get, is also equated to the service delivery. What is important and meaningful to our people is when they receive the services that we have promised them when we, all of us, all different political parties, went all out to say they must vote for us.

So the Office of the Premier, not only will strive to make sure that it monitors departments towards clean audit, but also, at the same time, make sure that we do monitor them to adhere to our agreement in terms of service delivery. Of course, Hon Wilson, we accept the fact that big departments, i.e., Education, Health, and Public Works, which constitute the largest percentage when it comes to resource allocations, are the ones that must make sure that they live by example and get out of the qualified audit opinion. We are also proud of the fact that the Department of Health has already been out of the qualified audit opinion, and we are proud of you, MEC, Hon Dieketseng Masesi Mashego, and the team in Health. We want to reassure you that Education is on its way out. We are only left with just one asset. It was very painful for them to obtain a qualified audit opinion this time around.

However, with the support and intervention that Treasury has agreed to provide to the Office of the Premier, we can reassure you that come the next financial year, we will speak a different language. So it's in Public Works, where we have also requested our Treasury to go and identify the challenges that are failing to take us out of the qualified audit opinion. There are other departments which will believe that they can easily join Sport, Arts and Culture because of their nature to get a clean audit.

We are proud, Hon Maseko, that Sport, Arts and Culture is now out of those prolonged qualifications, and they are now a clean audit, and they must maintain that status. So we are expecting Agriculture; we are expecting even Transport and Community Safety. Those are the departments that we are looking at.

Concerning Social Development, we had a bit of a setback this financial year, but we are working together with MEC Radzilani. We have already started to put in place an audit plan even if the audit has not yet been published. The audit plan is going to be implemented without failure and not on our watch.

We have agreed with MEC Radzilani that this cannot happen on our watch that we find departments like Social Development regressing because these are the departments which give hope to the hopeless. The poor people of our province are entirely dependent on that particular department. Now the Chapter 9 institutions reports that have been there in our provincial government, some of which, you are

indicating, have been accumulating dust without being implemented are going to be implemented.

We have already started as the Office of the Premier to meet with all Chapter 9 institutions. We have already met with the Auditor-General and all the reports that they presented, we're going to make sure that they are being implemented.

We'll be very soon meeting with the Public Protector who equally has got their reports, some of which have not yet been implemented. So is the Human Rights Commission. Some of these programmes that we have started as interventions, whether it's Hi Nwa Mati Friday or Dikgerekgere Wednesday, are informed by some of these reports that the Public Protector has indicated.

If there's any employee who has been appointed with fraudulent qualifications, Hon Wilson, just give us that name. I have got capable Hon Mathye Violet with investigating officers. We will investigate and we'll make sure that that person is out of the public service. We'll remove that person from Persal because we are very clear and serious about fighting corruption and fraud.

So as you have indicated, let's work together towards that. We want to indicate and reassure you, Hon Wilson, and all honourable Members that when we came up with our APP, we were informed by the National Development Plan 2030, which was also in line with the Limpopo Development Plan. We were also informed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Plan.

We were also informed by the African Union Agenda 2063. We were also informed by the Medium-Term Development Plan, the African National Congress Manifesto and equally the Government of National Unity Priorities, which speak about inclusive economic growth, reducing poverty, tackling the high cost of living and building a capable, ethical and developmental state. We are fully aware that as the Limpopo Provincial Government, while the ANC was given an overwhelming majority to lead, we are not a federal state, and we are going to work as led by our national government.

Therefore, I want to appreciate you chairperson of our portfolio committee for being able to provide leadership and guidance, together with all the honourable Members. We are saying to all honourable Members, let's do more together. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Premier. We shall now proceed to the consideration and adoption of the report of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury. I now call upon the committee chairperson. Hon Pheedi, you are the chairperson for Provincial Treasury, please just table the report for us. Thank you.

MR PHEEDI

Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker, and my apologies for responding late. Hon Speaker, greetings to you, as well as the Premier and all Members in here. I stand before this House now, to table the report of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial

Treasury on the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget. I so move for the adoption of this report as presented, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Pheedi, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Mdaka.

MR MDAKA

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. I stand to second the presentation of the report by the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mdaka. I shall now call upon Hon Constance Kupa.

MS KUPA

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker; honourable Members of the Legislature; distinguished guests; and fellow citizens; and my special greetings to you, Hon Premier. Today we gather here to debate the Annual Performance Plan and the Budget of the Limpopo Treasury.

Honourable Members, the Public Financial Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999) bestows upon the Provincial Treasury a critical safeguarding of our province's financial resources. The ANC has always upheld the principles of transparency, accountability, and fiscal prudence in governance. As we debate today, let us remember the trust the people have placed in us to manage the public purse with the highest level of integrity and responsibility.

The Provincial Treasury is not just a mere department amongst many. It is the cornerstone of our financial governance, and its task is to ensure that every rand spent by this government is utilised in a manner that maximises value for our citizens. This is not just a technical function; it is a moral and ethical responsibility. The Treasury ensures that our spending aligns with our provincial developmental goals, from improving healthcare and education to fostering economic growth and creating jobs. In her address, the Premier indicated the importance of financial discipline, emphasising that the Treasury must lead by example in the prudent management of our resources.

The Premier's speech reiterated our commitment to rooting out corruption, inefficiency, and wasteful expenditure. The Provincial Treasury must be vigilant in ensuring that every expenditure is justified and that funds are directed where they are needed most, with strict controls. This aligns with the ANC's broader vision of a developmental state that prioritises the needs of the poor and marginalised.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the 2024 May election has imposed on us the Government of National Unity and it's a founding statement. The GNU statement of intent by the

Government of National Unity provides a clear framework of how we as a collective should approach financial governance.

It speaks to the need for a balanced approach where fiscal discipline does not count at the expense of social development. As the ANC, we are committed to ensuring that our fiscal policies are people-centred and that the Provincial Treasury plays a pivotal role in achieving this balance. Honourable Members, one of the key responsibilities of the Provincial Treasury is to ensure that all departments adhere to higher standards of accountability and transparency.

This is not just about complying with financial regulations. It is about building trust with the citizens of our beautiful province. The ANC is unwavering in its commitment to fighting corruption.

We support the Treasury's efforts to tighten controls, enhance monitoring and evaluation, and ensure that those who misuse public funds, honourable Members, are held accountable and ensure a stealth application of the accountability mechanism. Hon Speaker, as the ANC, we would like to implore the Provincial Treasury to continue playing a crucial role in supporting local economic development. Through its procurement policies, it has the power to stimulate the growth of small and medium enterprises, promote Black Economic Empowerment, and ensure that government spending benefits our communities.

The ANC believes in using the public purse as a tool for economic transformation, and the Treasury is at the heart of this agenda. Hon Speaker, in a not-so-far and distant memory, our provincial economy was reversed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As we continue to recover from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of the Provincial Treasury has never been more critical.

The pandemic has placed immense pressure on our finances, and it is the Treasury's responsibility to navigate us through these challenging times. The ANC supports the Treasury's efforts to prioritise spending on healthcare, social relief, and economic recovery programmes. We must ensure that our recovery is inclusive and that no one is left behind.

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, the Provincial Treasury is central to our mission of building a better province for all. The ANC stands firmly behind the Treasury's efforts to safeguard our financial resources, promote fiscal discipline, and ensure that our spending is aligned with the needs of our people. Let us continue to work together to build a province where every citizen has the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Kupa. I shall now call upon Hon Jacobus Smalle. Jacobus Smalle is your name, I think so.

MR SMALLE

Hon Speaker; Members of the Executive; Members of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury, thank you very much. Transparency and accountability is a key focus to our Limpopo economy, and they can improve the lives of our people. The DA is committed to supporting an inclusive and sustainable economic growth plan while building a capable and ethical state.

This must be our single and most important indicator if we want to rescue South Africa and Limpopo from the shackles of poverty and unemployment. Limpopo faces a deepening unemployment crisis. It continues to record the highest differences between expanded and official unemployment rates of 15,1%, with the highest increase of 2,4% from 30,3% to 32,7% unemployment figures during the first quarter of 2024.

The youth between the ages of 25–34 is the hardest hit, with 40,7% being unemployed. The Government of National Unity has proven that with new capable Ministers, the economy, as well as investors, is responding positively. Every day, we receive positive messages of departments turning into capable and more transparent departments.

Hopefully, the success of the Provincial Treasury will be able to withstand the storm of culture and of greed that saw local municipalities losing R1,6 billion into VBS to Tubatse Municipal Land Scheme sold off and returned to the municipality at a loss of R108 million, and standing firm and not condoning the R17 billion irregular expenditure on the books of the Sixth Administration. It is our position that the Budget Vote remains under-resourced, especially taking into account the enormous task the department is tasked with. The Provincial Treasury is allocated R478 million, but R337 million of this is for the compensation of employees, leaving very little resources to support provincial departments, municipalities and public entities, all while trying to ensure sufficient controls in the use of public funds.

We hope the ring-fenced money of R11,8 million will be used efficiently to strengthen the Provincial Treasury's capacity to support our local municipalities, with a key focus on supporting and intervention projects that will see our municipalities complying with legislation and policies, establishing strong internal controls and rein in unauthorised irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure. The President stated that: "Our experience over the past 30 years has shown that when our economy grows, jobs are created. When our economy contracts, there is no job creation and jobs are lost."

This is the self-evident assertion that the DA fully supports. As Budget cuts are happening, the need to improve our own revenue generation and revenue enhancement strategies has never been more crucial. In particular, to ensure that we do not increase the burden on the already overtaxed society.

The quarterly bilateral meetings with other departments and entities cannot be one of how to get more money into the fiscus but rather focus on how we limit our fruitless expenditure. LEDA's collection rate has been reported to be at 1%. While we do support the effort to support small and medium enterprises, more emphasis must be put on credible business plans so that we can help more with less.

With our wage bill sitting at 64,7%, while we are well above the national average, and many of our departments, including the Treasury, experiencing a high vacancy rate, the balance between servicing the public and paying employees becomes a delicate matter. We simply need to increase our income and reduce our operational staff expenditure, and it cannot start by being firm on limiting financial schedule 3D entities. I think it should also be noted that there is a big opportunity, and these 3C and 3D entities should be harnessed to lead the charge and become the drivers in creating employment in the province.

In addressing the role of municipalities, the President mentioned that our municipalities must become both the providers of social services and facilitators of inclusive economic growth. The DA experience in local government has been that we have delivered on this, but for local government to be the driver of growth, the state cannot push unfunded mandates onto local government. It must budget for and provide the basic services as listed in the relevant schedule of the Constitution, first and foremost.

We also need a massive injection into local government infrastructure to prevent the collapse of service delivery. It is both an economic and moral imperative. In conclusion, this department needs to outperform its previous efforts from past administrations to ensure the provincial Budget is well monitored, sound financial management prevails, and controls are in place to ensure our entities, departments and municipalities thrive and start to harness economic growth and create jobs.

This is the only way we can satisfy the hopes and aspirations of the people of Limpopo. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Jacobus Smalle. I now call upon Hon Selaelo Mphahlele. She is not in the House, and I will proceed and call upon Hon Pheedi.

MR PHEEDI

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. Now I was on the alert when you called my name. Hon Deputy Speaker, I stand before this House to present the following:

Provincial legislatures are mandated to play an oversight role over the Executive in line with section 114(2)(a) and (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

A provincial legislature must ensure that all provincial executive organs of state in the province are accountable to it and further maintain oversight over all provincial state institutions. The above constitutional provision was amplified by sections 26 and 27 of the Public Finance Management Act of 1999. This is further amplified by House Rule 205 with respect to reporting accountability and responsibility by provincial departments.

Hon Deputy Speaker, informed by the above, the committee, therefore, will report as thus. Procedurally, the Provincial Treasury briefed the committee on the 2024/25

Annual Performance Plan and Budget on 16 August 2024. On the Budget overview, we have the following:

The Provincial Treasury Budget allocation has increased to R478 million, which constitutes an increase of 4,5% in the 2024/25 financial year from the Budget of R457,6 million in the 2023/24 financial year. Hon Speaker, the Budget allocations per economic classifications out of this total Budget allocation of R478 million compensation of employees increased by 2%, and this allocation will be used to fund the reprioritised critical vacant posts. Goods and services increased by 10,9% from R115,9 million in 2023/24 to R128,7 million in the 2024/25 financial year due to the reprioritisation of the budget to fund contractual obligations and key accounts.

Transfers and subsidies increased by 125,2% due to an increase in the number of officials that will retire in the next financial year. Capital expenditure (CAPEX) reduction by 2,1% from R8,4 million to the budget reduction is mainly as a result of a once-off allocation of procurement of security services or systems. Again, Hon Deputy Speaker, it is as a result of priority funding by the Office of the Premier.

The committee noted that during the presentation of Budget Vote 1 on 13 August 2024, the Premier of the province, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, indicated that for the 2024/25 financial year, the Office of the Premier has allocated funding earmarked to provincial priorities. The provincial priorities include but are not limited to water provision programmes, the #HiNwaMatiFriday programme, Musina-Makhado Economic Zone, as well as Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park. The Budget allocation programmes stand in the following order:

On Administration, which is programme 1, the budget allocation is R207,7 million or 43%, which is an increase of 2% from a total budget of R478,1 million for 2023/24. The budget was R191,9 million or 42% of the total budget of R157,6 million. The budget will enable the department to manage and monitor the implementation of corporate management services.

The programme has five output indicators, which entail the following: Six capacity-building programmes, a 10% or less vacancy rate, monitoring three governance focus areas, payment of 100% of the valid supplier invoice received within 30 days, and 40% procurement to be allocated to women-owned enterprises. Again, Hon Deputy Speaker, the committee raised their concern about the vacant critical posts in the department, as it may impact negatively on the functionality of the department, especially on support systems offered to various departments, state-owned entities, and municipalities.

The committee further noted that the department has constantly received good audit outcomes from the Auditor-General of South Africa. However, it was further noted that these audit outcomes do not cascade down to the municipalities to achieve clean audit outcomes.

According to the Provincial Treasury, there is a recruitment plan in place, and the department is in the process of appointing staff. The department indicated that municipalities are being assisted by the chief director to strengthen working relationships between municipalities and departments. According to the department,

the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 section 71 report presented recently highlighted that there are remarkable improvements in the municipalities.

On Sustainable Resource Management, which is programme 2, the budget appropriation is R80,8 million, or 17%, which is a decrease of 2% from a total budget of R478,1 million for the 2023/24 financial year. The budget was R85,8 million, or 19% of a total budget of R557,6 million. The budget will assist in providing sustainable resource management services to the provincial departments and provincial public entities.

Outcomes of the programme include a sustainable fiscal policy for the province and favourable audit outcomes. The programme has 7 output indicators. As part of output indicators, 26 municipalities will be assisted on the state of the municipal finance on a quarterly basis.

The committee raised concerns about the sustainability of the Limpopo Economic Development Agency, which is LEDA, and Gateway Airports Authority Limited. It was further remarked that GAAL is promising as compared to LEDA. The committee further enquired about the possibility of forging partnerships with the private sector in the form of public-private partnerships to roll out products for LEDA.

The department indicated that financial sustainability is still a challenge for LEDA and GAAL. The equity partner was secured to assist Polokwane International Airport. Against this background, a task team has been set up to look at the financial sustainability of the two entities.

To this end, a report will be made available by October 2024. The department explained to the committee that revenue generation can be achieved through a tourism strategy to market the province. Furthermore, a marketing strategy should be combined between LEDA and tourism to sell products for the province.

It was reported that the Limpopo Gambling Board is self-sustainable. Again, Hon Deputy Speaker, on Assets, Liabilities, and Supply Chain Management, which is programme 2, the budget allocation amounts to R49,6 million or 10%, which constitutes a decrease of 2% from a total of R478,1 million. In the 2023/24 financial year, the budget was R54,1 million or 12% of the total budget of R157,6 million.

The programme consists of four output indicators. The committee enquired about the feasibility of relocating the Legislature offices from Lebowakgomo to Polokwane. What is noted by the committee, is the possibility of the Lebowakgomo Legislature complex turning into a white elephant and resulting in vandalism of the existing infrastructure.

The committee further enquired if the money expected to be used to build new Legislature offices in Polokwane could not be better utilised to purchase government-owned offices. The department indicated that the pending relocation of Lebowakgomo Legislature offices will not be feasible. Accordingly, the committee expanded the available option to renovate and put maintenance systems in place at the existing complex in Lebowakgomo.

The committee enquired about the progress on the pending construction of new offices for Sekhukhune District offices. The committee expected that the construction and relocation of Sekhukhune District offices to Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality as planned will bring much-needed relief to the people of Sekhukhune District as services will be closer to the communities as opposed to when the district offices are currently located in Lebowakgomo.

The department reported that there is progress in the pending relocation of offices to Sekhukhune District since the land is now available and ringfenced in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality. It was indicated that the project has become a priority project, and the department is waiting for the design process to be completed. Upon the completion of the design process, the project costing will be done and a budget for the entire project will be made available.

Infrastructure maintenance has become a serious challenge in the province. The department is of the view that each department must develop a clear maintenance strategy. Accordingly, 15% of the budget had to be allocated to infrastructure maintenance.

In the Adjustments Budget, more money will be put into infrastructure development. In financial governance, the budget allocation for programme 4 is R81,3 million or 17% of a total budget of R478,1 million. For the 2023/24 financial year, the budget was R78,2 million or 17% of the total budget of 457,6 million.

Compensation of employees' budget increased by 11,5% from R47 million in 2023 to R52,4 million in the 2024/25 financial year. There is an increase of 5,4% on goods and services to mainly cater for audit committee fees, SITA and transversal training costs.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Please conclude, Hon Pheedi.

MR PHEEDI

As I conclude, Hon Deputy Speaker, we have the following findings:

- The VBS matter is still open-ended after many years of investigation.
- There was a standing resolution on relocation of the Limpopo Legislature.

The recommendations are as follows:

- The committee recommended that the department develop a comprehensive closure report on VPS. It cannot always be a long-standing item.
- Relocation of the Limpopo Legislature offices will not make any financial viability option. Accordingly, the offices must remain in Lebowakgomo and be well maintained.
- The relocation of Sekhukhune District offices must be expedited so that the people of Sekhukhune District have access to services.

- Each department must develop a clear maintenance plan and 15% of the budget be set aside for the purpose.
-
- Adequate measures must be put in place by the Provincial Treasury to offer adequate support to municipalities.
- The good audit opinion by the department and notable improvements in some departments must cascade down to the municipalities.
- The financial sustainability report for LEDA and GNT be furnished to the committee.

In conclusion, Deputy Speaker, the committee, having considered the department's Annual Performance Plan and Budget for 2024/25 financially, hereby move that this report be adopted as the report of the House. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Pheedi. I shall now call upon the honourable MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Mahoi, to respond to the debate made by honourable Members.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Hon Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier; Hon Chief Whip; Hon Chairperson of Committees and their deputies; Members of the Legislature; ladies and gentlemen, thank you.

This is a rare opportunity, of course, for us to be given a bite when the matter is in the hands of the Legislature to whom we account, and which is the only repository for approval of the Budget. We will try, and we thank the honourable chair of the committee and the team – the members of the committee. We have taken note of all the comments.

They are very patriotic. Whatever has been said here, we cannot agree more. It is exactly as it is. We will take a cue from all the advice and the wisdom of the committee in its engagement with us recently and the recommendations they have made – that are so clear. Indeed, we cannot ignore the facts, and I don't know if Hon Smalle has indicated that our Budget is too small, but we have to lead by example, doing more with less. There's no option left for us; we hope that this will set a better trend for the rest.

We have taken note of everything. I filled about five pages and everything that was said is what we need to do. All the recommendations, as given here, are as clear as they have been presented, and for this, Hon Deputy Speaker, I can't do anything but submit to the leadership of the honourable committee and the honourable Legislature and, indeed, subject ourselves to the oversight role of the Legislature and do what we are expected to do.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mahoi. We shall now go to the report of the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism. Hon Mapula Mokaba, over to you. I'll make sure I call on the names because it looks like the honourable chairpersons have forgotten their committees. From now on, I'm calling the names.

Thank you very much.

MS MOKABA

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker; honourable MECs in the House; honourable Members; and officials from the department. It's just unfortunate my tongue has an allergy to recognise people when they're not here. Good morning.

I, Mapula Mokaba, rise to table the report of the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism on the 2024/25 Performance Plan and Budget for LEDET for consideration and adoption by this House.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mapula Mokaba. You may as well move for all three of them: LEDA, LTA, and LGB. Thank you. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Selane.

DR SELANE

Mohlomphegi Mospikara, ke nyaka go thekga Modulasetulo wa Tlhabollo ya Ikonomi.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Selane. You may proceed, Hon Mokaba.

MS MOKABA

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. I rise to table the report of the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism on the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for LEDA for consideration and adoption by this House. I thank you.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mokaba. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Matlou.

MR MATLOU

Ke a leboga Motlatša Mospikara. Ke ema go dumelelana le Mohlomphegi Mokaba godimo ga poleo ye ba e boletšego ya Leano la Tirišo la Ngwaga ka Ngwaga le Tekanyetšo tša Kgoro ya LEDA.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Matlou. You may proceed, Hon Mokaba.

MS MOKABA

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. I rise to table the report of the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism on the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for LTA for consideration and adoption by this House.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mokaba. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Kupa.

MS KUPA

Ke a leboga Mohlomphegi Mospikara. Lenna ke ema go hlatsela se Mohlomphegi Mokaba a se boletšego, ke re ke sona. A re se itieleng matsogo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Kupa. You may proceed, Hon Mokaba.

MS MOKABA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. I, Mapula Mokaba, rise to table the report of the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism on the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for LGB for consideration and adoption by this House.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mokaba. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Mdaka.

MR MDAKA

Ndza khensa Manana Xipikara, ndzi yimela ku seketela leswi nga boxiwa leswaku 7.1.3.4 yi vulavulaka hi Annual Performance and Budget ya Limpopo Gambling Board yi seketeriwa.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mdaka. I now call upon Hon David Selane to open the debate.

MS MOKABA

Hon Deputy Speaker, I would like to submit a plea that people who are going to debate must be the people who are attending committee meetings. I saw the name of Hon Kgothatso Mogoane whom I have never seen in our committee meetings.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mokaba, your concern is noted. You may proceed Hon Selane.

DR SELANE

Thank you, Madam Speaker; Hon Premier; honourable MEC in absentia; honourable chairperson of the committee, Hon Mapula Mokaba; Chief Whip of the majority party and of the Legislature, Leader of the Official Opposition. Allow me as I rise today to present the portfolio committee findings on the Annual Performance Plan and Budget report for the 2024/25 financial year, as submitted by the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, commonly known as LEDET. This department bears a critical mission of promoting economic growth, environmental sustainability, and tourism development in our beloved province, Limpopo.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, to fulfil this mandate by LEDET, it oversees three key entities, i.e., Limpopo Economic Development Agency, Limpopo Tourism Agency, and Limpopo Gambling Board. Each of these entities plays a vital role in driving department objectives, and today, Madam Speaker, I will delve into both their contributions and the challenges they face. Madam Speaker, Limpopo continues to grapple with one of the highest unemployment rates in South Africa, particularly among the youth.

Despite concerted efforts by LEDET to stimulate job creation, the province's economy remains heavily dependent on agriculture and mining. This reliance, coupled with the slow pace of industrialisation, severely restricts our economic growth potential. We urgently need to diversify our economy, expand into manufacturing and other industries, and accelerate industrialisation to provide people with opportunities they deserve.

However, these challenges are compounded by environmental issues. Illegal mining, deforestation, and the overexploitation of natural resources have led to significant environmental degradation in our province. This has not only threatened our biodiversity and water resources but also jeopardised the long-term sustainability of our environment.

Limpopo is particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change, drought, floods, and erratic rainfall patterns, which further strain our agricultural sector and water availability. Madam Speaker, sustainable development is crucial, and we must balance economic growth with environmental protection to secure a prosperous future for all. Madam Speaker, as I stand before you today to discuss the critical role of the Limpopo Economic Development Agency and Limpopo Tourism Agency, these institutions are central to the prosperity of Limpopo and the wellbeing of our people.

However, like many agencies operating in a complex environment, LEDA and LTA face significant challenges that impede their ability to fully realise their objectives. One of the most pressing challenges facing LEDA and LTA is the issue of limited financial resources. These agencies often operate under constrained Budgets, which hamper their ability to fund large-scale projects that could significantly impact economic development in our province. They heavily rely on government allocation to further exacerbate this issue, as these funds can be unpredictable and subject to change based on broader economic conditions.

However, Madam Speaker, to address this, we must continue advocating for a diversified funding source for LEDA and LTA. This could include forming partnerships with private sector investors, tapping into international development funds, and exploring innovative financial mechanisms such as public-private partnerships, and so on. Additionally, we should ensure that LEDA and LTA Budgets are prioritised within the provincial government financial planning, recognising the agency's critical role in driving our economy.

Madam Speaker, inadequate infrastructure remains a significant hurdle in the economic development of our province. Poorly maintained roads, unreliable electricity, and insufficient water supply, particularly in rural areas, deter investment and limit economic activity, infrastructure deficiencies, and other critical barriers to attacking new businesses and supporting growth in the existing economy. Hon Speaker, investing in the infrastructure must be our top priority.

We need to work closely with the national and local governments to secure funding for key infrastructure projects, particularly in areas identified as economic hubs. LEDA and LTA should continue to collaborate with municipalities to improve the maintenance of their existing infrastructure. LEDA and LTA, like many organisations in our province, face a shortage of skilled personnel, particularly in specialised areas such as project management, financial analysis, and technical expertise.

This skills gap limits the agency to execute its mandate effectively and hinders the overall performance of the agencies. Hon Deputy Speaker to address these challenges requires focused efforts on capacity-building and skills development. LEDA and LTA should implement targeted training programmes for their staff in ensuring that they have the skills needed to manage complex projects and drive economic initiatives.

Additionally, Hon Speaker, LEDA and LTA should seek partnerships with academic institutions and industry experts to provide ongoing professional development and mentorship for their employees. Recruiting skilled professionals from both within and outside the province should be a priority to ensure that these agencies have the human

capital necessary to succeed. Hon Speaker, despite the efforts to market Limpopo as a viable investment destination, LEDA and LTA struggle to attract significant domestic and international investment.

Factors such as competition from other provinces, negative perceptions related to crime, and lack of strong investment incentives contribute to this particular challenge. To attract more investment, LEDA and LTA must enhance in marketing and promotional strategies. These include developing a robust branding campaign that highlights Limpopo's unique strengths and opportunities.

Additionally, Hon Speaker, the agencies should work with the provincial government to offer more attractive investment in that regard. Hon Speaker, during our portfolio committee meeting, Hon Wesly Maringa raised several issues concerning the state of tourism in our province. Significant issues, which are inadequate and poor maintenance of our infrastructure, include roads, airports, and public transport system.

These inadequate infrastructures pose severe challenges, as I have already indicated, necessarily because it is difficult for tourists to access these key attractions, especially in remote areas and also in rural areas. In turn, this will lead to a decline in tourist arrivals, as visitors may prefer destinations with better infrastructure and more reliable services. Hon Speaker, the substandard accommodation, the unreliable electricity and water supply issues, and poor sanitation facilities contribute to this particular negative perception that I have already indicated.

This not only affects the safety and comfort of our visitors but also diminishes the appeal of our province. The economic impact of declining tourist numbers is profound in this particular province, leading of course to job losses, reduced income for local businesses, and lower taxes for our provincial government. Hon Speaker, we must recognise the fact that addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort between our government, private sector, stakeholders, and local communities.

By providing the infrastructure and enhancing in market infrastructure, and managing the health risks effectively, we can create a more sustainable and competitive tourism industry in our province. Madam Speaker, the Limpopo Gambling Board is also faced with significant challenges that require our immediate attention. One such challenge is the prevalence of illegal gambling activity.

Unlicensed betting, online gambling platforms, and informal gambling operations are thriving in this particular province. This not only results in the loss of revenue in our province but also exposes our people to potential harm. We must strengthen our enforcement mechanism by collaborating with law enforcement agencies, conducting regular inspections, and increasing public awareness about the danger of illegal gambling.

Additionally, the Limpopo Gambling Board should forge partnerships with internet service providers to block access to illegal gambling sites, thereby protecting our citizens from scammers. Another pressing issue is regulatory compliance and enforcement. Unlicensed operators, often referred to as mo-China by Hon Wesly Maringa, continue to cause disorder in our villages and communities. These unregulated scammers undermine the public trust and integrity of our gambling

industry. We must ensure that all licenced operators comply with the regulations to prevent issues such as money laundering, underage gambling, and unfair gambling practices.

This can be achieved through regular updates to regulations, rigorous audits and inspections, and the implementation of a robust compliance monitoring system. The rise of online gambling presents new challenges in regulation, including jurisdictional issues. The anonymity of online players and the rapid pace of technological change remain a challenge.

The LGB must continue to develop and implement regulations specific to online gambling, including licensing requirements, player verification processes, and data protection measures. Investment in the technology to monitor online gambling activity is crucial to ensure compliance with the regulations.

Finally, the LGB faces significant resource constraints, including limited staffing, funding, and technological infrastructure.

These constraints hinder the broad ability to perform its regulatory duties effectively. The challenges faced by LEDET and its entities are significant, but they are not insurmountable. Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach, combining regulatory enforcement, public education, stakeholder collaboration, and the use of technology.

In conclusion, the ANC expresses its full support for the APP and the Budget report for 2024/25 financially, and we appreciate the department for creating a conducive environment for business growth, particularly SMMEs, women, youth, and enterprise. These efforts are critical for the economic transformation of our province and also upliftment of the community. However, we urge the MEC and the department to ensure that the plans are implemented effectively, and the necessary resources are provided to those who need them the most.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ke a leboga Mohlomphegi Selane. I now call upon Hon Velile Jack. The honourable Member is not here and he's the only member of the MK in this House. I will then call upon Hon Jacobus Smalle.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker; honourable MECs; and honourable Members. Economic development lies at the heart of any developmental state and can uplift societies to eradicate inequality and poverty through job creation and economic opportunity.

During the last three years, we have seen the decline of our economy post-COVID-19. Our trade sector, amongst others, has lost thousands of jobs, and why? It's because the government has failed to create an environment for business to flourish.

During dark days, we witnessed the entrepreneurial spirit of our province and nation that kept the livelihoods afloat. However, for the vast majority, more than 1,6 million people in Limpopo have given up looking for work. The facts paint a grim picture.

Over 9 500 businesses were liquidated from 2019 to 2023, and this number excludes businesses that closed down without being formally liquidated. According to Stats SA, over 1 300 businesses shut their doors in 2023 alone.

Between 70 and 80% of small businesses failed in the first five years. It is, therefore, no coincidence that we have an unacceptably high unemployment rate of 32,9%, which rises to 42,4% when one includes discouraged job seekers. Existing legislation, policies and programmes have not been successful.

Access to finance remains a major obstacle, with many entrepreneurs struggling to secure the capital needed to start or expand their ventures. The regulatory environment can be complex and burdensome, particularly for those who lack the resources to navigate the complex legal and administration quagmire. In this regard, we can learn from the Western Cape, which through their Western Cape Booster Fund has supported over 950 SMEs across the Western Cape, sustaining 4 977 jobs.

Additionally, between May 2019 and March 2023, the Western Cape Government Red Tape Reduction Unit saved the province's economy R2,4 billion through its intervention. LEDA's main strategic objective is to establish and stimulate industrialisation in our province. However, when we analyse the agency's performance, it is regrettable that LEDA and its board have been reckless in driving Limpopo's economy, borrowing funds from subsidiaries and not collecting outstanding debts.

LEDA's loan book collection rate sits at an unacceptable 1%. No financial institution, not even the Reserve Bank, would be able to function with figures like these. LEDA's latest attempt to sell its loan book must be questioned, as this implicates subsidiaries that have never paid LEDA and may lead to a domino effect of investment losses.

Great North Transport has lost its market share and is expecting a R49 million net loss this financial year. Towards the end of the Sixth Administration, R100 million was set aside to procure buses. To date, there has been no movement, nor any consequences.

As we look forward that Limpopo's GDP should increase by 12,5% due to mineral beneficiation projects, I want to remind the MEC that the mining industry lost 11 000 jobs during the second quarter of 2024. The Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park still awaits sign-off by the national Minister, despite completed infrastructure and occupying tenants. This industrial park must receive the priority investment to unlock the billions of rand committed by the private sector and if the licence is awarded to the entity.

With a heavy reliance on agroprocessing to create jobs and an anticipated investment of R1,25 billion in the upcoming financial year, the government must do more to assist the agricultural sector when natural disasters strike. The DA believes that LEDA

should become a major player in support of agricultural investment. Rural tourism is used as a developmental strategy in developing countries and must be effected by the Limpopo Tourism Agency to unlock economic development and sustainable growth.

The Wolkberg Wilderness Reserve in Magoebaskloof is maintained mainly for scientific importance, as natural ecosystems are largely untouched by modern progressives. It is a beautiful new camp, Mutagumetse, a dream destination for nature lovers and hikers. The DA supports the upgrading of the Nylsvley Nature Reserve over the next MTF.

The GNU government continues to prioritise the economy, and we eagerly await the details of the fuel price intervention plan which should assist consumers and deliver tangible relief to all South Africans. The DA remains committed to fighting for policies that improve the quality of life for all citizens, and this victory on our fuel price will go a long way.

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Jack Smalle. I shall now call upon Hon Kgothatso Mogoane and she is not in the House. I will then now proceed to Hon Mapula Mokaba.

MS MOKABA

Hon Deputy Speaker; honourable Members in the House, once more, kgotsong. Today as we gather to deliberate on our provinces' progress and future direction, I am heartened by the positive developments in Limpopo's economic landscape.

In his Budget Speech, the honourable MEC for LEDET, Hon Tshitereke Baldwin Matibe, told the House that, according to Stats SA, a provincial GDP experimental estimate released in September 2023, Limpopo's economy grew by 1% in 2022. Our contribution to the national economy has increased from 7,3% in 2013 to 7,7% in 2022. Securing our position as the fifth largest contributor among South Africa's provinces, this growth is a testament to the resilience and potential of our province.

The ANC-led provincial government has set in motion transformative industrialisation measures aimed at reshaping our economy. We are committed to nurturing this positive momentum and driving further growth. Our strategy includes a deliberate focus on the domestic market, particularly in tourism.

By converting travellers who visit to see friends and relatives into holidaymakers who engage in local hospitality and tourism experiences, we aim to extend their stay, increase tourism spending, and foster a culture of travel amongst locals. This approach not only boosts our tourism sector but also aligns with our brand proposition of more to enjoy.

The Limpopo Tourism Agency plays a crucial role in this strategy. We will provide robust marketing support to the Limpopo Wildlife Resorts and enhance the promotion of our nature reserve to the domestic market. By building a strengthening partnership

with the tourism industry, local government and stakeholders in neighbouring provinces and the South African development community, the LTA will work tirelessly to fulfil its mandate. Additionally, the LTA's commitment to supporting tourism entrepreneurs, especially youth, women and people living with disability, will contribute significantly to job creation and support the transformation agenda within the tourism industry.

Turning our attention to the gambling industry, we acknowledge the challenges posed by the greylisting of South Africa by the Financial Action Task Force on 24 February 2023. This listing highlighted eight areas of improvement, two of which directly impacted the gambling industry. The Limpopo Gambling Board is actively collaborating with the Financial Intelligence Centre to address the deficiencies.

We have developed a risk-based methodology for supervising licences, which is being implemented across the provincial Gambling Board. The LGB has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) and is utilising existing registries to monitor beneficial ownership, thereby contributing to improvements in this area. The LGB remains committed to maintaining good governance, achieving qualified audit opinion and ensuring an effective performance management system.

We are also focused on approving new applications for limited payout, machine licences, monitoring and auditing gambling operations and fostering strong stakeholder relations. Our efforts to promote responsible gambling, combat illegal activities and conduct research on the impact of gambling in the province are ongoing. Although our Budget has increased by 2,7% from the previous financial year baseline, we anticipate Budget pressure during 2024/25.

We will seek retention of surplus revenue from the Provincial Treasury to address these challenges and maintain the critical services essential for fulfilling the LGB's mandate. On the transportation front, the Great North Transport remains a vital enabler of economic activity and the primary affordable public transport provider in Limpopo. For the 2024/25 financial year, the GNT will focus on recapitalising through the acquisition of additional buses to ensure reliable and sustainable public transport at affordable prices.

We will also pursue a private-public partnership to enhance the company's self-sustainability. A capital budget of R104 million has been allocated for the new buses with the GNT's total operational budget exceeding R530 million for the financial year. This investment is crucial for achieving GNT's mandate of providing the most reliable and sustainable public transport for our province.

In conclusion, the economic development, environmental stewardship and tourism initiatives outlined in our plans are integral to shaping a prosperous and sustainable future for Limpopo by continuing to support and invest in these areas. We are not only enhancing our provincial economy but also enriching the lives of our people. Let us remain united in our efforts to achieve this goal and make Limpopo a beacon of progress and opportunity.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mokaba. I shall now call upon the MEC for Education to respond on behalf of the MEC for LEDET. I call upon Hon Ramakhanya.

THE MEC FOR EDUCATION

Thank you so much. Ndi mats Sheloni. Let me take this time, Hon Deputy Speaker, and pass my revolutionary greetings to yourself, the Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; the colleagues in the Executive Council; the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on LEDET, Hon Mapula Mokaba, and all members of the committee; the Chief Whip; the chairpersons of other committees in this House; and all honourable Members that are here.

Let me also greet the team being led by the acting HOD from the department and all our SOEs. Let me take this time, Hon Deputy Speaker, and appreciate the work that was provided by the committee – the oversight work and the debate that the committee has done. Indeed, the legislative oversight over the Executive is a singular and exclusive constitutional responsibility that is bestowed on the honourable Members of this democratic House by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

No other government institution, Hon Deputy Speaker, except the Legislature, has the legal authority to oversee the activities of the Executive to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of public resources. Part of our duties as the Executive is to ensure that we come to the House and account that quality public services are provided to our communities in a transparent, responsive and accountable manner to meet the service delivery expectations that are bestowed upon us.

On 21 August, we can confirm, Hon Deputy Speaker, that we appeared before the committee, and indeed our deliberations with the committee were a confirmation that *zwithu zwo shanduka*, and you can see from the first debates today, being led by the chair, that we will need to match the high heels of the chair when we are dealing with what we need to do.

In our first meeting, we also observed that the committee raised other issues, and we have since committed that we will ensure that there is no stone left unturned until all service delivery bottlenecks are unlocked. Plans for growing the economy and creating jobs are implemented effectively. As the department and its entities, we are also determined to ensure that we don't drop the ball on implementing our priorities through the Annual Performance Plan, which this Legislature fully funded.

We have also set these plans in line with our mandate to respond to priorities, Hon Deputy Speaker: priorities of women, youth and persons with disability as well as military veterans in our province. We have no reason not to do what is expected. On the debate this morning, Hon Speaker, Hon Selane raised issues, and we want to confirm that as a department, when we are dealing with the economic upliftment of our people, we also confirm and agree as presented, that you cannot deal with the economic upliftment in isolation of other partners or without collaboration with other departments.

We have noticed that the organised and professional bodies, which facilitate the sector, need training and they need monitoring and professionalisation of all the activities that are being done by these bodies. We want to also confirm that on the marketing of the LTA, we are revising the marketing strategy to profile Limpopo as a destination of choice. We are for a partnership on awareness and working with SAPS on eliminating illegal mining and gambling.

We want to receive and accept all the other issues that have been raised for the department to go and attend to. We want to fully agree with Hon Smalle that the beneficiation programme should be enhanced, and we should be able to identify the correct beneficiaries so that in terms of the economic spinoffs, all the issues that have been raised are clear and we are able to talk with confidence that the narrative of our province is changing, as Limpopo has been able in the last quarter to grow in terms of jobs compared to the other provinces.

On the Fetakgomo-Tubatse, the Premier is committed to working with the national Minister to make sure that there is a turnaround. On the Musina-Makhado, the department has pledged and is busy with a turnaround strategy for the next six months, which will be monitored every month. Honourable chair, we want to confirm that on the domestic performance report released by the Minister, Limpopo is leading on domestic arrivals.

You know that we are indeed going towards the Tourism Month, which the Premier and the department will be launching in due time. On the audit outcomes for both the Limpopo Gambling Board and the Limpopo Tourism Agency, we got clean audits joined by RISIMA and the Limpopo Connexion as part of the subsidiaries that are under LEDA. With that, Hon Deputy Speaker, allow me to say we note all the important issues raised by the honourable Members.

As a department, we have started to address some of the issues. However, we want to also say we shall effectively implement our plans and account for every cent allocated to us without incurring financial wastage. We are continuing and we commit to use the allocated Budget fully for our legal mandate.

Thank you so much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Ramakhanya. We shall now call upon the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA to table the committee report on the APP and Budget of the Department of CoGHSTA for consideration and adoption by this House.

MR SEPURU

Hon Deputy Speaker, this time at 11:57, this day, 27 August 2024, having considered and adopted the APP for 2024 and its Budget for CoGHSTA, I, David Mmakgabo Champ Sepuru, hereby move for the adoption of the report.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Sepuru. May I please have a seconder. I recognise Hon Selane.

DR SELANE

Ke a leboga Mospikara. Ke rata go tšea sebaka se ke thekge Modulasetulo wa CoGHSTA, Mohlomphegi Champ Sepuru.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ke a leboga Mohlomphegi Selane, I shall now call upon Hon Mhloti Muhlope.

MS MUHLOPE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, and my apologies; we are new in this House. The MEC for Transport scared me, and I nearly fell. We are new; that's the way you welcome newcomers; thank you very much. [LAUGHTER]

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker; Hon Deputy Speaker; Premier in absentia; Members of the Executive Council; Members of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature; Chief Whip of the majority party, the ANC; chairpersons of the portfolio committees, not forgetting Chair of Chairs, good afternoon, inhlekani.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I stand before this august House on the occasion of the consideration and adoption of the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs' Annual Performance Plan and Budget.

These are important tools within government's planning framework that are used to plan for and implement service delivery for the people our country. These tools must be aligned to ensure responsible spending within the context of limited funds. It is through the APP that is strategically linked with broader government outcomes that we will achieve value for money.

Hon Deputy Speaker, one of the key requirements is to provide a better life for all our people and to ensure that our institutions are staffed with competent, professional, honest, and responsible public servants. These must be men and women who are committed to upholding the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and to serving on the other course than that of the republic and its people.

Such people must be appointed on merit and be insulated from the undue political interference in their quest to deliver quality services to our people. We have witnessed on several occasions, Hon Deputy Speaker, instances where people, especially senior managers, are replaced or transferred each time there is a new administration or a new MEC appointed.

In many instances, these managers have helped to stabilise government institutions and ensured that government functions without disruptions. We are happy with the inauguration of the Seventh Administration; there have been a lot of senior managers

in the department. It is our considered view that where there is leadership stability, service delivery improves, and funds can be properly accounted for.

We call upon the MEC and the leadership of the department to capitalise on this low turnover rate of senior managers and move with speed to fill all the advertised and funded posts to reduce the vacancy rate within the department. We are happy that the current vacancy rate within the department is within the 10% norm.

It is concerning though that the turnaround time to fill the positions within the department is often too long. This has the negative effect of compromising service delivery. As we fill these positions, we must not compromise the imperative of ensuring equitable women representation in senior management level.

Currently, women representation within this level in the department is at 41%. We believe that the department can do more to achieve gender parity within its ranks. The same should be done with other designated groups like people with disability. Their representation in the department is at 1%, which is totally unacceptable and should change immediately.

We have an opportunity to realise fair representation of people with disability when filling the vacant posts when advertised. It is common knowledge that people with disability face multiple forms of discrimination in various social spheres, including employment.

We note little and slow progress that has been made in this regard though. Together with women, people with disability are the worse affected by the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Our social protection initiative, including the provision of housing, should put this vulnerable group first. We congratulate the department on the progress made to eradicate mud houses in the province. Evidence shows that there has been an upward trend of households residing in formal dwellings in the province.

It is our hope that the department will ensure that women and people with disability are the immediate beneficiaries of the next 4 500 Breaking New Ground houses that will be built in this current financial year.

We urge the department to implement a number of programmes to develop residential areas, upgrade informal settlements and provide affordable renting options for our people.

We welcome the announcement of the three flagships, i.e., Marapong, Talana, and Tshikota that are at different stages of design and construction and that will provide more relief to the beneficiaries in those areas, the majority of whom should be the most vulnerable sectors of our society.

At the same time, Hon Deputy Speaker, we must fast-track the process of accrediting municipalities to exercise functions relating to the administration of the National Housing Programme at municipal level. This must be predicted on improved capacity to plan, implement and maintain projects fully aligned and integrated within the

integrated development plan of municipalities. This function of housing delivery by municipalities is firmly rooted within the Constitution and can be further located within the framework of good and cooperative governance. It is made more urgent by the current constraints in the housing delivery processes that are leading to slow delivery and persistent budgetary rollovers.

With the approval of the revised accreditation framework for municipalities to administer the National Housing Programme in September 2023, we hope that municipalities will be capacitated to perform this designated function uncompromisingly. It is saddening that after almost 30 years since the dawn of democracy in our country, we have not managed to replace all asbestos rooftops in our province. That is an apartheid weight that still weighs heavily on the health of poor households. We must be mindful of the fact that asbestos materials are linked to cancer and chronic lung diseases. We urge the department to move with speed to replace the 755 asbestos rooftops during this financial year. We hope that the process to eradicate these rooftops will not be met with corruption. Elsewhere in the country, Hon Deputy Speaker, people are facing serious corruption charges relating to multimillion rands asbestos eradication tender.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we welcome the initiatives taken by the department to ensure that initiation schools in the province are conducted within the confines of the law. While we appreciate the fact that the recent initiation season went with little fatalities, we remain concerned about the disregard for regulations by some surgeons.

The department must tighten regulations to ensure that this sacred practice is not commercialised. We congratulate the initiates, traditional leaders, surgeons of the department by extension for successfully hosting the complementing of 2024 initiation school season.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, we welcome the APP and Budget and hope that we will all put our hands on deck to achieve the better life for all.

I thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. Ndza khensa. Ndi kho livhuwa. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Muhlope. I shall now call upon Hon Wilson.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker, this department's self-proclaimed mission is to be an effective agent of change that delivers quality service to the citizens of Limpopo by promoting developmental cooperative governance, supporting municipalities and traditional leadership institutions, and optimally delivering integrated and sustainable human settlements.

The Government of National Unity's core focus is economic development, and without proper infrastructure and effective service delivery, economic growth is not possible. Modern infrastructure is the backbone of economic development.

We need to prioritise projects such as reservoirs, sewage plants, roads, and bridges, which are essential for attracting investment and facilitating business operations. Not to mention, access to water, without which most small businesses like bakeries, restaurants, guest houses and factories simply cannot operate.

Service delivery to enhance economic growth begins at the municipal level, and without strong political will to hold officials accountable for mismanagement, corruption, and incompetence, investment in Limpopo province will remain low.

The Auditor-General noted in the 2021/22 audit report, poor service delivery experienced by residents is most evident in the concerning state of municipal infrastructure and water provision.

In her latest consolidated report released today, as has been released today, the AG found that not much has changed, in fact, our municipalities regressed. Not one municipality can claim compliance with wastewater management. Towns like Tzaneen, Marble Hall, Mokopane, to name a few, have sewage leaks which endanger not only residents' lives but are hazardous to the environment, as raw effluent flows into dams and rivers.

Lack of access to drinking water is a systemic crisis in most of our municipalities. Polokwane, our capital city, is plagued by water shortages daily, and in Tzaneen, millions of litres of water disappear before it reaches the pump station, leaving residents without water in the afternoons.

MEC for Treasury, let's chat, in the consolidated general report on local government audit outcomes, 2022/23, the province spent R279,87 plus million for financial reporting consultants during the financial year, a 6% increase, mainly because finance units lacked the staff and skills to prepare credible financial statements.

Despite this, only four municipalities were able to submit credible financial statements for auditing. It is abysmal, The financial health of municipalities remains under pressure, with five municipalities disclosing uncertainty about their ability to continue operating in the foreseeable future. It is a crisis.

Councils did not follow credible budgeting processes and approved unfunded budgets at 9 municipalities, which contributed to the total unauthorised expenditure of R2,77 billion. Suppliers were also not always paid within the required 30 days. At 22 municipalities, fruitless and wasteful expenditure totalling R230,58 million placed more pressure on their financial health, while the amounts owed to Eskom and the water boards remained high at a combined R2,73 billion. We are in trouble.

Hon Makamu is not here. In the previous financial year, not one municipality received a clean audit; not one. Time is up. Take charge of dysfunctional municipalities and turn them around; provide a cut-off date to municipalities to replace unqualified officials to fulfil the requirements of a coherent organogram; enforce consequence management to eliminate negligence and maladministration; effect improved municipal billing systems in turn improve the cash flow to assist with improved infrastructure maintenance.

Hon Makamu you have an obligation to the residents of Limpopo and to this honourable House to effect change within municipalities. Section 12 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) gives the MEC the power to decide on the composition of a municipal council and whether it will be constituted in terms of a MAYCO or an EXCO. Section 106 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) gives the MEC powers to institute criminal investigations. This should be happening more and more.

Section 154 of the Constitution orders provincial government to provide support to municipalities. Please apply the same criteria to all municipalities and not to settle political scores, whether it be internal or external, but rather to turn around a dysfunctional municipality to benefit residents and for future investments.

It is time for change. The situation has become abysmal in our municipalities. It is sad that Hon Makamu is not here, but I am glad that the MEC for Treasury is here. We need more oversight on this. I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Wilson. I shall now call on the MEC for Treasury to respond on behalf of the MEC for CoGHSTA; thank you.

My apologies, MEC, before you respond, I shall now go back to the chairperson of the portfolio committee, Hon Sepuru.

MR SEPURU

Hon Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier; Members of the Executive Council; chairpersons of committees; Members of the Provincial Legislature representing various political organisations; ladies and gentlemen; comrades; compatriots and fellow combaters.

Hon Deputy Speaker, you know as well as I do that the mandate of the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA is to hold the executive authority accountable. We are happy that the May 2024 national and provincial elections have ushered in a woman Premier in this province, Hon Phophi Constance Ramathuba.

This is a major milestone in a decisive step towards affirming women leadership in this province. Hon Kennedy Tshivhase, I am tempted to start with matters pertaining to traditional authorities just to illustrate the point that this Seventh Administration is serious on matters that are affecting traditional leaders in this province.

Taking a cue from this important milestone of having a woman Premier, as I have just said, we urge the department to affirm women who qualify in terms of customary law to assume positions of senior traditional leaders or head women. The department is duty bound to help the Office of the Premier to fast-track the issuing of certificates to traditional leaders in general, women magoši, and head women in particular.

Tša etwa ke ye tshadi pele di nwa maswi. In my language from Moletji, we say, tša etwa ke ye tshadi pele di kalampetša maswi. We also want to call upon the department to speed up the resolution of disputes related to traditional leaders so that this

traditional leadership institution can play its role in the broader development initiatives of our country and province.

This will help to remove the perception out there that there is political interference in the appointment of magoši and that government officials are highly implicated in the controversies around the appointment of magoši in this province.

We welcome the continued support the department is providing to the traditional leadership institution in this province in the form of construction of offices and provision of other tools of trade. We believe more can still be done despite limited resources; at the same time we call on the institution of bogoši to play an active role in the fight against gender-based violence and femicide, and other social ills that our people are confronted with on a daily basis.

We also call upon traditional leaders to desist from commercialising initiation schools at all costs, and foster the collaboration between the Department of CoGHSTA, Education, parents, and initiation schools.

Hon Deputy Speaker, another overarching mandate of the Department of CoGHSTA is to optimally deliver integrated and sustainable human settlements. This is a paradigm shift from traditional approach of providing houses, where houses are located far from economic opportunities and social amenities.

Provision of sustainable human settlements allows for communities to thrive to build social bonds, cohesion, and to raise children safely and comfortably. We need to clear the perception, again, that RDP houses are allocated on the basis of political patronage, bribery, family ties and friendship.

We need to come up with checks and balances to ensure that our councillors do not do things according to what is coming out of their heads, but to ensure the prioritisation of the list on who should benefit is done in a fair and equitable manner.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we welcome the various initiatives that the department has embarked upon to deliver various typologies of quality human settlements. We would like to agree with the honourable member representing the African National Congress on the suggestion she has made; it is our thinking as well.

Hon Wilson, it is important not to jump the gun. We, as the committee, in our meeting, have agreed that although honourable Members can stick to their political mandates, they must understand that we are working as a collective. We have noted issues that you have raised, and we have agreed on the way forward. Next time you should ask your reps in the committees as to what was discussed and then take it from there. Do not come here and try to play to the gallery.

We further welcome the initiative taken by the department to sign a service level agreement with Risima to increase the uptake on Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme, which seeks to enable sustainable and affordable first-time homeowners' opportunities for the market segment, whose income exceeds the maximum threshold but is also insufficient to qualify for home loan finance from private lenders and banks.

This approach would have helped to empower the bracket that I have just spoken about, some are calling it the missing middle. Hon Wilson, it is clear in the APP for 2024 and the Budget that there are tangible plans to address the issues that you have raised, so what you were doing was wasting time for this august House.

The department must accelerate the formalisation of informal settlements, as you have said; it is exactly what we are doing. You are saying “nee man” for nothing.

Through this programme, the department and other roleplayers must fast-track provision of security of tenure, basic municipal services, social and economic amenities and empower communities to take full and direct control of housing development.

Madam Speaker, we are aware that the department is planning to acquire 20 ha of land to provide various types of housing human settlements. We can only add the department to commence conversations with the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure to release state land for this purpose. We must avoid passing negative publicity that government endured in relation to the Tubatse land acquisition transaction or the Talana temporary housing provision debacle.

We support the department’s plan and commitment to deliver 4 500 Breaking New Ground houses, service more than 5 000 identified sites, deliver the 540 committee residential units and create 3 200 much-needed jobs through housing construction and services of sites.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Please conclude, Hon Sepuru.

MR SEPURU

As I’m just about to conclude, Hon Wilson spoke about the provision of water as if the Premier has said nothing and the MEC said nothing. The portfolio committee is here to report from its meeting that it fully supports the #HiNwaMatiFriday and the recommendations that were made by the Hon Premier at the Opening of the Provincial Legislature.

We have adopted a number of proposals to remedy the challenges that we have. Remember, today is not necessarily the last day of dealing with these matters. We will continue to engage and come up with possible solutions to the challenges that we have. I, therefore, Hon Deputy Speaker, move for the adoption of the 2024/25 APP and Budget of the Department of CoGHSTA.

Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Sepuru, chair of the committee. I shall now call MEC, Hon Mahoai to respond on behalf of Hon Makamu.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Hon Deputy Speaker; and honourable Members, I will not repeat what I said before, but indeed this is an honour and privilege for me, on behalf of MEC Makamu, to respond to some of the issues, including those that are transversal to Treasury.

I would like to assure Members, especially in as far as the current vacancy rate is concerned, that as for this year, the process of filling such is at an advanced stage, and it will consider the vulnerable groups, i.e., women and people with disability. That is a matter that is being taken care of.

In as far as the other matters that have been raised here, of unfunded budgets, I will sufficiently indicate that the efforts to reduce this is at an advanced stage and I can report very confidently that we have seen fruits coming out of it.

The municipality in Bela-Bela has just graduated from this phenomenon of unfunded budgets and others are coming, and we are hopeful that this will be a good way to say we will move out of this area soon.

Not to forget the support that is to be given to municipalities by Provincial Treasury, of course, in collaboration with CoGHSTA as in my own Budget Vote Speech I indicated that the Treasury has beefed up its personnel component responsible for municipal finance to ensure that capacity and performance in municipalities is realised.

We take note of the challenges, and I must also indicate that, indeed, the issue of audit outcomes, as alluded to, is not as effective or as improving as the provincial government or entities. We have said there is a good practice, as we have noted, in respect of the internal audit, which is another assurance provision that ensures that whenever the external audit comes, at least some spade work has been done. We are encouraging, of course, although the sphere of local government is of a different nature, that perhaps a consideration for shared services could be explored. We have seen the benefits of shared services in the province, including those housed in Treasury. That's why you see more clean audits, moderate unqualified audit opinions, and the qualified audit opinions becoming lesser and lesser.

Regarding traditional affairs, the issue of affirmation of women who qualify to assume positions of traditional leaders, as the honourable chair has indicated, is indeed being looked at, and the issue that has been raised of officials who are alleged to be manipulating the processes around the appointment of traditional leaders will be investigated, and necessary actions informed by such findings will be embarked upon. Regarding the disputes and claims, the Premier has already established a dispute resolution mechanism to deal with claims. The department is supporting the House of Traditional Leaders in this regard.

To sum it up and to waste no time, we take note of all other matters that have been raised through this debate, and all will be looked into. When the Budget review report recommendations are done, I would be able to, in writing, confirm some of the things that the department has to deal with.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I should go down with an assurance that I will relay the message to my colleague whom I'm standing on behalf of due to the fact that he is involved in another similar assignment elsewhere at the NCOP.

I thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much MEC, Hon Mahoai. We shall now consider the report of the Portfolio Committee on Education. We shall now call upon the committee chairperson, Hon Nkakareng Rakgoale.

MS RAKGOALE

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. I hereby present the report of the Portfolio Committee on Education for adoption by the House.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Rakgoale. I shall now call for a seconder. Hon Selane, you are recognised.

DR SELANE

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Ke ema mo ke thekga Hon Christian Rakgoale on her presentation. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. I am now aware of the name Christian. I shall now call upon Hon Maringa Vongani Wesley.

MR MARINGA

Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Hon Premier in absentia; honourable Members of the Executive Council; Chair of Chairs; Leader of the Opposition; honourable Members of this august House, I greet you.

Madam Speaker, life and development starts or, has its roots in family or largely imposed within the family structures, family strength, and family teachings.

Whilst we acknowledge the role played by families in human development, we must also pay attention to the role played by our education system in human development and capacity-building.

The department's role is its legislative authority, which is in line with section 104 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, with special attention to provisions of section 114(2). As we continue to celebrate Women's Month, we must appreciate

great efforts deployed by great men and women in this system who carry out the responsibility of teaching our children.

In the 2023/24 financial year, this function was carried out in spite of the challenges that the department was experiencing, considering the fact that we are emerging and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit us the most in the Department of Education.

The department has received the total Budget of R40,02 billion in the allocation of 2024/25 financial year, which is made up of equitable share of R35,654 billion and conditional grants of R3,164 million and own revenue of R760 million.

Honourable MEC, it is time to level up in the education platform, and even do much better despite the limited resources that we have. Let us remove the silos between the systems designed to work together and serve the same communities across Limpopo and implement corrective measures.

We have a responsibility to strengthen our partnerships with our colleagues in other departments: Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, and Department of Health. The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is to deal with aspects of mental wellness and the Department of Health is to try and address the challenges that we face in terms of health provision in schools, with a specific focus on trying to resolve the challenges that relate to current high levels of teenage pregnancies. If we are able to manage that, consequently we would have managed to deal with the crisis of the spread of HIV when we contend that particular aspect.

Madam Speaker, the portfolio committee will continue to pedal down its work so that all schools can remain developmental hubs for the children and the communities within which they are located.

We need everyone to play a role in the same team because we have served the families, and we serve communities. The provision of scholar nutrition can never be more relevant than it is already today, as we serve an extremely rural province.

If a child is hungry, has no access to adequate housing, living in an unhealthy condition and has an unhealthy mindset, their readiness for being taught and for learning is going to diminish.

MEC, let it be all hands on deck in the Seventh Administration led by Hon Premier, Phophi Ramathuba, and in respect of administration, Madam Speaker, the portfolio committee acknowledges the challenges that exist in the system and is committed to working within the limited Budget timelines to resolve all the challenges that we have.

It has been indicated that the issue of Early Childhood Development remains one of the key priorities that the government is looking at for the current financial year. The department has made a commitment to increase the number of the Early Childhood Development centres, which is going to resolve the challenges that we are facing.

Madam Speaker, there is also the provision of e-learning in schools. This is one aspect that has been highly considered, looking at where the country and the world is in respect of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

With the limited resources that are there in terms of gadgets that must assist in realising the provision of e-learning, we are certain that the department will be able to put it all to us so that we can render the services that the students are looking forward to.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the portfolio committee supports the provision of e-learning in principle. There is a challenge as well, Hon Speaker, that the portfolio committee is making a recognition of, and that is the fact of accountability in respect of some of our officials who are entrusted with the responsibility to deliver.

There is also the provision of infrastructure development. The portfolio committee acknowledges and notes that there is a number of infrastructure that is not in good condition and not in good shape, and also you will not be able to deliver the aspects of learning and teaching if the environment where these services are conducted is not in a good position.

There is a budget allocated for the provision of refurbishment of all infrastructure that has since been damaged by the storm waters and rains and all that. There is a commitment as well that the committee will continue to play its oversight role, including provision of oversight visits.

There's also an aspect that the committee has paid attention to, that is the complete eradication of pit latrines in all our communities, as we service our communities to the best of our capacity and ability in terms of our limited Budget that we have. Fear of the recommendations that are being up by the portfolio committee relate to a commitment that has been made by the Premier during SOPA and the commitment that has been made by the MEC during the Budget Speech in terms of making sure that all these projects that are put forth are implemented without fail.

There is also a commitment that the portfolio committee insists that it must be done very well, and that is the question of Budget expenditure. There must be an aspect where at least we are able to monitor the Budget, as we are allocating it so that there is proper accountability for the money that belongs to the public.

In conclusion, I want to thank my fellow committee members, Hon Speaker, for their contribution during our discussions in the committee and for entrusting us with the responsibility to come and lead in respect of these discussions.

Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Maringa. I shall now call upon Hon Maritz, and happy birthday to you, Hon Maritz.

MS MARITZ

Thank you, Hon Chair; Hon Speaker; Hon Premier; esteemed Members of the Executive Council; opposition leaders; Members and guests.

Hon Speaker, over the past five years, the Department of Education has been allocated a substantial Budget of R178,550,957 billion. This significant financial commitment underscores the government's recognition of the critical importance of education and the need for investment in the sector. However, it is deeply concerning that despite this considerable funding, there are still 80 schools that are equipped with pit toilets.

The presence of such inadequate sanitation facilities not only reflects a lack of basic infrastructure but also raises serious health concerns for the students and staff who utilise these facilities daily.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the situation is exacerbated by the fact that numerous educational institutions continue to deteriorate. Many schools are facing challenges such as crumbling infrastructure, insufficient learning materials, and a lack of essential resources, which hinder the quality of education that students receive.

This deterioration not only affects the physical environment in which learning takes place but also impacts the overall educational outcomes for students. The persistence of these issues highlights a critical gap between the allocated Budget and the affective implementation of programmes aimed at improving schools' conditions.

It raises questions about the management of resources, the prioritisation of projects, and the accountability of those responsible for ensuring that funds are used effectively to enhance the educational landscape.

A total of 19 circuits have been identified as underperforming, primarily due to a lack of accountability and consequences for educators who are not meeting the needs of our children.

A lack of accountability can result in poor decision-making at all levels of a department. When officials do not feel responsible for their actions, they may prioritise personal gain over the best interests of the department and the valuable children of our province.

To conclude, Hon Deputy Speaker, the FF Plus strongly advocates for the education of children in entrepreneurship, as the high unemployment rate in the province undermines their aspirations for a brighter future. By instilling a sense of initiative and creativity from a young age, we can believe that children can develop the confidence and skills necessary to navigate the challenges of the job market and contribute positively to society.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPREAKER

Thank you, Hon Maritz. I shall now call upon Hon Jacobus Smalle.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker; MECs; and Members.

While we analyse both the departments and Executive performance over the last decade, we have witnessed the moving of key indicators such as fixing storm-damaged schools, eradicating pit latrines and improving the learner retention rate.

Hon Speaker, the Democratic Alliance has been defined by relentless advocacy, rigorous scrutiny, and a vision for a better tomorrow. Our pledge to every learner and their families is that tomorrow will be better than yesterday through an improved education system that will not deliver a system where one in five Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning in any language.

More than half of Grade 6 children cannot read for meaning when tested on Grade 4 levels. These tests show that we have lost a decade of progress.

While many of our learners aspire to become scientists, engineers and IT specialists, as a province we simply lack the vigorous approach to create an equal society by delivering on only 314 or 8,7% of our schools to have access to a library, of which 108 libraries are stocked with library material.

We continue to advocate for the Fourth and now the Fifth Industrial Revolution, but with 228 or 6,3% schools having access to laboratory classes and 618 or 17,1% computer centres, the future remains bleak to the many young learners.

For many of them, the education system has failed them, as more than 50 000 learners drop out of the education system in Limpopo between Grade 10 and 12 every year.

We do support the introduction of digitisation of reading assistive technologies and e-book reading capabilities to learners with difficulty. I want to remind this House that only 108 of our 3 662 schools have access to internet connection for learners. Once again, this department will be responsible for a vast majority of learners completing their school year without ever having the opportunity to be on an e-learning platform.

The importance of early childhood education cannot be overstated. The first four years of life are critical for brain development, and early childhood education lays the foundation for lifelong learning. The DA supports the President's call for high-quality early childhood education and safe spaces for children in ECD centres. We urge the department to expedite plans for educational programmes for 3–5 year olds and provide systematic support to home-based care and learning initiatives.

With more than 220 vacant schools across the province due to amalgamations, the DA recommends that these vacant schools be utilised towards Early Childhood Development centres and our ECD practitioners. At a minimum cost of R20 million per school, we cannot allow R500 million of school infrastructure to go to waste.

As we look towards the future, the establishment of a GNU (Government of National Unity) offers a unique opportunity to forge a new path. The inclusion of diverse voices

and perspectives will strengthen our democracy and enhance our policy-making processes.

In this new era, we envision a DA-led Ministry of Basic Education that brings innovation, accountability, and unwavering dedication to our educational landscape.

I thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Jacques Smalle. We shall now call upon Hon Molapo Walter Samuel.

We shall proceed to the chair of the committee, Hon Nkakareng Rakgoale.

MS RAKGOALE

Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; Members of the Executive Council present here; Chief Whip; Deputy Chief Whip; Chair of Chairs; Leader of the Opposition; honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature; all protocols observed.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the educational landscape in our province can be best described by the words of Albert Einstein who once wrote: "Education is that which remains, if one has forgotten everything he learned in school."

Despite the challenges that plagued our schools and province at large in the Sixth Administration, as the biggest education system in the country we triumphed. However, it must be emphasised that it is generally agreed that appropriate teaching approaches and pedagogies are vital for effective literacy learning.

It is acknowledged here, Hon Deputy Speaker, that an intervention has to be robustly designed to measure casual impacts. A key schooling challenge in Limpopo is how to concurrently address the two problems of deep socioeconomic inequality and poor overall performance in the literacy learning.

As the committee, we share view that literacy and numeracy form a critical and fundamental measure of improving the delivery of quality education and learner performance.

Early Childhood Development is the backbone and the bedrock of the improvement and provisioning of quality education.

Hon Smalle, you just left here, and I was listening to you very attentively as the member of the committee. Thank you for your attention; Early Childhood Development is the backbone and bedrock of improving and provisioning quality education.

The committee is pleased by the extent to which the integrated Early Childhood Development strategy is being implemented and wishes to give all credits to the

department for the role they are playing in ensuring that the objectives of the strategy are attained.

One of our priorities, as highlighted by the National Development Plan 2030, is to see South Africans having access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes.

Of course, with tasks given to the leadership of the ANC, as led by the Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, the plan to make sure that this province becomes a global leader in research and technology, and which will attract new companies and highway jobs to Limpopo is highly achievable.

It remains a plan to put force back to work, including our communities, rebuilding our schools and other infrastructure. It is a plan to reduce our deficit in a balanced way. Now it must come to our good sense that Limpopo people voted for action not politics as usual. They elected us to focus on jobs not ourselves, and in this spirit the sister parties must join hands so that we can start building consensus around challenges that we can only solve together.

Deputy Speaker, the MEC spoke much on inclusive education in her Budget Speech and emphasised pedalling down the support of our children living with disability. For noting, honourable members, disability and poverty operates virtuous circle.

Disability often leads to poverty and poverty in turn often results in disability. People with disability face multiple discriminatory barriers in line with the priorities of the plan; people with disability must have an enhanced access to quality education and employment. Much as we applaud the Department of Education Limpopo for setting aside R100 million for assisting in critical areas, more efforts are still needed to ensure relevant and accessible skill development programmes for people living with disability coupled with equal opportunities for their productivity and gaining employment.

Nelson Mandela once made an inspiring quote that goes: "Disabled children are equally entitled to an exciting and brilliant future." It is highlighted in the Budget that the department received a total Budget of R40,29 billion in the 2024/25 financial year, which is made up of equitable share of R35,6 billion, conditional grants of R3,5 billion and own revenue of R750,4 million.

Members, allow me to talk about infrastructure. It is a fact that having schools in good condition is decisive for students to achieve an expected academic result. For those who love to read and study, any place can be good to read and learn.

They might argue that the place you are in does not matter, that knowledge is immortal, that the physical context is secondary and that what is important is to concentrate on what you are reading, but if we transfer this reasoning to the reality of educational systems, the empiric evidence is flagrant.

In other words, the condition of the schools directly impacts the performance of the students. Much as we applaud your hardworking MEC for the Department of Education, the department focuses much on infrastructure as part of making education accessible.

The fact is that the good school infrastructure with renewed spaces, makes it possible for children and youth that live in remote areas to study. In addition, it tends to improve the attendance and interest of students and teachers in learning.

For the same reason, investment in school infrastructure for having an essential role, is solving access to problems of students to the school system and improve their performance, but it helps in job creation.

On Tuesday, 20 August 2024, the Minister for Basic Education made a significant input on security in schools during the Basic Education Sector Induction Workshop held at national Parliament in Cape Town.

The department used these skills in a serious light because they carry a potential to deprive our learners of their inheritance constitutional rights to life, education, equality and dignity.

The Minister recommends that the parents and communities must actively participate in addressing and promoting school safety. Parents and communities are well positioned to see to it that children are safe wherever they are.

Sexual harassment and violence are affecting the learning environment negatively, creating an atmosphere of fear and aggression. These are certainly not conditions which our learners should be subjected to as part of learning experiences.

MEC, as the committee, we encourage your department to have a solid partnership with the South African Police Service, aimed at linking schools with local police stations and establishing functional school safety committees. I know, this collaboration once happened; I think it is just the two of you together, as your colleague, who should resuscitate it.

The necessity of providing scholar transport services cannot be overemphasised. No child should be denied access to education because there is no school close by. The department is encouraged to continue to identify learners in need of this service and to work closely with the Department of Transport and Community Safety to meet the need.

MEC, the learners from GaPhasha in Botlokwa are forever on social media on transport challenges. With the allocated budget of R361,6 million for the 2024/25 financial year set aside for the provisioning of learner scholar transport, qualifying learners will access their learning centres with ease.

The committee lobbies the department to prioritise those learners travelling from GaPhasha to Fedile Secondary School.

As I conclude, let me acknowledge the honourable members of the portfolio committee for the stewardship and guidance which is fruitful this far since the Seventh Administration. Their constructive criticism will help to sharpen ways of doing things in the educational sector. I thank you, Modimo ke o. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Rea leboga Hon Christian Rakgoale. I shall now call on MEC, Hon Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya to respond to the debate made by honourable Members.

THE MEC FOR EDUCATION

Once more, ndi masiari, Hon Deputy Speaker. Let me again observe the protocol that has been established and greet all Members and also acknowledge the presence of our chairperson, Hon Rakgoale and the members of the committee and also appreciate the debates and the issues that have been raised by the committee.

Indeed, I fully agree that education is a developmental process that needs to be guided by a proper curriculum and quality education. Hon Deputy Speaker, we can only be able to achieve that when we have got human resource capacity, both for administration but also for our schools.

We have in our Budget also indicated that administratively, we have been allowed by the Department of Treasury to fill the much-needed posts so that we are able to address our aging demographics when it comes to staff and teachers and so that we can have a learner of 21st century being taught in a class where there is technology but at the same time being taught in the latest models of our curriculum as it demands.

We want to appreciate the inputs that have been brought by the honourable Members, and we want to agree with Hon Maringa that, indeed, the education system plays a role, and we fully agree that we need to remove the silos.

In our department, we are speaking with other honourable MECs that we should have our partnership revived, particularly in terms of sport because we believe that the young learners need that exercise and that focus to take out the skills.

We are also speaking to the Department of Health to deal with the learners as they launch their programme. They will be focussing on youth, and we are the biggest beneficiaries in terms of dealing with the issues and problems that you have alluded to.

Indeed, in dealing with the safety of our learners, we need to work closely with SAPS and the Department of Social Development. So indeed, we will look at those partnerships and make sure that we come back to the House and report in terms of how far we are.

We are not only increasing the number of ECDs that we should have in the province, but, as we presented to the honourable chair and the committee, we are also providing infrastructure and materials for curriculum for the ECD centres.

AS the Department of Education, we need to wake up and smell the coffee and take a child from 0 to 3 in our institution, take the 0 to 6 and prepare them for the curriculum and have all our Grade R learners in our schools, and then prepare them for the next 12 years of their lives.

We want to also agree, Hon Maritz, that indeed we are addressing the issue of infrastructure, as you have seen in our reports; we can confirm that. It is just a pity, Hon Deputy Speaker, that when members come, there are different researches that are being used, but as Limpopo, we are committing to finish up the less than 30 pit latrines schools that are in the province, and we are good to go.

In terms of management of our employees, as Hon Maritz alluded to, we are committed to making sure that we strengthen the training and support that we need to give to our teachers, and in that way, Hon Maritz, happy birthday once more.

We are saying learning is a developmental process, so technical subjects, such as Agriculture, are being done in our schools to address the issues that you are raising, to help a child who cannot be able to participate in the economic activities as they grow up.

Hon Smalle, we fully agree that the research talks about learning as a very challenging process in terms of our learners who cannot read, but we have introduced reading corners. You will remember, Hon Smalle, that if we were to take the reports from the Sixth Administration of this House, the Department of Education then and the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture were collaborating on the libraries of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture that they were building in the communities.

We collaborated on accessibility for our learners and collaborated on using connectivity that each library has to introduce the research that they need access to, and also using the connectivity for them to be able to read books online, if we are to refer to the collaboration that happened in the Sixth Administration of this House.

Besides the reading corners, we are also privy to the situation that in the Limpopo province, we are keeping our learners more in our classes and more in our schools because the parents have to work more hours because of the high rate of unemployment, and the other parents do not have time to teach their kids at home to be able to read, hence we keep our learners more in schools.

We are working with the national Department of Communications, SITA in our province, to deal with advanced connectivity but what we have noticed, Hon Deputy Speaker, is that our schools have got connectivity, but it is not properly audited.

So, we are checking what type of connectivity the schools have so that we can be able to understand if they are strong enough. However, I can confirm to the honourable House that most of our learners use e-mails to access their homework, and also some tasks that they are working on, which is a confirmation that we are indeed ready to produce a learner of 21st century, who is also exposed to the Fifth Industrial Revolution.

Hon Rakgoale, as our chair, we want to confirm that we are doing everything that we can to assist our affected learners. We can confirm that in our province, most of our schools are under quintile 1 to quintile 3, which means that the parents cannot afford other extra lessons, hence we are spot on when we deliver materials for curriculum to our schools.

There's even 1 district out of 10 districts that does not even have a single quantile 4 to 5. It means in all those schools, we are providing educational materials, food, and transport. We want to acknowledge your encouragement for us to improve and do better.

We want to also acknowledge that on inclusive education, we are receiving partners that are going into our schools and recognising the talent that the learners have. It is out of all these issues that Members have been indicating that we are challenged as the department, Hon Radzilani, to make sure that we promote our Sanitary Programme where we give our learners sanitary towels in our schools to reverse the embarrassment and indignity that a girl child faces, and we should be able to do it on time.

We are committed, honourable chair of the committee and Members in the House, through you Deputy Speaker, to give our learners dignity and quality education and a proper system that gives them the opportunity to be able to grow.

It is through this that as the department, we are encouraged by the words and lyrics of Mariah Carey in her song "Hero", because in it you identify that no matter how difficult the issues are, you should hold on. It says:

"It's a long road,
When you face the world alone,
No one reaches out a hand for you to hold.
You can find love if you search within yourself,
And the emptiness you felt will disappear."

We talk about these lyrics because I have learners who stay in communities where parents are working hard; we don't have support.

We stay in communities where unemployment is high, but together with our 1,8 million teachers and our 3 600 principals in the province, we believe that the hero will come along, and it should start within us to be able to tap it out and believe in the strength that we have.

On that note, Hon Deputy Speaker, if you go and read the lyrics, you will know that the Department of Education in Limpopo will succeed and win the battle of quality education. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, MEC, Hon Ramakhanya. I shall now go for consideration of the report of the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture. Chairperson, Hon Falaza Mdaka, you are recognised.

MR MDAKA

Thank you, Hon Speaker, for the opportunity. I, Falaza Philemon Mdaka, hereby rise to present the report on the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for the

Department of Sport, Arts and Culture for consideration and adoption by this honourable House. I so move, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Falaza Mdaka. Hon Selane, you are recognised.

DR SELANE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to second Hon Falaza “Indiyoni” Philemon Mdaka. Thank you. [LAUGHTER]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Selane. I see today you are revealing names.

Thank you very much. I shall now call upon Hon Thabo Mabotja, the unifier. [APPLAUSE]

MR MABOTJA

Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; honourable Members of the Cabinet and those who are not here with us; Chief Whip, Hon Essob Mokgonyana; Deputy Chief Whip of the majority party, Hon Gannye Rodgers Monama; Chair of Chairs, Hon Mokone; honourable members of the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture led by Hon Mdaka, the chairman; and honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature; receive heartfelt salutations, and happy birthday to you, Hon Maritz.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am honoured to stand before you today in a province rich in cultural heritage. As Limpopo, our province is vibrant with diverse traditions, languages and artistic expressions that reflect the very essence of our identity.

From the rhythmic beats of our indigenous music to the intricate craftsmanship passed down through generations, Limpopo’s cultural wealth is unparalleled. It is this heritage that not only defines who we are but also strengthens the social fabric of our communities.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture seeks to promote, develop and transform arts, culture, museums, heritage, language services to contribute to nation-building, good governance, social cohesion, moral regeneration, and human capital development.

Deputy Speaker, you will not hear this department coming to this House saying they need to get services of foreign documented professionals like our counterparts in Gauteng.

We will ensure that we capacitate the human capital that we have. Honourable Members, the Premier in her maiden address did make an emphasis that dilo dišhentšhitše, because nothing is as permanent as change. Due to the fact that

change is a constant force shaping our lives, be it personal upliftment or societal shifts, change surrounds us. Those who studied Mathematics, at least until Grade 12, will tell you that the derivative captures change. So is life, which is an ongoing journey of adaptation and transformation. We need to embrace change because it is where growth and progress dwell.

Honourable Members, the past indicates that the sports and the creative industry are the major contributors to economic and social development of any country. Hence, when Hon Selane was here, he indicated that we have a problem in developing our economy in the province.

It is very important Cde chair that you bring the Department of Sport closer to your department because in sports we have got brand ambassadors, e.g., we have Makhadzi, a Grammy Award winner. She can be a very good ambassador of the province. She can sell the province elsewhere; we have Limpopo Boy who is currently in China raising our flag very high. We need the Department of Economic Development to ensure that it invests in such people to fly the flag of the province very high.

Honourable Members, allow me to quote the former President of the ANC Rolihlahla Mandela when he said, "Sport has the power to change the world ... It has the power to unite in a way that little else does, it speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. it is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination. The heroes [sport creates] standing with me are examples of this power. They are valiant not only on the playing field but also in the community ... spreading hope and inspiration to the world."

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture met with the department with a sole mandate of scrutinising the APP on its performance during the year under review. We did so as a collective in line with the strategic plans, tools of analysis being the NDP, performance plan, and broader mandate of our liberation movement, the ANC.

On Library and Archives Services, honourable Members, libraries aren't just a place where books are found but hubs that foster learning, research and enhance robust engagements. The annual allocation for Library Services subprogramme was R212,3 million during the 2023/24 financial year, and was increased to R231,7 million during the financial year under review.

The APP indicated that the construction of five libraries will achieve completion at the end the year 2024/25, and those libraries are as follows: Mulamula Library in the first quarter, Botshabelo Library in the fourth quarter, Vleifontein Library in the fourth quarter, Sekhukhune Library in the fourth quarter, and Tshaulu Library in the fourth quarter.

Out of the 107 libraries, 99 libraries have been equipped with ICT, and we are glad as the committee that all the contracted librarians and assistant librarians have now been appointed on a permanent basis; therefore, there is stability.

Madam Speaker, there's a need for libraries to open on Saturdays. Staff shortages in most libraries remain an area of concern, with some libraries operating without electricity during loadshedding and load reduction, and some with no backup generators and boreholes, thereby negatively affecting our people.

Our libraries do not have air-cons and proper signages, which makes it difficult to study and locate them.

On Cultural Affairs, Hon Deputy Speaker, it is indeed our individual and collective responsibility to ensure the advancement of cultural heritage of our beautiful province. Our province has seen the possibility of uniting our people, diverse in culture but united in love of free and prosperous South Africa.

On that note, Hon Deputy Speaker, we are making a plea on behalf of the Balobedu people that we please champion the Balobedu language to be recognised as the 13th official language. [APPLAUSE]

Madam Deputy Speaker, the APP indicated that progress on the construction of the provincial theatre will be at 40% at the end 2024/25 financial year. The committee was concerned about the infrastructure projects which take time to be completed, as well as disruptions these projects encounter from business forums. Hon Susan Mathye, will you please assist us during these disruptions. LAUGHTER]

Honourable MEC, during these disruptions, we really need your help to ensure that the development and progress of these projects are not interfered with. The ongoing challenge faced by the department and implementing agency such as IDT (Independent Development Trust) and Public Works results in a delay of construction work.

The committee has directed the department to request the Cabinet to approve that it be allowed to implement its own infrastructure projects by firstly building internal capacity as these implementing agents are delaying progress in these projects.

This will also assist the department to account properly to the AG on its spending and continue maintaining its clean audit status. Honourable Members, it is this committee that is going to champion the remaining strategic key features in our province to reflect the 30 years of our freedom and democracy we have just attained this far. The MEC will be providing direction in this regard.

On Sport and Recreation, honourable Members, sport is the bedrock of any vibrant society. Sport, for instance, goes beyond physical activity. It is a powerful tool for unity, bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds under a shared passion.

Deputy Speaker, we need to pay greater attention to the wellness of our people. I, therefore, urge MEC Maseko, our very own MEC for "Happiness" to look into the programme called Sports Wednesday for it does not have the necessary va-va-voom as well buy-in from other government departments like other government programmes.

It is almost spring, honourable Members; let's go and get our summer bodies. Let's support the programme so that we stay healthy and reduce the burden for the MEC for Health.

On Mapungubwe Arts Festival, Davido must pay back our money. Davido and Anthony Hamilton have to pay back our money.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Please conclude, Hon Mabotja. You are left with one minute.

MR MABOTJA

The Mapungubwe Arts Festival must be supported to reignite the spark, and let's appeal to the wide range of audience but not limited to Ama2000. With Mapungubwe partnering with other organisations such as SAPA YOPA, Limassol, PSD and other NGOs, we will bring the festival back to its former glory as the economic driver of the province. There's a need for the organisers of Mapungubwe to benchmark with other provinces.

In conclusion, Members must know that we are driven by the belief that Budget appropriations for services which are categorised as those within the social cluster are not mere expenditure but an investment in society and individuals. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy; and I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mabotja. I shall now call upon Hon Velile Jack. He is not in the House as he is not back. I shall now call upon Hon Wilson.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Firstly, let me start by congratulating the department on a clean audit. In an ideal world this must be a norm for every department. We do hope that the department continues to maintain this through good governance and good internal controls.

The overall Budget allocation for the Department for the 2024/2025 financial year has increased from R621,816 million to R827,099 million, and this signifies a considerable increase in resources on the part of the department in carrying out their important work. This department is one that has great potential to create jobs and harness economic growth in the province.

The department's plans to fill senior management level posts and increase the number of women, youth and people living with disability in the department's staff component is encouraging if it is actually achieved.

Deputy Speaker, the DA has previously raised the issue of treatment of librarians and library assistants who had been seeking permanent employment for years. Ensuring an adequate budget for 195 librarians and library assistants who have been now

appointed on a permanent basis is welcome, and we support the push to reduce contract workers.

With the provincial theatre taking up such a large chunk of the department's Budget, it is extremely worrying to see what is happening at its site with groups disrupting work there, and we hope it has been addressed.

While we agree with the MEC that it could contribute to creating job opportunities, economic growth and offer a more vibrant creative industry, this will come to nought if it just becomes another project that is incomplete over multiple years. Its location may be well a problem too; being so far out of town, I'm not sure if they will address this. Please also give us updates on Schoemansdal Museum.

The more inclusive approach of the new model of Mapungubwe Arts and Cultural Festival introduced by the department with more activities offers more exposure and opportunity to many more of our creatives.

Now that the department has successfully implemented Mapungubwe Choral Festival, Mapungubwe Open Air Concert, Mapungubwe Video and Film Festival, Exhibition of Crafters, Comedy and Theatre Night, and Mapungubwe Rugby Cup, the next challenge is to figure out a model that generates more revenue, and sees more money spent on artists and creatives within the province.

Deputy Speaker, we hope the new MEC is successful in his commitment to the libraries continuing with construction in this financial year because the completion of library infrastructure projects has been a historical challenge for this department. MEC, it should be unacceptable that the construction of Mulamula Library, which was to be completed this year, was initiated in 2019. It cannot take five years to build a library and not at a cost of over R18 million.

The department's collaboration with the Department of Education to ensure that schools actively participate in sports programmes and its intention to continue supporting 25 000 learners participating in school sports programmes will go a long way to encourage school collusion and continue to support some of the province youngsters.

The plan to implement 223 sport development leagues across the province will also enhance sport development and perhaps start to unlock the province's true sporting potential. However, priority must be given to proper facilities. Children cannot be competitive or compete on badly maintained, badly marked, unequipped grounds and stadiums that are not effectively managed on sports day. I thank you, Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Wilson. The next speaker is Hon Mapoulo. He is not in the House, and we shall then proceed to the chairperson of the committee, Hon Philemon Mdaka.

MR MDAKA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba in absentia; Hon Deputy Speaker; honourable MECs present; Hon Chief Whip; Deputy Chief Whip; Chair of Chairs and Deputy Chair of Chairs; and all honourable Members in this august House; I greet you all in the name of the African National Congress. Good afternoon. Inhlakanhi. Ndi masiari.

It has been a long day, but the speakers who spoke before me did very well. I wonder if I am indeed supposed to even read my speech, because they have covered almost everything, and I am highly surprised and excited that even the DA can see the good work that is done by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. Thank you very much.

However, as I'm about to just summarise the debate, allow me Hon Deputy Speaker, to start from where it began in 1955. The Freedom Charter says the doors of learning and culture shall be opened.

It further says that the government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life. Furthermore, it says the aim of education should be to teach the youth to love their people and culture. Lastly, it says that the colour bar in cultural life, sport and education shall be abolished. This is where everything started.

We are here today to celebrate our achievements as the African National Congress in these years of democracy. Honourable Members, why are we emphasising this in particular? It is because one can never separate education, sports and culture, as indicated in the Freedom Charter. Sport and education are intertwined.

Where there is sport there is education, where there is education there is culture, and where there is culture there is sport and vice versa. It is against this background that we see the Annual Performance Plan and Budget of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture having programmes such as Library and Information Services, which is education, Sport and Recreation as well as Cultural Affairs.

One will not be overexaggerating to say that coaches in sports are teachers and teachers in class are coaches. It is, therefore, imperative that the two departments, i.e., Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and Department of Education, should work together to build a South African child into a responsible, cultured and disciplined future leader, entrepreneur and productive worker with proper ethics and manners.

As the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture, we would like to see a situation where there's effective collaboration between the two departments in bringing school sport to its former glory. Our children should be allowed to do sports at school in order to be able to nurture their talent at their very tender age.

Hon Thabo Mabotja was very clear. He went into detail on this aspect. Therefore, I am not going to waste any time. However, I'm still saying, we must also go further than creative arts and drama to create our own Hollywood in the province.

In sports there is no cutting of corners. Winners in sports cannot be losers and losers cannot be winners. If one does not play according to the rules, one is cautioned. There are consequences for playing outside the rules of the game.

If one continues to play against the rules, a red card is issued against your team with no replacement. Discipline is the rule of the game for one to win. I am not surprised that the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, under the leadership of somebody whose urge is not necessarily different from mine but who is young at heart, Hon Funani Maseko, managed to obtain a clean audit; I think that must be celebrated, as it has been by my friend on the left. [APPLAUSE]

It obtained a clean audit in the 2019/20 financial year, unqualified audit in the 2021/22 financial year, unqualified audit in the 2022/23 financial year, and a clean audit in the 2023/24 financial year. What a record! [APPLAUSE]

I think this can go into the Guinness Book of Records in our province if we can create one here. Congratulations, Hon Funani Maseko. Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure is not something that is allowed to prosper in the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. There should be no room to tolerate corruption in our ranks.

As the portfolio committee, we will continue to offer support to the MEC where it is needed but at the same time exercising robust oversight to strengthen the arm of our government.

We will call for accountability at all times and will not push documents for the sake of compliance and legislation, but we call for accountability, accountability and accountability.

I am moving forward, honourable Members, as I was represented very well by previous speakers, with no one playing a different tune, but all of them were playing the correct tune that we believe can take us forward.

As I move towards conclusion, honourable Members, we support the APP and Budget of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, as outlined by the Hon MEC in this House.

Now the Budget, as it was indicated earlier on, is standing at a whopping R827,999 million. Yes, it is a good thing because for those who were there in 1994, some of us were there from day one, I can tell you vividly from my mind and my memory that the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture was allocated a very small Budget, about R28 million, that it had to run with.

I did not go into the archives, but I believe if you check you will find it to be correct. So indeed, now we are standing at R827,999 million. That is a great achievement. However, I want to see us jumping, moving towards a billion of rands, because if everything can be invested in sports, we would have less problems everywhere; it could either be in-house or in school, no problem. Kids would be disciplined because if you are not disciplined, we will show you a card; if you don't comply, you will be removed.

Therefore, we will groom ethical leaders through sports. Corruption can be dealt with by making sure that we groom quality leaders and ethical leaders through sports. The Budget of sports must increase; we want to see it moving beyond a billion.

We want to see activities in the villages; we want to see R111,171 million that is there for sports and recreation doubling. We want the money that is allocated for Cultural Affairs, which I think is standing at R273 million and some couple thousands, doubling as well. That is what we should do in this country if we want to succeed.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is not just a by the way department; it encompasses all the departments' activities, including what is happening in Social Development. We need our Vakhegula Vakhegula to go to the field and train. We need our old people to exercise. We need these Sport Wednesdays, as it was actually alluded to by previous speakers on sports for adult people being catered for in the department.

Sports build the economy. In sports you can make sure that there are some economic activities, and small businesses thrive through sports. Therefore sports encompass all other departments; it is not just sports alone.

Sport is there to coordinate all other departments around the issues of sport. If our employees are active, they will never sleep on duty because the mind will be active as well. They will be able to stay at work until the last minute, and not necessarily sleep at work because they will be healthy.

With these few words, Hon Deputy Speaker, I want to support what the previous speakers have said, in adopting the Budget for now, as outlined in the document, and making it a point that the document is now the document of this House.

I so move, Hon Speaker. I believe that indeed we will all be active. I don't know how many of you have started exercising this morning. Some of you can hardly lift a leg. We all need to go and play. The games have started; the APP has been presented. Let's all go and play.

We must have Team Limpopo of adult people... [INTERJECTION].

Thank you very much, Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mdaka. You must all go and play sports. I shall call on MEC Hon Funani Maseko to come and respond. [APPLAUSE]

THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker; Chair of Chairs; Chief Whip; Deputy Chief Whip of the ruling party; my colleagues, members of EXCO. I have seen the administration led by Dr Nkuna, the Secretary of the Legislature, my acting HOD, Mme Mampa.

Honourable Members, I have got a very vibrant portfolio committee chairperson and a portfolio committee. We had our first portfolio committee meeting three or four days

ago. There was a serious robust engagement. They were not saving anybody's face. That is oversight.

Oversight is one critical tool that the Legislature must adopt to ensure that it makes us as the Executive to account without fear or favour. That to me, will assist us to ensure that we comply with regard to our plans, and we push the administration to assist the people to achieve their target.

That to me, Hon Speaker, is very much important, and it must be applauded. We should not take it personal when honourable Members are raising issues sharply.

Happy birthday to my skattebol, Hon Maritz, my deputy wife; she is my deputy wife. Happy birthday to you.

Hon Speaker, allow me to start with the soft issues, as raised by members of the portfolio committee in this gathering today. With regard to the issue of school sport, we are collaborating with the MEC for Education. There are some discussions that are to come to make sure we break any challenge that is there, any obstacle that is there and begin to resuscitate school sport because it is the only strategic vehicle that can assist us to unearth talent at that stage of age.

On that one, there is a commitment from us to deal with it. There's also this issue of Walk for Health; these are soft issues. We don't need a budget here. We don't need money for you to come and walk; we just request your commitment. Re a lwala. I am saying it again; we are sick here; our hospitals are full; just come there today.

I am inviting you to Peter Mokaba Stadium at 15:00, every Wednesday. We must lead from the front; if you want other people to join us, the leadership elected must lead from the front.

We go there and walk and turn Limpopo into a walking province. That is what we are calling for, and we request yourselves as honourable Members to join us. I appreciate those who have already started, like Hon Mabotja.

In fact, I told him before you constituted your committees that I wish they could bring him into sports because you started with us before the committees were constituted. So, there is love for sports, obviously such a person will become more constructive to make us realise what we should achieve.

The other issue regarding Schoemansdal is that the project is finished. We were supposed to open it over the weekend. Unfortunately, due to technicalities we postponed, but on Monday we will sit down with magoši that side and agree on the date to go and open it.

Mulamula reminds me of Hon Mathye when she was still a member of the portfolio committee; it was part of her agenda. Every day, she would raise the issue of Mulamula.

Mulamula Library is finished. There are challenges from one part of the traditional authorities that we thought should be dealt with before we open it; even Minister

McKenzie wanted to come and open it. We then advised him that before we open it, let's go and deal with social challenges that characterise traditional authorities there, because this is one critical sector that we do not have to undermine. We need to address these challenges and make sure that when we go and open it, at least the environment is conducive for the Minister to come and open it.

These are the two libraries that I am sure, as for now, we are ready to open, and in that process, we equip the libraries. There's WiFi. We employ workers from the surrounding areas; that's our principle. We don't want to see somebody moving from Polokwane to man a library in Groblersdal. We want people around there who have got necessary qualifications to be employed so that the people of Limpopo must see themselves in this government – that this government is taking care of them.

We are a province with five districts, and now when we recruit, we must consider those factors. That is very critical; that's what we need to do. Once you have a skewed geographical recruitment process, other sections and other regions will identify that and obviously will fight. That is what I am pushing against in the department.

When we employ people, let's look along the length and breadth of the province, and by so doing, we will be appealing to our people and people will be too attached to ourselves.

In terms of security, I want to assure this House that all these libraries that we are going to open, will be having security, WiFi, books and permanently employed staff before we open them. You don't just open a building if it has no capacity because it is going to be a white elephant, and obviously bašhimane ba dinyaope will come and vandalise it. I have heard honourable Members raising a very critical issue around our capacity as a department to implement infrastructure projects, and I want to put on record, Hon Deputy Speaker, that we have got four libraries that we started in 2022 and their envisaged construction lifespan was one year, which means they were supposed to have been completed by 2023, and we didn't complete them. Most of the contractors' contracts, who were appointed at that time, were ceased because of nonperformance.

In 2022/23, they appointed other contractors. They were supposed to finish this end of August, and they can't finish. Some of them have requested for extension until the end of September, so these are the fundamental challenges that we have – the types of contractors we allocated this service provision. Do they have the capacity? Obviously, it tells there's no capacity. Was there any due diligence made? Obviously, no. So those are some of the issues that make me frown and begin to ask: What is our role as a department? I am going to couple this with the issues of the Auditor-General. Our role is to identify, prioritise and allocate budgets and funds only. Public Works procures those contractors, bring invoices to us and we check due diligence in terms of performance through the certificate, and we pay.

When it comes to the procurement process, we are not involved and when the Auditor-General comes, I want to put on record, he is also auditing us. If there is no compliance with the supply chain management policies on these projects, the AG qualifies us as a department, and I am going to make the HOD and the CFO to run there because there should be consequence management. But how do you activate consequence

management on the HOD and the CFO who are not part of the procurement process? Those are fundamental questions that I think the authority must begin to look into. If the system does not work, let's change it. If the policy is not working, we are elected to formulate policies, legislations and regulations, let's change it.

I can assure you, Hon Deputy Speaker, I say it from the bottom of my heart and without any intention, that we might terminate some of the contractors' contracts after September. They are going to terminate them. Let the Legislature begin to be aloud about this.

It is going to take a year again to get a service provider of the same projects, whereas in terms of logical fiscals of allocation every year, the department must implement at least four libraries. These are some of the issues that I thought I must share with you. The portfolio committee is aware; I know their recommendations that they have put in place for this House to take.

Other issues that have been raised will be packaged by the portfolio committee, like we have agreed, and sent to us. We will follow up on those issues. We are very happy with the issues of the AG. There are other issues that we need to tighten up, but I can assure you that the administration for now has got necessary capacity and skill to run the finances of the department. What we are calling for is the one that the chairperson was raising.

We will develop models and proposals that have the capacity to be funded. We need money; lemali yincani for us to achieve all the responsibilities that are vested, I was telling the Premier that many think the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is a small department. It is small because you determine its size through the Budget allocation.

In terms of activities, it is important because you must interact with every stakeholder in the province. That's where you build a cohesion; that's where you build your nation. There's a lot of cultural groups and artists that always want funding – they want money.

As I am saying, we are celebrating the boy, Mahlatsi Moropo from Skeem Saam, who received a Royal Soapie Award on Saturday in Pretoria. He came to my office. Limpopo Boy, I hosted, has got 12–13 international activities that he's going to perform in. They want money, but there's no budget. Thank you, Deputy Speaker. [INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, MEC, Hon Maseko. [LAUGHTER] That was an address. I shall now call on the Chief Whip for a draft resolution. Thank you.

8. DRAFT RESOLUTION

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker, and good morning to honourable Members. [BACKGROUND NOISE]

If you knew what I would be presenting, you wouldn't be making noise. [LAUGHTER]

Thobela, Hon Speaker. In terms of the provisions of section 6(3)(b) of the Remuneration of the Public Office Bearers Act 1998, (Act No. 20 of 1998), the provincial legislature must by resolution, if the provincial legislature is then sitting, or if it is in recess, within 30 days of its next ensuing sitting, having regard to the provisions of subsection 1 and the upper limit as set out in the said notice, determine the salary and the allowances of the Premier concerned.

Hon Speaker, I so move that this House, noting the provisions of section 6(3)(b) of the said Act, resolves to determine the salary and allowances of the Premier of Limpopo as follows:

The determination of salary be with effect from 01 April 2023. I know Hon Simon Mathe wants this.

The total remuneration package shall include the following elements: Basic salary component equal to 60% of the total package which constitutes the pensionable salary; an amount of R120 000 per annum which is an amount which section 8(1)(d) of the Income Tax Act 1962 applies to, this amount is included in the basic salary component; employers pension benefits contribution equal to 22,5% of pensionable salary and a flexible portion for the remaining amount of the total remuneration.

I move accordingly, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Chief Whip. May I please have a seconder.

Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

E re ke go makatše. O re kgane nkase thekge tšhišinyo ye? Ke tla go makatša. Thank you, Hon Speaker. No, I am saying your expectation is that I am going to second, but let me surprise you.

Based on the provisions of the Public Office Bearers Act, and I am going to surprise you, and based on the provisions of the Income Tax Act of 1962, and with special reference to section 8(1)(d) and all other applicable legislation, I therefore in good spirit and not being personal, and trying to be as factual, reasonable and legal as possible, because I know there are expectations when it comes to issues of this nature, out of excitement, will just stand up and second.

You forget the financial principles and practices as encompassed in both King reports 1 and 4, so that will be the basis of my submission. It is not personal, but I want us to be accountable; I want us to ensure that the Legislature continues to get clean audits.

I, therefore, second without any pressure. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mathe. [BACKGROUND NOISE]

Thank you very much.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

I shall now call upon Hon Thabo Mokone to come and give announcements.

THE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker; Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip; Deputy Chief Whip; and the august House.

As usual, mosšmo waka ke go gana le Food and Allied Workers Union ba bangwe ba lena le ka se e tsebe. [LAUGHTER]

The first announcement reads as follows:

The meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development will be held today at Parliamentary Village at 15:00. The meeting is no longer in the Committees Boardroom, le kwele akere?

Honourable Members and guests are invited for lunch which will be served in the main Committees' Boardroom. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mokone.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The House is adjourned to Thursday, 29 August 2024 at Lebowakgomo Legislature Chamber at 10:00.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you. You may all be seated. Honourable Members, good morning. I want to take this opportunity to welcome all of us. It is a very beautiful morning; I can see that we are all bright and beautiful. Honourable Members, today is going to be one of the longest sessions that we are going to have. It is going to be as long as the one we had on Tuesday, because of the number of debates that will be taking place. I want to take this opportunity and request that when you look in the House, I am the only presiding officer present. I would want to make a request to the House, because on item 7.1.6 the Speaker will be expected to respond when the Oversight Mechanism Committee will be presenting. I therefore request that we use Rule 173 that says I need a second presiding officer at whatever time when I need to respond. Somebody should be presiding at that point. I, therefore, request that if the House agrees, we appoint a second presiding officer now so that at that moment that person will just ascend the presiding chair. Honourable Member, you are recognised.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER

Thank you very much, Speaker. I nominate the name of Hon Gannye Rodgers Monama to be the second presiding officer. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

The name of Hon Gannye Rodgers Monama is being proposed. Is there a seconder? Hon Tshivhase, you are recognised.

MR TSHIVHASE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the nomination.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. I did not ask Hon Monama whether he is comfortable. I do not want to assume. Can we check with Hon Monama if he is available to be the second presiding officer for the day?

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I am deployed by the party to come and take over from your seat. [LAUGHTER]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. You are warmly welcome. I am so happy to know that sitting next to the Chief Whip, anything is possible, especially next to MEC 'Dikgerekgere'. Anything is possible. Without wasting of time, we will proceed on that note. I am told that the Programming Committee has agreed that Motions without Notice (Rule 145), Notices of Motions Rule (146), Members' Statements (Rule 200) and Executive Statements (Rule 201) have been put in abeyance for this Sitting. We will now move to item 6: I want to check if there is any tabling of Committee Reports, Other Reports and Papers. Item 6.1 Leader of Government Business or any other MEC that is delegated to lead that item. MEC Mahoai, you are recognised.

[ITEMS 2–5 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

I want to check if there is any tabling of committee reports, other reports and papers. The Leader of Government Business or any delegated MEC should lead that item. MEC Mahoai, you are recognised.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I have been requested by the Leader of Government Business to lead item 6.1.

THE SPEAKER

I did not hear properly, Hon Mahoai. I thought we are giving you an opportunity to table item 6.1:

6.1. Departmental Institutional Annual Performance Plans.

It's over to you, honourable Member.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY [ON BEHALF OF THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS]

Madam Speaker, in compliance with the provisions of section 27(4) of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 [Act No 01, 1999] as amended by Act 29, 1999 as well as chapter 5 of Treasury Regulations, I, Kgabo Elias Mahoai on behalf of my colleagues in the Executive Council as well as the Legislature, do hereby table the Departmental/Institutional Annual Performance Plans for the following departments for consideration and adoption by this honourable House:

- Office of the Premier;
- Limpopo Provincial Legislature;
- Department of Education;
- Department of Provincial Treasury;
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development;
- Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism as well as its entities, Limpopo Tourism Agency; Limpopo Gambling Board; Limpopo Economic Development Agency;
- Department of Health;
- Department of Transport and Community Safety and its entity, Gateway Authority Limited;
- Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and its entity, Roads Agency Limpopo;
- Department of CoGHSTA;
- Department of Social Development; and
- Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.

I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC. The reports as read by the honourable MEC are referred to the relevant portfolio committees and Scopa for consideration and report back to the House. We will now move to item 6.2.

6.2. Tabling of the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Limpopo Legislature

It will be presented by the Presiding Officer. Honourable Members of the House, MECs present here, Chief Whip, Leader of the Opposition, all Members of the Legislature and our guests in the gallery, thank you.

I, Makoma Makhurupetje, rise to table the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature for consideration by this august House. This report is tabled in terms of section 60 of the Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, 2009 which states that: "the executive authority must table the annual report including the audited financial statements for that financial year, the audited report on those statements and annual reports in Parliament within one month after the accounting officer received the report." I move accordingly.

Honourable Members, this report is now the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Limpopo Legislature and is referred to the Committee on Oversight Mechanism and Scopa for consideration and to report back to the House.

We now move to item 6.3.

6.3. Tabling of the Report on Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests

Committee chair, Hon Dikeledi Mmetle Ramohlola, the floor is yours. [APPLAUSE]

MS MMETLE-RAMOHLOLA

Thank you very much, Speaker, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje. The Members of the Executive Council in this House, Chief Whip of our Legislature, chairpersons of committees in this House and all honourable Members present, especially from various political organisations, receive my fraternal greetings this morning.

I am going to present the report on noncompliance with conventions and practices by some Members of the Economic Freedom Fighters. My introduction there is that the Legislature held its Sitting on Thursday, 08 August 2024 to afford the Hon Premier an opportunity to respond to the observations made by Members during the interrogation of the Premier's Official Address. In terms of the background, Chairperson, the Limpopo Legislature subscribes to establish convention and good practices in relation to the smooth running of the House and other Legislature-related business. Among others, is that when the presiding officers' processions enter the Chamber, all Members of the House are expected to rise and remain standing until the presiding officer reaches the chair. This is a practice since time immemorial, and it is still being practised in modern democracy.

During the Sitting held on 08 August 2024, the Speaker's procession entered the Legislative Chamber. Members of the EFF remained seated in violation of this established convention and practice as outline in Rule 7 of the Standing Rules and Orders the Limpopo Legislature. After ascending to the chair, the Speaker requested Members of the EFF to follow suit and rise before the House observes a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditation before resuming the Business of the Day. Members of the EFF remained seated in defiance of the Speaker's advice and in violation of Rule 7. Having exhausted all avenues, the Speaker then invoked Rule 97(1) on the Standing Rules and Orders of the House. The Speaker ordered the Members of the EFF to withdraw from the House as they did not adhere to Rule 7 which is the Conventions and the Practices. The EFF Members continued with their contempt to the Speaker's ruling and refused to leave the House. The Speaker then suspended the proceedings of the House and invoked the provisions of Rule 97(2) and Rule 97(3) and instructed the sergeant-at-arms with assistance of the Legislature protection services to remove the Members of the EFF from the House.

Hon Speaker, the matter was referred to the Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests. The House reflected on the conduct of the EFF Members and resolved that the matter should be referred to the Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests for consideration and determination. The committee held a meeting on 16 August 2024 to consider the matter. After deliberations it was found that the conduct of the EFF Members was in contravention of rules. Consequently, it does not fall within the scope and mandate of the Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests as outlined in Rule 67 of the Standing Rules and Orders of Limpopo Legislature for 2017. We, therefore,

recommend, Hon Speaker, that since the matter is a contravention of the rules, the Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests recommends that the matter should be referred to the Rules Committee for consideration and determination.

I, therefore, move for this House to adopt this report as a report for the Limpopo Legislature. I move accordingly, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable chair of the Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests. The report of the Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests is referred to the Rules Committee for consideration and for a report back to the House.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1. Second Reading Debate: Approval of Budget Votes and Schedule of the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B02-2024].

7.1.1. Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Health.

Committee chairperson, the floor is yours.

DR MALEBANA

Hon Speaker, and honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature, in particular the Chief Whip of the majority party and Deputy Chief Whip of the Legislature, Leader of the Official Opposition, Members of the Executive Council, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I greet you.

Hon Speaker, the Portfolio Committee on Health met with the Department of Health to scrutinise and interrogate the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget. In light of that, Hon Speaker, allow me to table the report of the Portfolio Committee on Health for 2024/25 APP and Budget of the Department of Health. I accordingly move that the House adopts it. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, chair. Is there any seconder? Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Chair, I, Simon Matsobane Mathe, hereby second the motion as presented by Hon Chuene Malebana.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. Hon Mdaka Philemon, you are the first speaker. [APPLAUSE]

MR MDAKA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Good morning. Hon Speaker, Hon Premier in absentia, honourable MECs present, Hon Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip, and honourable Members, I greet you all this morning.

I stand before you to debate on the APP of the Department of Health. Hon Speaker, we have not forgotten that this is still the month to celebrate the achievement of women who paved the way for us to enjoy our freedom today. As we remember what happened in 1956, we must also remind ourselves that the theme to celebrate Women's Month was celebrating 30 years of democracy towards women development.

Hon Speaker, you remember very well that the official opening of this House was on 02 August 2024 which is Women's Month. We did not only open this Seventh Legislature during Women's Month, but also for the first time as a province we made history by ensuring that we are led by a woman. That is indeed a great achievement in terms of the development that we are talking about on this day. We acted accordingly as Limpopo.

Hon Speaker, the committee noted that the department's reporting was not necessarily showing good achievements on its targets. The APP reported that the target for the ideal clinic for 2024/25 financial year was to achieve 142 clinics of 474 or 30% of the clinics at the end of the fourth quarter. We request the department to submit a report on their plans in order to achieve this ideal status and how it is going to be maintained. The committee also noted that contributions on some of the achievements of the targets were poor access to services and poor staff attitude. The targets were not met in maternal mortality and neonatal death. The department reported unreliable data on viral load, suppression and antiviral suppression. The target was unreliable due to clinicians not adhering to clinical guidelines and poor capturing of the viral load. This challenge was raised by the Auditor-General. The department must institute consequence management on those that actually are involved in overseeing the department.

The other issue, before I go to the summary of my input is on the EMS personnel. We commend the department for having made it a point that we have ambulances all over the province. For some of us that were there before this democracy started, we used to deliver people to hospitals because there was a lack of ambulances in our communities. I can actually tell you that in 1990 there were very few cars in our communities, maybe one or two or three cars, and those cars were used to deliver people that were supposed to be treated in hospitals and clinics. At some point you would find that there were no clinics in those days. People had to travel to hospitals to make sure that they deliver women to give birth. Today, we are proud that we have a lot of ambulances all over. I am told that our ambulances are having drivers. We are having a challenge, honourable MEC, on the issue of paramedics. I also think you should find a way of telling the House how you are going to deal with that.

We are very much pleased that the department is having a Budget of about R24,6 billion which is the largest in terms of the budget allocation. The department is still having a shortfall. Some of the programmes that they are having are budgeted on a deficit. We need to find a way on how they are going to address the issue. A deficit is

not very easy to deal with. You cannot budget for a deficit because it would mean that at the end of the day you will not be able to achieve those programmes. We would like to call on the MEC to tell us on how we will be able to deal with those issues that were budgeted for a deficit. A Budget of R24,6 billion is a lot in terms of what we have. It is second to the Department of Education in terms of the budget allocation. We are very much worried about that issue.

Lastly, as I move towards closure, is the issue of making sure that the issues that were raised by the Auditor-General report are dealt with. Particular the issues around fruitless, irregular and unauthorised expenditure. We are aware that you might not be getting a clean audit. You have been getting qualified audit reports, but this time around we are aware that you are going to get an unqualified audit report, which is commendable. We are very much worried about the issues of unauthorised, irregular and fruitless expenditures. We need to be told how you are going to deal with the amounts that are there in the report in terms of curtailing them. I was calculating and I am aware that in some of the reports the figures are not properly written, and it is an issue that I also want to raise, Hon Speaker. We met yesterday and we are here to debate the very same report and some of us are not very comfortable to debate on issues of which the figures are not written properly. We need to make sure that those issues are corrected in terms of unauthorised, irregular and fruitless expenditure.

In a few words, we support the department, as a committee, and we believe that we will go a long way in addressing some of the challenges and anomalies that are there. In all your programmes, please note that we are still a country that is suffering from HIV/Aids. We have a very, very big number of people that are still suffering from HIV/Aids, but we are quite aware that we as a province are doing very well. Hopefully because we are a province that is very good in agriculture. Our people are also getting a good diet, and they are able to deal with it. In the past we used to be very, very, very, very good in making sure that we go to the communities including working with our municipalities in delivering condoms and making sure that people abstain to reduce that area of the HIV pandemic. The situation is now better, because people are taking what they are supposed to take. We are commending the department in that area, and we believe the programme that is written in this report will be achieved at the end of the day.

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk to you. I believe in future some of the issues that we raised will be addressed to make sure that you programme properly so that we can at the same time be able to give you the report properly.

Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Mdaka. You have set the precedence that you have spent your 10 minutes wisely. We call on Hon Maritz Marcelle Frieda.

MS MARITZ

Hon Speaker, good morning. Hon Premier in absentia, esteemed Members of the Executive Council, leaders of opposition parties, Members of this House and guests, I greet you.

Hon Speaker, the department foresaw a significant shortfall in the financial resources necessary to maintain and operate various essential facilities and equipment. This anticipated deficit extends to crucial areas such as the procurement of medicines, which encompasses not only standard pharmaceuticals, but also vital vaccines that are essential for public health initiatives. Some hospitals lack the necessary medications, and this deficiency significantly affect their operations. Additionally the shortfall affects the availability of blood and laboratory services, which are critical for diagnostic and treatment purposes.

The lack of adherence to clinical guidelines by clinicians, coupled with inadequate monitoring of viral load has resulted in unreliable data captured which is unacceptable. Steps must be taken against those clinicians. We should ensure the safety and integrity of the healthcare environment. There have been attacks on clinics, hospitals and personnel. The maintenance and upgrading of health technical equipment plays a vital role in delivery quality healthcare which is also at risk due to the insufficient financial resources.

An immediate turnaround strategy is essential when the department recognises deficiencies in critical areas where we cannot tolerate any shortcomings. Shortfall in maintenance of facilities and equipment including vaccines, blood, and laboratory services, security services and health technical equipment is not acceptable.

The acquisition of vehicles disseminated for transportation of patients between hospitals for planned patient transport services has been significantly delayed at present. Certain ambulances are being utilised for this purpose which compromises the availability of emergency services and places citizens in dangerous situations during critical times.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. You were spot on with your three minutes. We now move to Hon Evelyn Rayne Wilson.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Speaker. At the outset of the meeting of the Health portfolio, yesterday, and before the arrival of the MEC and the department, a long discussion was held with the portfolio members. Many issues were raised, and amongst them, the problems with quorums at the meetings and lack of oversights by the committee. An honourable Member of this House, and of that portfolio committee was brutally honest, and explained to the new chairperson, that it was a problem, and that in fact the problem was that the department did not take the portfolio committee seriously.

There has been a constant disregard by the former MEC, now the Premier, and the department on issues constantly raised by the portfolio committee, including issues like Veritas Digital, owing R1 million a day without reporting, medico legal claims of R7 billion and a R2 billion irregular expenditure amongst others. Year-on-year the recommendations of the committee were ignored and when questions were raised in this regard, serious issues were whitewashed with the odd bit of good news thrown in, but real issues and responses to the committee were not forthcoming.

Those members who have served on this portfolio committee before, were all in agreement that this was an issue and because the portfolio was not taken seriously, oversights and meetings were not taken seriously, because they were merely a tick box exercise. The meeting with the CEO of Pietersburg Hospital with regard to the unfortunate explosion followed thereafter, and then we had the opportunity to interrogate the report and APP of the department with the MEC. It was a lengthy meeting. As the afternoon reached later hours, members of the portfolio committee were suddenly disappearing, again serious issues with regard to the performance of the Department of Health were raised, and I mentioned these earlier. Some answers on minor issues were dealt with, but again, the serious questions got no answers.

As the meeting was closing just before 18:00 last evening, the portfolio committee did no longer quorate. The DA advised that this matter would have to be taken off the agenda for today, as it could not be voted on due to a lack of quorum in the committee. We were then told not to worry. I queried the issue with the legal advisor who advised that we did not quorate, but they were contacting people to come back to the meeting to vote. A couple of them had been gone for hours at that point. They were not even there when answers to their questions were discussed by the department. Having started the meeting earlier in the day, and with the committee agreeing that tick box exercises had to come to an end. This committee promptly reverted to old habits and for the sake of ticking the box began calling members back to the meeting after they had been gone for some time.

The DA will not participate in tick box exercises; we left the meeting. Two members were called back to tick the box and clearly supported the report and APP, despite big queries and concerns about this department's performance. In principle, the DA, rejects the Budget and APP report.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

We now move to the EFF. I am told that the EFF might not use the list we have. Can we have a Member who will debate on the Department of Health. Honourable Member, you may take the podium.

MR LEBOGO

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Greetings to the MEC for Health and her colleagues. Furthermore, greetings to the Leader of the Opposition, Commissar Mapoulo. Further greetings to all honourable Members in the House.

Hon Speaker, the EFF was taken aback by the explosion that left three people injured in Polokwane Hospital. This explosion that occurred in the MRI unit at Polokwane Hospital created pandemonium at the hospital, further traumatising and scaring patients. Did the victims and their families get support in this regard. If yes, we would like to find out from the MEC as to what type of support was given to these people. The fundamental questions are: When was the decommissioned MRI scan machines purchased and installed? Did the department check the chemical exposure and suffocation levels which occur when room oxygen is displaced by chemicals emanating from the explosion in the surrounding wards? What are the decommissioning procedures and how many personnel must be part of the team to accomplish such a task?

We call upon the Radiological Society of South Africa to check if all procedures required for decommissioning the MRI machine were followed and further establish what led to the explosion. The EFF Limpopo will make necessarily follow up on the matter to ensure the province averts similar disasters in future in any health institution in the province.

We have been told that the number of clinics that were activated to render 24-hour service has increased from 50 to 217, through a combination of the straight shift and on call. Furthermore, we have been calling on the department to ensure that all 470 clinics operate 24 hours. Our people do not only get sick during the day. The failure to open all clinics 24 hours is a testimony and characteristics of a heartless and less caring government which keeps sitting back while our people continue to suffer.

The EFF noted that pregnant women continue to give birth outside the gates of clinic premises, because they are `being told that the facility is not yet opened or it is closed. They are also being told that the nurses have not yet arrived to assist patients. We have various clinics that on Friday at around 13:00 you will find that there is nobody in the clinic. When you ask, you are told by the people you are told that the department says there is not enough budget. The clinic in question is at Moeding village in the Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality, in the Sekhukhune District. The "EFF government" will adopt a life-cycle approach to the national healthcare system that focuses on primary healthcare, building 24-hour ideal clinics and disease profiling through public healthcare facilities. Furthermore, we will renew the health system through the strengthening of primary healthcare, universal coverage, people-centred care, with an emphasis on public health and evidence-based policies.

Hon Speaker, security breaches in the form of burglary and violent attacks on PHC facilities remain a hinderance across the province and it has serious consequences on the provision of primary healthcare to our people. What is the department doing to stop criminal activities against the health system which is extending to other areas? We have taken note of a very bad incident where a guard at the Musina Emergency Medical Service station was gunned down when two armed men attacked him. This happens because of the failure by the department to put stringent security systems in health facilities hence our people die unnecessarily. What is happening at the EMS station in Lebowakgomo, because workers are congested in one room on daily basis while the project is not anywhere near completion. The medico-legal cases have contributed to the significant balance in our contingent liabilities. How much money is

the department expected to pay for the medico-legal cases contingent liability and what is the main issue with these cases?

This is the African Traditional Medicine Week, and the government has not done anything to promote traditional medicine, despite the fact that millions of citizens in our province use these traditional medicines on a daily basis. The EFF recognises the role of traditional medicine in providing holistic healthcare to our population. We further call upon the government to establish a hub which will gather traditional herbs...[INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

You have one minute left.

MR LEBOGO

... and animals from game parks and other state farms for medicinal use. Such a noble move will minimise shortage of traditional medicines and ensure that the environment remains protected for future use.

The Economic Freedom Fighters have also received complaints that the patients throughout the province are forced to pay at government hospitals. The newly appointed board distributed ambulances in the province. When they deliver the patients, they take the patient from home and deliver them at the hospitals given the amount that they are supposed to pay. We know in our province the majority of people are dependent on Sassa. The Sassa money is intended for their wellbeing and to take care of their health. It is surprising and we call on the Department of Health to make it clear that the policy for the payment of services to the department must only be for those who are employed and not the Sassa beneficiaries.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We now proceed to the chair, Hon Malebana Chuene William, the chairperson of the portfolio committee. Your 10 minutes starts now.

DR MALEBANE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Greetings to the Hon Chief Whip, chairpersons of portfolio committees, Leader of the Official Opposition, honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature, as well as the people of Limpopo *ba re lebeletšego mo dikgokaganong tša social media*.

Hon Speaker, may I start paying tribute and honour all the patriotic South African men and women, urban and poor, young and old and successive generation of freedom fighters who served our nation selflessly and unconditionally during the different phases of the National Democratic Revolution for our country for freedom and self-determination. We are today celebrating 30 years of freedom, and we should pay homage to all those who came before us. The establishment of the democratic state

institutions established in terms of the Constitution such as the Auditor-General, Commission for Gender Equality, Independent Electoral Commission, Public Protector and other organs that protect democracy and freedom are very important in assisting us to do our work.

The democratic South Africa today is very different from the apartheid South Africa 30 years ago. Access to good health is a fundamental human right just as water and food are universal human rights. The department has achieved much in improving the lives of the people of Limpopo. Our work in promoting universal access to quality healthcare has made tremendous impact. These include access to healthcare for pregnant women, children under five to reduce infant and maternal mortality and sustained investment in building healthcare facilities even in the remote areas of our province.

Accordingly, life expectancy has progressively improved. This improvement is related to advances that we have made, amongst others, in rolling out comprehensive HIV/Aids programme with more people enrolled in the anti-viral treatment and steady progress with the fight against TB. Similarly, the success in curbing mother to child transmission, HIV, together with our child support grant has helped the rate of infant mortality. The department has done well with the fight against COVID-19 and has got recognition from World Health Organization and the President with regard to improvement on availability of medicine. As part of this achievement of universal and equitable access to healthcare, we spend significant time and effort over the past years to establish a system of universal healthcare insurance. This culminated in the passing of the National Health Insurance which further culminated into a plan on the department having some housekeeping and preparatory work that seeks to make sure that we achieve this universal health insurance.

However, chair, there are a number of challenges that the department is facing. The honourable Members have mentioned them. I will mention at high level those challenges. The problem that we are having in the department is contract management which affects the procurement of medical equipment. They are mainly part of the problem of managing service providers. There are a number of chapter 9 investigations and the challenge with regard to consequence management, matters of reporting, as well as some problems relating to other state agency like water supply, irregular expenditure and maintenance of the infrastructure. There are a number of other challenges that the House needs to note which I will quickly browse through.

Amongst the problems are human resources shortages. We also have a problem of brain drain where there is emigration of skilled healthcare professionals to other provinces. Those are part of the structural challenges. With regard to service delivery, we have long waiting times and queues as well as poor patient experience and satisfaction in a number of agencies or institutions of the Department of Health. This includes inadequate emergency medical services which the department is seized with. There are a number of financial challenges that the department is faced with insufficient funding for public healthcare, insufficient use of resources, wastage and perceived corruption within the department. There is also a general problem of healthcare workforce challenges, shortage of healthcare professionals, especially in rural areas, high turnover rates and attrition. Somewhere, there is a lack of specialised healthcare services.

However, the department has guaranteed the portfolio committee and understand what is expected of them. In their report regarding the APP, the department was able to articulate and outline the strategic objective and performance target and Budget allocation for the forthcoming financial year. We also have a report with regard to the incident that happened at Pietersburg Hospital which was a pre-report. We will later during the course of our work, get the full report which we will be able to interrogate and be able to have an opinion on.

We as the portfolio committee will support the department. We are calling on the department, particularly with regards to governance and leadership, to rise to the occasion. We have found that there is ineffective leadership and management. The department's management is able to articulate their problem very properly and to pave the way forward. We will encourage the MEC to pay attention to some inefficiencies that are happening within the department, because the challenges that are there except for those that are related to infrastructure which need a big budget, can be resolved. Most of them are related to contract management.

The honourable Members are talking about some medical and digital issues and other things these are contract management matters. We are saying pay attention to contract management, because as the service providers are blundering, they are doing it with some of the officials within the institution. It is important that we put more systems in place to deal with that. We are happy that you are monitoring and evaluating the system to deal with that. We will pay attention to that...[INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

You have two minutes left.

DR MALEBANA

...and therefore the committee has learnt that the Budget of Health which is popularly known as Vote 07 is about R24,6 billion. We encourage the department to utilise it maximally. As the portfolio committee, we will conduct our oversight work without any fear and favour. We would like to join the Premier ge bare dilo di tšhentš ile. Hon Wilson, we believe that things have changed. We are calling upon the department to support the MEC with regard to making sure that the programme ya go tšhentša dilo, it should happen very seriously. We support the approval of the APP and Budget as the portfolio committee.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We shall call upon the MEC for the Department of Health, Hon Mashego, to respond to the debate as made by honourable Members. [APPLAUSE]

THE MEC FOR HEALTH

Hon Speaker, Members of the Executive Committee, Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip, chairpersons of portfolio committees, Leader of the Official Opposition, honourable Members present here, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to respond to some of the issues that have been raised. Let me appreciate the inputs and the advices that were given. We have noted them as the department. On the issue of the EMS personnel, I would like to assure the House that indeed the report according to our department is that all the ambulances that were procured, before they were even procured, they had personnel, drivers who will be responsible for driving those ambulances. Every ambulance that has been disbursed in our facilities, has a person who is responsible for that ambulance.

When you get into a facility and there is an ambulance that is not working on that day it means the person who is responsible for that ambulance is not working on that day. Which would mean, the ambulance is also resting. It is a positive thing in terms of the lifespan of the ambulances. However, we do note that there is a challenge with our paramedics in the province. We do not have enough, but already we have plans to address that. We are looking into having a bursary to fund those that are qualified paramedics in the province, and it is a challenge. We are looking into having a bursary where we will be taking people to school having our own paramedics to come and service the people of Limpopo. We are looking into reopening the EMS college. If you have seen the circular, we have already advertised for a post of the principal of the college so that it can start running. When the EMS college starts running, then we will be able to train those who are basic drivers of our ambulances to at least have an intermediate qualification in terms of rendering that service.

Hon Speaker, in terms of the audit findings, at least, we are still here today announcing that for the 2023/24 financial year, we have an improvement. We have got an improvement in terms of the audit outcome. We are on unqualified which is an improvement from the previous years where we had findings and the audit opinion being qualified. We have developed the action plan to address all the findings to work towards a clean audit opinion by the monthly steering meeting. We also have by monthly audit steering meetings to monitor progress reports in resolving audit findings. Before the end of this financial year, those findings shall have been addressed.

Honourable chairperson of the portfolio committee and Hon Speaker, we want to assure this House that the Portfolio Committee on Health is taken seriously by the Department of Health. As a department, we know that for us to do better, we have to work with the portfolio committee and we're taking you seriously. We have also committed ourselves even yesterday in our meeting that we will continue to work together with the portfolio committee and make sure that every information that they need in order to run their oversight smoothly will be provided. We said that in the meeting yesterday, as honourable Members said, it was indeed a lengthy meeting with lots of questions. As a department, we answered every question that was posed by the committee and made a commitment in terms of the report that was requested by the committee to be provided by the department. We will provide information. We are going to do likewise.

On the issue of the patients who were injured at the Pietersburg Hospital when the incident of the explosion happened, indeed we had three people who were injured. One of them was the technician who was busy decommissioning the MRI scan. He is still admitted, but out of the ICU. We have been checking on him; he is doing better. He is out of ICU; he is now in high care. The other two staff members of the Pietersburg Hospital, one of them was not admitted he was just checked in casualty and was released on the same day. The second one was admitted overnight, and she was taken for a scan to check if everything was fine, everything was fine the following day and she was also discharged.

In terms of the investigations, indeed, we are still busy with them. As a department, we would like to know what caused the MRI scan to explode. When that report is ready, we will share it with the committee and the House will know what transpired. We will work to ensure that once we find the reason for what happened, we will ensure that we prevent it in future as we believe that prevention is better than cure. We will ensure that we prevent such incidents from happening again.

On the 24 hours clinic activation, we are still busy with it. We have started, and we are continuing with it, because we agree with honourable Members that people do not only get sick during the day. We are committed to ensure that we always activate clinics and we activate them for 24 hours. We do not just activate them just to say they are activated. Batho ba bona fela, but we will ensure that we strengthen our clinics to indeed render those 24-hour services to our communities. We will be monitoring those clinics, because I heard that it is only the lights that are on for 24 hours, but the services are not 24 hours. We will ensure that we monitor them so that at night that they are not only switching on the lights and that they are servicing our people. We are all about bringing services to the people. The issue of Ephriam Mogale is noted. I would be happy if honourable Members could come and tell us about what is happening so that if there is an issue, we would know exactly where that issue is so that we can go there and intervene. We believe that this Department of Health is a department that needs all of us to assist one another to ensure that we bring proper services to the people. For that to happen, it needs every Member of this House, wherever you see a challenge you alert us so that we are able to address the challenge there and then.

Hon Speaker, I also want to assure the House that we have noted all comments and indeed as a department, we are more than ready to always respond where we are needed. We have plans to ensure that quality health services that we are talking about is not just talk that we act on it and ensure that we give proper services to our people.

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC. We now move to item 7.1.2.

7.1.2. Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development

Committee chairperson, it's your turn.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much. I appreciate that, Hon Speaker. I rise on behalf of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development to table its report for consideration and adoption by this House. I so move.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder? It is the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget, for record purposes.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much. Yes, it is the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you chair. Is there any seconder? Hon Mdaka, you are recognised.

MR MDAKA

Thank you very much. I, Falaza Mdaka, rise to second the motion as moved by the chairperson of the portfolio committee, Hon Mathe. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. The report has been seconded. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. The 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for the Department of Social Development. Hon Nenguda Dowaleni Alton, your 10 minutes starts now. [APPLAUSE]

MR NENGUDA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje; Hon Premier in absentia; Hon Chief Whip of the majority party; Members of the Provincial Legislature, distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen. Avuxeni. Thobela. Ndi matsheloni Good morning.

Madam Speaker, allow me to steal this moment before debating and give an overview of challenges depicting the reality faced by the majority of our people. The situation is unfortunately familiar to many in the trenches of poverty, yet it's a true reflection of our situational conditions. The African National Congress has tried and continues to put its shoulder on the will of desirable change to alter and reverse the inhumane conditions of our people that was inherited from the apartheid era.

Yet, Madam Speaker, when we traverse the length and breadth of this province, we cannot confirm the serious impact of poverty that our people continue to be exposed to. It remains a fact that the Department of Social Development is at the coalface of

poverty affliction. It witnesses its scars and wounds inflicted on our people on a daily basis. Regarding disability, income and poverty, Madam Speaker, I guess we all know and understand that disability is one of the most important issues in contemporary society, because stigmatisation of people with disability has contributed to the formation of biases and prejudice which put them in the disadvantaged position compared to people who did not have problems of disability. Nevertheless, today, the problem of people with disability and their discrimination persists, because many biases and prejudice are resilient.

As procedural in carrying out its constitutional mandate, the Portfolio Committee on Social Development succeeded in a meeting in engaging the department on the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget. It has been reported by the Department of Social Development that a total 294 people who are living with disability will be provided with access to residential facilities while 3 510 will access protective assistive devices in the 2024/25 financial year. It is stated on record that the newly appointed service provider at the Shiluvana Frail Care Centre continues to render service to frail patients and brings stability and comfort to frail patients in the province. The Portfolio Committee on Social Development will therefore as part of its oversight responsibility, monitor and oversee if the Budget is spent accordingly during the implementation of plans. Regarding Social Welfare Programme, the subprogramme for HIV/Aids cater for implementors who get trained for social and behavioural change where the target has been increased from 579 of the previous year to 700 in the year under review.

The department has challenges in reaching the required quarterly targets indicating budget constraints, and poor responses by implementors of social and behaviour changes. The committee was concerned on how the department will ensure that implementors of social and behaviour changes are on board as required. Many beneficiaries of social and behaviour change are also planned to be reached. Similar to those who will also need psycho-social support services. This programme has R525,6 million allocated to implement all 8 targets to reduce levels of poverty, of inequality, vulnerability and social ills. It is recorded that circumcision reduces susceptibility of men to acquire HIV during intercourse by up to 60%, about 4 000 men in our province have gone through circumcision during this year. It is important to note that circumcision is not a stand-alone prevention method and should be combined with other preventative measures such as condom use and safe sexual practices. Education and awareness play a crucial role in our fight against HIV/Aids.

It is imperative that we continue to disseminate accurate information about transmission, prevention and treatment, dispelling misconceptions and promote understanding. By promoting comprehensive sex education, we empower young people with the knowledge and tools they need to protect themselves and make informed choices.

Regarding youth and women development subprogramme, Madam Speaker, I am happy that our government led by the African National Congress understands that investing in women is one of the most effective developmental tools of our time to uplift both women and children. It stops generational poverty and, in the process, stimulates economic growth. Rural women are particular disadvantaged both as poor and as women. Women in both rural and urban areas face a higher risk of poverty and more

limited economic opportunities than their male counterparts. The number of rural women living in extreme poverty rose by about 50% over the past 20 years.

It has been reported that the department still maintains the same number as the previous year of youth participation and development skills and development and the entrepreneurship programmes of 600 and 6 000 and the target of 17 000 participating in empowerment programmes is the current financial year. Both the subprogrammes and targets are similar to that of the previous financial year. The allocation of the programme increased by 9,5% from R217,2 million in 2023/24 financial year to R237,9 million in 2024/25 to enable the department to implement what is planned for this financial year. The committee recommended that all commitments made in the previous financial year that are not achieved, be reported on a regular basis.

Women in rural areas live under the same harsh conditions as their male counterparts, but experience additional cultural and policy biases which undervalue their work in both informal and if accessible, formal labour markets. Having engaged the department and scrutinised the departmental 2024/25 Budget, the committee has recommended that the department should fully implement the recommendations of the Auditor-General in order to move from unqualified audit opinion towards obtaining a clean audit before the end of this financial year.

Regarding the investigation reports within the department, following the investigation report by the Public Protector on the allegation of maladministration and improper conduct relating to shortlisting, interviewing and appointment of certain candidates to positions of child and youth care, workers and child and youth care, team leaders at Polokwane Welfare Complex and Mavambe Secure Care Centre during the period March to October 2023, the department did inform the committee that it had requested the Office of the Premier to conduct an investigation to determine whether the companies are irregularly appointed as alleged.

In closing, we wish to reiterate our position that led this Seventh Administration accelerate the transition from social welfare to social development as we embrace the plight of the most vulnerable in our society. Believing that the African National Congress-led government will continue to remain firm in providing opportunities for the vulnerable to develop skills and earn an income with products that they make in workshops to supplement their grants. To this end, let us continue to make every endeavour to ensure that those who need social relief are given priority and fair treatment.

I thank you. Ke a leboga. Ri a livhuwa. Inkomu.

THE SPEAKER

Ten minutes on the dot. We now call on Hon Kobodi Diens Maila. Hon Maila, your three minutes starts now.

MR MAILA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, Hon Deputy Speaker, Hon Premier in absentia, Hon Chief Whip and Hon Deputy Chief Whip, chairpersons of portfolio

committees and all the Members of Limpopo Legislature. Thobela. Avuxeni. Ndi matsheloni. Good morning. Goeie môre.

As I am standing in front of you during this time where Africa is still battling to achieve its economic freedom even after years of colonisation, we need to make it clear that the lives of our people still need to be improved as we all deserve a better life for all.

As United African Transformation, we put the lives of our people first and request the Department of Social Development to identify the needs of our people before the Annual Performance Plan and Budget. This will enable the department to know how to address the social ills and challenges which are faced by our people. We once again noted with concern that there is a shortage of social workers in five districts in our province. This was also indicated by the MEC for Social Development in the meeting.

We therefore say in order to address such a problematic area, we request that each school, clinic and police station in the province must have at least one social worker. The reason for this is that these social workers will be able to identify those who face socioeconomic problems, and identify what the children are facing at their schools. If a social worker could be there, they could be able to identify such kind of learners who are psychologically problematic.

In that sense, the government of Limpopo will efficiently be able to manage all the social ills, in terms of collaborations with CoGHSTA for building houses. We put it clear that it is better to build a quality house that has at least three bedrooms and it should be fully furnished. This is how the government of Limpopo can improve the quality of life for the people of the province. Bomme ba ka mo South Africa ba hlaka. E be re re bontate banyale bomme ba babedi goba ba bararo. [LAUGHTER]

Re a leboga. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

We now move to the third speaker, Hon Evelyn Rayne Wilson. We will hear what Hon Wilson will be saying in the response. We shall hear if Hon Wilson will respond to the statement.

MS WILSON

Hon Speaker, the department's total Budget stands at R2,076 billion. However, key programmes in this department have gone with funds underspent, despite the important work it is tasked with in recent times. This cannot and must not continue.

The DA has always raised concerns over the department's serious budgetary constraints whilst simultaneously having a high vacancy rate of staff at both senior and lower levels. We welcome and acknowledge that the staff compliment operating at 48 % is unacceptable, and the undertaking by the MEC to advertise and fill these vacant positions. We have an abundance of social workers without jobs in the province. In fact many were trained by this department and left high and dry when the department failed to absorb them, maybe MEC, you can start there.

As we continue to celebrate and commemorate Women's Month, we note the department's plans to empower 17 000 women on programmes such as women in agriculture, business management, business start-up, etc. While providing these women with skills is commendable, we hope the department has the foresight to collaborate with other departments and spheres of government or the private sector to see what opportunities can be availed to them after they have gone through these programmes. We cannot take these women through programmes only for them to sit at home again. The same applies to the youth in skills development.

We welcome the decision for this department to assist and capacitate 3 200 NPO's and to continue funding and supporting well run, effective and efficient NPO's. However, we put it on note that we have very serious concerns on the appointment or the granting of the tender for the running of the Shiluvana Care Centre to an NPO with very little skills and background in caring for the severely disabled and handicapped patients there. The potential for another Life Esidimeni crisis is looming. They did not meet all the tender requirements, and this is currently being investigated, and oversight there will be regular.

It is imperative that the department works jointly with the NGOs to develop plans in ensuring that they have the necessary capacity and expertise to run programmes and most importantly to manage the funds in accordance with the policies and regulations. Jobs for friends results in a string of unfortunate events, which will be costly in every way. Increasing the number of vulnerable households accessing food from 4 550 to 7 200 through food security programmes, will provide much sought relief in this province and we hope the department meets this target.

Speaker, as a province, we have a responsibility to ensure that older persons and persons with disability are cared for. There should be a concerted effort moving forward to increase the number of older persons and people with disability accessing residential facilities from 542 and 294 as I am certain that the demand for such facilities far outnumbers the availability. There are simply insufficient old age homes for the most vulnerable. This has to be addressed, and urgently.

The increase in subsidy amount from R3 500 to R4 000 for children in child and youth care centres is encouraging. The next challenge will be that the department ensures that payments to these centres and other NPOs are done on time so that their monthly expenses can be met. Last year, many NPOs' went for months on end without payment. Furthermore, in our experience and from oversights, these moneys are not spent appropriately and for what they were intended. We will be monitoring every aspect in this department very closely it is the lifeline for many of our poor and vulnerable. We must succeed.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

You know I am so happy that honourable Members are managing their time. She did not respond to the question maybe the question of marrying many wives or many husbands will be debated in the Snap Debate. [LAUGHTER] We shall now move to

Hon Magolo Matlebjane Abraham. [LAUGHTER] The Snap debate will be interesting. [LAUGHTER]

MR MAGOLO

Once again, thank you, Hon Speaker, Members in the House and our MEC for Social Development.

Hon Speaker, the problems that the Department of Social Development is supposed to deal with or is purposefully dealing with is part of the social ills caused mainly by the unemployment rate which is high in the country. At the beginning when the Hon Premier was opening this august House, the Premier emphasised that the purpose will be the capacitating of our state institutions for us to insource services and that will be sacrosanct and that will be the priority of this Seventh Administration. In other words, the Premier was indicating that the insourcing of vulnerable workers will be at the forefront.

The EFF indeed believes that the insourcing of workers will provide quality jobs to the workers and curtail corruption which is truly a cancer to the society. The EFF has sadly, however, found nothing significant living up to the promise in this Budget Vote just like in all other Votes from Vote 1 to 13 aimed at replacing the government's corruptible tender or outsourcing practices. It is a stampede on these tenders and these tenders and the participants in these tenders, are fighting causing murdering others and causing a lot of disturbances to the delivery of services.

The department is still held back by the investigation of possible malfeasance in the security tender that was awarded to the Premier's Office as the previous speaker has alluded. This department is still very much into outsourcing to an extent that it has recently awarded a tender to supply our destitute citizens with food parcels. This is one of those that we had to insource, and it should be done inhouse by the department. The EFF has noted potential simmering tensions in this tender that could possibly delay the delivery of food parcels to our hungry people

Possibilities are further unfolding that the people of Limpopo might have been lied to primarily, because the Budget allocation and stated execution plans, the APP, suggest nothing to outsourcing. Of the 50 youth care centres in the province, only five are run by the department with 10 under independent NPOs which are unsupervised or insufficiently supervised. There is nothing or very little in this Budget to change that situation. The bigger part of the departmental budget is spent on these unsupervised NPOs with the risks that go with it.

As the Economic Freedom Fighters, we are surprised as to why there is no expression on insourcing in this APP and Budget. It is because insourcing is not actually a policy of the African National Congress. The ANC is happy to please employers, to take the side of the employers and allow the tender system, labour broking which in essence is a slavery to those few African people who are working. This has the result of exploiting workers who do the actual work such as the cleaners and security.

The EFF noted the staff compliment of the department of 2 762 with the number of women being 1 899 and men being 854. The EFF noted the answer from the MEC to

the portfolio committee that what looks like a high number of women employed which is roughly 2000 to 800 of men is not that low. The MEC when answering she said that the majority of them are of the low paying jobs, the cleaners. The EFF finds that answer as unsatisfactory. We equally have a large number of qualified men in all categories, including in those very low levels. If we have to had 2 000 women to 800 men in that category, we found it to be unacceptable.

The only target of the Employment Equity Act in the APP is that the department is intended to level the employment rate at the senior level. That is the only target. When we look at that it is 10 women and 12 men. Whereas we are leaving that huge discrepancy, the big gap of 2 000 is to 800. We do have brothers and fathers out there who are unemployed at that very same level. We find that this needs to be reconsidered, honourable MEC. We need to correct it going forward. We are not calling on anyone to lose their job, we are merely calling on the department to correct this anomaly going forward.

Accordingly, the EFF could have supported this Budget if the insourcing of workers in Limpopo as promised by the Hon Premier has received an expression in this APP and Budget. The EFF considers it very important for the more than 47,8% of unemployed people in our province to be gainfully employed thereby attaining economic freedom in their lifetime.

During the elections we all go out with manifestos as politicians telling people that we will be creating jobs, we have plans. After the elections, we all come here having raised the hope of the people that they will be employed. When we arrive here, we have seen everything that needs to change the face of our economy. After having listened to the Hon Premier telling us of everything that needs to be done like the beneficiation of the minerals in the province, the Hon Premier just goes back to the usual practices of the ANC which is to say we are going back to the Mining Indaba and that mining indaba has been happening since 2017. We hold these indabas, and we are not doing anything. We know exactly what needs to be done. We need those minerals in Sekhukhune and in the province to be beneficiated here, to benefit the people and deal with the social ills that we are having.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable Member. We now proceed to the chair , Hon Mathe Matsobane Simon. [APPLAUSE] You can see he is no longer using a stick.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Members of the Executive Council present here, Members of the august House, Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip of the Majority Party, Members of the opposition parties allow me once more to interact with this House.

Hon Speaker, the theme as we tabled it from the Premier it is that 'vha do vhona uri zwithu zwo ya zwa Shanduka.' I am told it means 'dilo di tšhentšile' to prove that things

are changing. It is not going to be business as usual. We have always emphasised that we will fight corruption, and we have a responsibility as the Legislature to play oversight and fight corruption. If people would want to continue with their corrupt tendencies, we will enforce consequence management. We want to demonstrate that 'Zwithu zwo Shanduka'. It cannot just be lip service.

We as the portfolio committee, after having engaged with the MEC and the department, resolved on a number of issues. This particular resolution of the portfolio committee, Hon Speaker, I believe, will follow the necessary processes of the Legislature so that it also becomes the resolution of this House. Whoever would defy that resolution will face consequence management. We have empowered the MEC to act without fear or favour in enforcing the consequence management. Regarding the DSDP 31/23 and DSDP 32/23 tenders, they are set aside, and all the appointments must be cancelled and reversed. Period. As to how you do it, do it the way you have done it irregularly. They have irregularly appointed the service providers now they must go and find a way to regularly dis-appoint if there is anything called dis-appoint, because 'zwithu zwi a shanduka.' We are dealing with issues that require consequence management.

In that department, it seems like it was everybody for himself without any accountability. Things happened as if we do not have laws and policies in this country and in this province. There are people who were suspended and subjected to disciplinary processes for appointing staff irregularly. Some of those people were dismissed from work for appointing staff irregularly. Those who were appointed irregularly are still at work. So, what are we saying? We are not in the USA, if we were in the USA, I would say it is a decree. We have directed the MEC, that consequence management must also follow those that have been appointed irregularly. These things were done in consultation and engagements. It is not us coming out of nowhere. We would wait because people are used to a certain Christmas in that department. We want to see if they are going to implement or not. If they don't, consequence management will be enforced. We are going to assist this department to find its way to do things the right way. Where we will hurt feelings, it is unfortunate that we are not in a love relationship, we are in a work relationship. Feelings won't matter most.

On GBV and femicide, this is a strong challenge to many of us, and we need to be asking ourselves whether we must always say we are against gender-based violence without taking any form of action. It is our view, Chief Whip and Hon Speaker, that in the next Sittings, it is not correct that when we speak about gender-based violence, we only speak about males "moering" females. It applies to both. Each and every Member of this House after doing our tradition of Hon Speaker and chair and what, what, you must confirm to us that I am not a women abuser before you can tell whatever you are going to tell. Every female must tell us that I am not a man abuser before she can tell us whatever she wants to tell us. In that way we will be instilling the spirit to intensify the fight against gender-based violence.

Hon Speaker, through your office, we would request that if it is possible, in consultation with the Office of the Acting Secretary, we need to have a pledge where we can write our names where we say that we are not going to abuse females. In all the things that come from Legislature, be it a bag or a t-shirt or a cap or any other thing, to have that thing to say I am not a woman abuser or a man abuser. We need to take that seriously.

The optimal utilisation of our treatment care centres, we will understand that currently our country and province, many of our districts and townships are confronted by a problem of drug abuse. We, as a Department of Social Development, have a responsibility to be in consultation with other departments: Health, Police, so on and so forth. What we do not understand is the red tape in terms of ensuring that people that are victims of substance abuse find themselves in. You cannot have a treatment centre that always has 22 or 23 patients to undergo rehabilitation, but you have a waiting list of more 1 200 applicants. We are not optimally utilising the resources that we have so that we are able to fight this pandemic or this problem.

We have others that we can still collaborate with. We have seen those that are on social media, and I am not promoting anybody, I'm giving an example like SADAG (South African Anxiety and Depression Group). They are doing wonders. Our problem now is more of a national rehab centre than to a provincially rehab centre. How do we tap in as a department, to work in partnership with them. How do we enhance the psychological services or whatever services. When those kids are done, there they come into our centre to get psychological assistance. We have seen that their programmes are working. We still request Members of this august House to sometimes on weekends to go and volunteer their services there like some of us do, even with Hon Mapoulo. I am going with him this Saturday, we are going to volunteer our services. We have embraced what is happening...[INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

You have two minutes left, chair.

MR MATHE

Mola ke thoma gob futhumalapedi, Hon Speaker, I am trying to prioritise. When we have to deal with physical abuse, police you are contributing towards GBV, because when males go to the police station to report the abuse that they are faced with, you reduce them into cowards, and they get very angry, and they kill their wives. The conduct and behaviour of police is also a contributing factor towards this particular problem. The police must create an environment where everybody would feel safe. If my wife had "moered" me, I should not have a problem to go to the police station, because I was "moered" by my wife. If I go there and you laugh at me, I go home and I do something else.

Regarding child-headed families, we are happy that the APP and the Budget Speech presented by the MEC speaks to issues that we have identified as major challenges. How are we going to reduce child-headed families? How are we going to make sure that we provide support? For us as this department to get things right, MEC, we are repeating, it is by consequence management. Consequence management for us who were here when Hon Phala was still here would know; consequence management, consequence management, consequence management. Nothing more, nothing less.

Thank you very much. I can walk on my own.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable chair. Indeed today, you are walking on your own without any assistance. We shall now call upon the MEC, Hon Fulufhelo Florence Radzilani, to respond to the debate by honourable Members.

BACKGROUND

Malibongwe!

THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you very much. Hon Speaker of our Legislature, Makoma Grace Makhurupetje; my colleagues in the Executive Council; Chief Whip and the Deputy Chief Whip of this august House; the Leader of Official Opposition, Hon Mapoulo; the chairpersons and Members of portfolio committees; honourable Members of this august House; HODs of departments; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, I greet you all.

Hon Speaker, let me start by appreciating all the inputs and comments from the honourable Members. We believe that as a department we are going to improve on our performance if we can act on the guidance that you have just provided. Hon Speaker, the dawn of the Seventh Administration has brought with it the opportunity to turn things around and make significant changes in line with the Premier's theme of, 'Things have changed'. Zwe Hon Mathe vha ri 'zwithu zwo shanduka'. Indeed this is the call by the head of the provincial administration.

As we respond to the Annual Performance Plan and our Budget, it is clear Hon Speaker that there is an urgent need for the department to adapt and change in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of our society, in order to effectively address the changing priority needs of the poor, the elderly, people living with disability, the neglected, children and victims of gender-based violence amongst others. The department must be willing to review and reassess its strategies and programmes in order to continue restoring the dignity of our people. This will require a proactive approach to ensure that resources are allocated in a way that benefits those who need them the most. By prioritising the needs of the most vulnerable we can make real impact and improve the lives of those struggling the most.

We have also pleaded with Members of this portfolio committee that they should also assist the department, especially to lobby the Provincial Treasury so that resources are afforded. This is the department that is assigned a very huge responsibility. A responsibility to provide services affecting the most vulnerable within our society. It can't be correct that in most of the programmes, the department relies on donors, because those donors will not just step in. You will have to follow them. You will have to lobby them. Others will release their resources. Others will be reluctant; hence it is important for this august House if we want to make change, if we want to uplift the lives of our people, – we must make sure that budget is provided for this department.

Through our various programmes and services, we provide essential support that can make a tangible difference in the daily lives of the people that I have just mentioned. Whether it is through social welfare initiatives, financial assistance, food provision, training or empowering of our citizens with necessary resources and opportunities. We are committed to rebuilding hope and providing a safety net for those who need it

most. It is true what the honourable Members have just indicated to this august House, the issue that I also mentioned during my Budget Speech, that we are operating as a department with a staff compliment of only 48%. However, we are trying our best to make sure that those funded posts are advertised and within a short space of time. We hope that with the assistance of the Office of the Premier and the MEC for Provincial Treasury we will be able to fill a number of positions.

Concerning the Shiluvana Frail Care Centre, let me indicate that it is unfortunate that Hon Wilson you were not in the meeting. We respect that maybe you had other pressing commitments that made you not to be available for the portfolio committee meeting. When it comes to Shiluvana Frail Care Centre, it won't be nice, and it won't be right to give people information that is not correct to say the department appointed a service provider who does not have the skills and expertise necessary to run that centre. That information is misleading. We are more than ready to sit down with you as a Member of the portfolio committee to provide the information that will assist you so that when you debate in future you do so coming from an informed position.

The service provider who is attached to the Shiluvana Frail Care Centre has been appointed after all the legal processes had been complied with. When you comply with legislation you can't take someone who doesn't qualify to be appointed. There is stability. We request you, honourable chair that you find time and space to lead honourable Members and visit the centre. The people who are housed there receive quality services of which we are happy about. Of course, the issue of underspending on some of the programmes is something that cannot be accepted. We are trying our best to make sure that as the department we spend on the resources allocated to us so that for future allocation, we must not make it difficult for the Provincial Treasury to assist the department.

The outsourcing vis-à-vis insourcing, I thought that maybe the honourable Member will appreciate that we are talking about the department that is struggling in terms of the staff establishment. When you start to insource, that is when the organisational structure in terms of warm human bodies it fills will assist the department to achieve its mandate. We can't run away in areas where we will have to insource. If we have capacity, with your guidance, because we will be working together, we will be able to do so.

The employment equity is something that the department has provided answers and in areas where there are gaps, we said we are going to address those gaps. Because if you check in terms of the existing organisational staff compliment of the department, especially at the management level, we have only acting positions. In the process of filling those positions that is where, also, the issue of employment equity will be taken care of. Fostering employment equity for us is not only adhering to the legal mandate but also driving the organisational success and social cohesion, making it an essential consideration for effective public administration performance.

On the issue of fighting corruption, tenders that were irregularly awarded are to be reversed. Honourable chair of the portfolio committee, even yesterday you were very much clear. You raised this matter sharply and we have agreed as the department that definitely where wrong things have been done, we will have to find ways of

correcting those things because it can't be that we continue to house these anomalies within the department. Consequence management will also be implemented.

On gender-based violence and femicide, women vis-à-vis men, on this one we are guided by the South African Police Service crime statistics. It will indicate who are the serious victims of gender-based violence and femicide. Of course we are not saying men are not abused, but we rely on the numbers that are there because we can't just thump suck. We have noted the issue of the NPOs, and we indicated how we are going to manage these kind of NPOs.

On substance and drug abuse, we indicated that we are engaging the mining companies in Sekhukhune District where we want to make sure that we have a facility that will house those who are victims of drugs and substance abuse so that they continue to receive counselling. It is true that we do have a number of social workers and community development workers who are lingering out there and, some of them were trained by government. If we can be supported by resources, definitely we are going to make sure that they are appointed. For all of us, whether you start from a family setup even if you go to stokvels you go to all areas of life where you have people, you need the services of social workers.

Once you are you are emotionally not okay, Hon Mataboge Moris seated next to Hon Malebana there and Hon Dikeledi Mmetle, if you are busy engaging one another and you are not doing it in a polite way one will be emotionally affected, you must not hesitate to call me so that we provide services of social workers.

Thank you. [LAUGHTER]

THE SPEAKER

This snap debate is now enriched by the honourable MEC. Thank you so much. We will now proceed to item 7.1.3, Consideration of the following Report of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. Committee chairperson, Hon Ramadimetja Constance Kupa, you are recognised. [APPLAUSE]

MS KUPA

Hon Speaker; Members of the Executive Council; Hon Chief Whip; Hon Deputy Chief Whip and honourable Members, good morning to you all. I am Bella Constance Ramadimetja Kupa, the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. The committee held a meeting with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to interrogate the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget. Allow me, Hon Speaker, to table the report of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development for consideration and adoption by this august House. I so move.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Ramadimetja Bella Constance Kupa. Can I please call for the seconder of the motion as presented by the chair. The honourable Member on the other side, you are recognised.

MS SEBOPELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Seanego Sebopela, rise to second for the adoption of the report.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Sebopela. We now refer to the Speakers' List, the debate is opened by Hon Mnisi Gloria Dzunisani. Malibongwe!

MS MNISI

Hon Speaker; Members of the Executive Council present here; Chief Whip of the Legislature; Deputy Chief Whip; the Chairperson of Committees; honourable Members of the Legislature; the Leader of the Official Opposition; esteemed guests and stakeholders from the agricultural sector, greetings in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ. Hon Mathe, I am not a man abuser. I declare. [APPLAUSE]

It is an honour for me to be addressing this august House as we gravitate towards the end of this remarkable month of August. Long live the spirit of the heroines of the struggle against apartheid, patriarchy and poverty more especially those who hail from this province! Happy Woman's Day. Happy Women's Month to all women in this House and those who are at their resting places.

Hon Speaker, crucial for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is the genesis of its mandate, the Freedom Charter; in the section where it says: "The land shall be shared among those who work it". There is a directive from the people of South Africa that says: "The state shall help the peasants with implements, seeds, tractors and dams to save the land and assist tillers". Honourable Members and the MEC for the Department of Agriculture, Land and Rural Development or the acting MEC since the MEC is absent it is against this background that the agricultural sector remains the cornerstone of our provincial economy, providing livelihoods for thousands of families and contributing significantly to food security. We are not doing the people of this province and South Africa a favour, but it is an obligation that emanates from the people's aspirations and the renewed mandate that they get the ruling party in this province on 29 May 2024.

Food is very important. Hon Mdaka, it is not only sport that brings people together. Giada De Laurentiis once said: "Food brings people together on many different levels. It's nourishment of the soul and body; it's truly love". Whilst Franklin D Roosevelt said about soil: "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself". Hon Speaker, the department's Annual Performance Plan outlines how the department would enhance sustainability, support farmers and drive economic growth through agriculture. Honourable Members, the ANC is pleased to say that the department's commitment to sustainable agricultural practice is evident in Programme 02, which is Sustainable

Resource Management. This programme is designed to promote the sustainable use of natural resources which is crucial for the long-term viability of our agricultural sector.

Key initiatives include; soil conservation projects, water management programmes and climate change adaption strategies. The ANC welcomes the department's willingness to work closely with farmers to implement practices which reduce environmental impact and enhance resilience to climate change. These efforts are essential in ensuring that our agricultural system can withstand the challenges posed by the changing weather patterns and environmental degradation.

Hon Speaker, another critical area of focus in the APP for the department is Programme 03, which is Farmer Support and Development. This programme aims to provide comprehensive support to farmers, particularly smallholder and emerging farmers who are the backbone of our rural economy. We commend the department for expanding access to extending services, training and financial resources to empower farmers in increasing their productivity and profitability. It is worth noting that the department is giving special attention to the promotion of agroprocessing and value chain development to ensure that farmers can capture more value from their produce.

We are pleased with the budget set aside to implement the catalytical projects which are Majeje Citrus Farm, Tshilwavhusiku packhouse, a hatchery in Waterberg and bringing back the former glory of Zebediela Citrus farm. This is more food for the communities. Bringing people from different levels together. Food is truly love. This will also bring the much-desired economic boost.

We also have a programme called Veterinary Services. This programme is focused on safeguarding of animal health, which is essential for both food security and public health. The programme deals with disease prevention, control and management. With a particular emphasis on preventing the outbreak zoonotic diseases that can impact both animals and human populations.

We commend the department for enhancing its capacity to respond to animal health emergencies and ensuring that vaccination programmes are effectively implemented across the province. Ensuring the health of livestock is not crucial for food production only but also for maintaining the livelihoods of many farming communities out there. Honourable Members, innovation is key to staying competitive in the agricultural sector, for that reason, a programme of Research and Technology Development is dedicated to driving innovation. The department will invest in research to develop new crop varieties, improve livestock breeds and enhance farming practices.

The department needs to strengthen collaboration with academic institutions and research organisations to ensure that farmers have access to the latest scientific knowledge and technologies. Furthermore, the programme will focus on promoting the adoption of digital technologies in farming which can significantly increase efficiency and productivity.

Another crucial area in agriculture is understanding market dynamics. Agricultural Economic Services provides the necessary support in this regard. The programme will provide market information, economic analysis and trade facilitation services to help

farmers make informed decisions. Therefore, we implore the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development to ensure that the department works hard to improve access to local and international markets for agricultural products with a particular focus on smallholder farmers in accessing these opportunities.

Honourable MEC, please ensure that the farmers have the tools and information they need to succeed. This will help them to compete fairly in the market place. Honourable MEC, I am still referring to the acting honourable MEC who will take the message there. The future of the agricultural sector depends on the skills and knowledge of the next generation of farmers. Structured agriculture education and training will build this capacity by providing high-quality education and training programmes. The ANC urges the department to continue supporting agricultural colleges and training institutions in the province.

Hon Speaker, emphasis should be placed on practical training and entrepreneurial skills to equip students with the skills they need in the sector. Worth noting is the efforts made by the department in providing learning in basic farming in schools which can go far in stimulating farming career paths for students at a very young stage. Hon Speaker, I chose to speak about programme 01 at the end for a reason. Administration is equally important to the other programmes and critical to ensuring that the department operates effectively and efficiently by providing strategic policy coherence for the department, providing strategic leadership, financial management and governance oversight to ensure the achievement of objectives by all the programmes.

The priority remains the improvement of service delivery through accountability and transparency. More often than not, Hon MEC, some departments, when faced with constrained Budget limits, they choose to neglect this programme, which we advise them not to be tempted to because the weaker the administration, the weaker is the governance of the institution. Obtaining clean audits is not rocket science. It is about delivering services to the right people effectively and efficiently with the correct deployment of resources, following the correct statutes and procedures and keeping the correct records at the right place so that you do not keep the auditor waiting and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has realised that.

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, it is very important for this Seventh Administration to make deliberate efforts to refrain from working in silos. It needs to promote integration, critically look at the mandate of each department and beneficiary population of each programme before deciding on who gets how much. The appropriated Budget for this department stands at R178 2612. This department is huge and critical in terms of its mandate, but they can do just a little because their Budget increase is below the CPIX. MEC, Hon Mahoai is working with economists and accountants, and their language is projection, its estimates, its cuts and increases.

They have no, or little relations with humanities. Agriculture will continue to offer a minimum of the much-needed support in the agricultural sector whilst they deal with the most sensitive, delicate, critical, fibre of our society, which is food and building the economy.

I thank you. Ndza khensa Mulawurinkulu wa Huvo ya ku endla Milawu ya Limpopo. Hon Grace Makoma Makhurupetje. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Ha khensa Manana Gloria Mnisi. Hi khensile swinene. We will now move to the next speaker. Hon Velile Cyril Jack, the stage is yours.

MR JACK

Thank you, Hon Speaker. It is really difficult to talk about land in three minutes when you have failed in 30 years. Hon Speaker and honourable Members in the House; progressive forces on my left the only two things that concern some of us is that we always called food as a basic need and we grew up studying agriculture from home. [LAUGHTER] We went to basic schools and agriculture was part of the subjects, theoretically and practically. After 1994 that subject was never pursued. We call upon the Department of Education to revisit and amalgamate in assisting our children in schools to love agriculture and to know the importance of agriculture.

That is because nowadays agriculture is taken as 'a by the way' subject whilst it is supposed to be a compulsory subject that brings food to the poor. People must know how to make food for themselves without relying on tenders so that even children can plant their own vegetables at schools to avoid the unfairly distributed feeding schemes. We are here and 90% of the people seated here are former Bantu Education victims. They know very well how important agriculture is because they are from that culture except Hon Thabo Mabotja, maybe, and his colleagues. However, we are from that school.

The Premier said something about the redistribution of some farms to small-scale farmers around the province. I then asked myself, how is that going to be practical when the boss of Agriculture is the man who is anti that project of redistribution of land, Mr Tony Leon. How are you going to practicalise that under his nose because he is going to stop anything that has got to do with the levels of agriculture?

My last part, Hon Speaker, because the three minutes can't make any difference here, it's better I talk with you outside with the relevant people. My last part is that we are requesting the Department of Agriculture that they must have a policy of some kind. You can't have white farmers after 30 years of our democracy still continuing to kill their own workers and black people in particular. There must be some sort of punishment. Even if you are to take back that farm and compensate the victims of those people who killed the same women on the month of August. We are suffering today. This thing started because of your GNU. If it was not of that GNU, we would not be facing this.

You sing about heroes and heroines, but you married the same people who abuse our black people in their own country and in their own land. However, you people must be careful. You will reap what you are sowing. We must continue supporting the Department of Agriculture. It must also support the workers in the farms. They can't be victimised under your nose, Dr Malebana. You are a communist for that matter. How do you allow a situation like this? We must take back the farms of the oppressors. Take back and give back to the families of the victims. I know you can't do that because

you gave yourselves farms, all of you. You have farms here. You must be careful. We are going to take those farms in 2029.

Thank you, Hon Speaker. [NOISE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Velile Jack. Order! Order! Order! Honourable Members, can we have order in the House, please. We now move to Hon Kobodi Diens Maila. You may take the podium.

MR MAILA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Nka se dule fase. Ditaba e sa le tše ntšhi. As the UAT we are saying the Agricultural Science subject should be compulsory at school so that when children grow, they grow with full knowledge of agriculture. A tsebe go lema. A tsebe go jwala. We are saying there should not be somebody who owns 20 000 ha of land, especially if there are no farming or agricultural activities. There must at least be a ceiling that an individual may own not more than 1 000 ha of land for farming or agricultural activities. We need to introduce massive agricultural projects and provide land machinery and seek to ensure that our people farm that land. More particularly women and the youth.

The state should train farmers in management, finance and agricultural skills. As an alternative, expropriation of land without compensation should be enforced to ensure adequate access to land by African people because ga re na le lefase. Subsistence farmers must be financially supported, and farming resources should be made available for them so that they can continue with the good work they are doing.

Today the question is, how many subsistence farmers do we have in Limpopo province; so that during the financial year, there should be a specific allocation of budget for them. Ke a dumela gore ke ba bantšhi ba e le gore ba nyaka thušo ba e hloka. When coming to rural development, we are saying we need to create an SME stimulus package to resuscitate our rural and township economy and to counter the price war waged by small businesses owned by legal and illegal foreign nationals against our people; since foreign-owned small businesses sell expired and counterfeit products to our people. As the government, we need to create counterfeit goods units with our law enforcement agencies to deal exclusively with counterfeit goods that are destroying our rural and township economies. We have to create a unit which must discourage FMC so that we can compete with our small businesses in our villages, and townships or alternatively settle competition with their big buying powers.

Thanks very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable Member. We will now request Hon Marcel Maritz to take the podium.

MS MARITZ

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Hon Premier in absentia; esteemed Members of the Executive Council; leaders of opposition parties; Members of this House and guests, greetings to you. Hon Speaker, in 2022 former Premier, Stan Mathabatha anticipated that the Lebowakgomo chicken abattoir would generate 500 employment opportunities and was scheduled to commence operations in June of that year. Although constructed by the department over a decade ago, the facility has yet to operate at full capacity. Former Premier Mathabatha described it as a state-of-the-art abattoir; however, two years later, it has become evident that additional investment is required for it to become operational.

Will this facility resemble Zebediela Citrus Farm in that taxpayers will be required to permanently support struggling farms? Hon Speaker, in the APP, it was stated that Zebediela Citrus Farm will contribute immensely towards job creation and economic growth. However, the question arises as to how this will be achieved. Considering their substantial debt of R170 million, one must question the feasibility of attaining self-sufficiency. Although the department has been consistently investing in resources, the operation has yet to regain its previous standard of excellence.

Hon Speaker, I would like to discuss the significant concern of foot-and-mouth disease in our province. The allocation of R4.5 million from the CASP for the FMD programme aimed at acquiring vaccines and medications is insufficient to effectively manage an outbreak. The unpredictability of such outbreaks is heightened by the shortage of border fences and those surrounding the Kruger National Park. Poachers frequently breach these barriers, allowing cattle in search of food and water to also cross over, leading to potential infections.

When these infected animals return to their herds, they pose a risk of spreading the disease. It is imperative to develop a comprehensive strategy to address poaching, repair the fences, and educate farmers on the necessity of ensuring their cattle have access to adequate food and water to prevent them from venturing into hazardous areas.

I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, for managing our time. We will now call upon Hon Helm Maria from the Democratic Alliance. Today it is her maiden speech.

MS HELM

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Good morning, Hon Speaker; the MECs present; I don't see the Premier I hope she is well; Members of this august House and our guests. I hope there are some agricultural guests that are interested in what we have to say. Most of us, if not all, had something to eat this morning. I wonder how many of us thanked our farmers for this privilege whilst you were eating. With massive advertising around food and eating in the world, most of us take food for granted. There are so many outlets everywhere.

Not so long ago, during the devastating world wars that ravaged our planet, food was scares. Those who are blessed with a long life will tell of hunger and quotas and how war can destroy everything. For me, the Department of Agriculture is the most precious department of all. The responsibility for us in this department, the portfolio committee included, is to honour those who have the guts, stubborn determination, everlasting optimism and strong work ethics to make farming work.

I recently met with the Vhembe Livestock Forum members. They had many complaints, but not once did any of them said that they are going to quit. Not one. I spoke to farmers after the devastating disasters of black frost, which wiped out the potato-producing area of Limpopo. You can be prepared but this is going to be very expensive very soon. I saw farmers who looked at the black frost destroying mango trees already full of flowers and the promise of fruit. And then I saw that they are already busy preparing the next land for planting.

We can and must do more to show those brave farmers that we are on their side and that we appreciate that we can eat and everything we eat is coming somewhere from a farm. Let's listen to the complaints of those farmers and take it seriously. Their complaints include:

- Drought relief and the fact that there is little to no government assistance during natural disasters.
- Community Property Associations do not always utilise the land properly and they gave us examples. They said to me examples like; examples such as Ben Levin, Mailaskop and Schoemansdal. Also, some CPAs do not utilise their land at all, whilst the farmers and their cattle are really in a dire state. More than that is, if we can allocate the CPAs to farmers that can bring valuable revenue, maybe the CPAs will start looking into that. We have good farmers, and they can bring valuable revenue to the CPAs.
- Veld fires cause massive problems. You remember now in Tzaneen and Makhado areas. MEC Radzilani, maybe you are aware of it. They caused devastation.
- Farmers asked for assistance so that they can fight this veld fires because we all know disaster management is a problem. Our municipalities cannot fight every single fire that is there. It is impossible. They also asked that they need training for themselves and their workers in firefighting techniques. Farmers asked the enforcement of the red line to keep foot-and-mouth out of the area. Markets and auctions pens must be created in the red zone area. Remember there are farmers behind the red zones. Somewhere we must assist them so that they must also be able to trade. What they do now, because that is not working, they bring the cattle to this side. And then we have a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak. Let's look at that and see how we can assist the farmers beyond the red line.
- Poaching with dogs and snares is a big problem, and stock theft left farmers devastated. The irony of these all is that the SAPS do not follow up. One of the farmers said, they saw the person who has killed my cow. We saw the person

walking to my cow. I saw the person walking there and when asked the police they said, you follow them. We cannot have that. We ask our MEC, please we need to discuss with the police how we can solve this big issue of stock theft and help our farmers on how to combat that.

The many programmes to assist farmers must be evaluated for sustainability. It is imperative that a list of all support to all farmers over the past five years be done and the amount of money spent with an evaluation of the effectiveness of the departmental programmes. We cannot continue to do what we have done for the past 30 years and expect different results. It is now time to use our resources wisely. The department must show accountability for taxpayers' money spent, and recipients must show that they take the responsibility to become successful, producing farmers.

Revitalisation of irrigation schemes is futile if the reasons why the projects failed in the first place are not dealt with. The DA is determined to do thorough oversight and to make sure that each cent spent is used to create successful farming enterprises. The department must set a target of how many successful farmers can be added to existing farmers annually, not just how many people are supported.

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We really appreciate it. We will now move to the EFF. Hon Baloyi, the stage is yours.

MR BALOYI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Greetings to the Members of the House and greetings to the Leader of the progressive party, Commissar Mapoulo. Hon Speaker, the EFF rejects this Budget because it is not radical or progressive enough to change the lives of our people. Budget increases have become just an annual ritual and malicious compliance because there is nothing progressive on the ground to show for it. Service delivery is at a low point despite the fact that budgets are being allocated on annual basis.

Hon Speaker, Norjax Tomato Plant in Tzaneen remains the elephant in the room for the department. Where is the forensic report for this project? Can the MEC respond to this matter and take the people of Limpopo into her confidence that justice will be served for this issue. The EFF is disappointed that the government is not buying from the smallholder producer in order to empower them and grow their businesses. Prison and hospital food should be bought from smallholder producers.

The "EFF government" will strictly procure only 100% locally produced food. We will build and support fresh produce market for access by small-scale food producers with a minimum of 50% access by women and the youth. How many agriculture projects which include livestock, and water infrastructure aiming as long-term solutions for drought mitigation in rehabilitation and recovery purposes has the department supported during the 2023/24 financial year? The majority of irrigation projects have collapsed under the watchful eye of the ANC-led government. Nothing has been done

to resuscitate them. These projects have not been assisting our people in any way since they have been introduced. Infrastructure including pipes has been stolen on site which is a complete waste of money.

The Elandskraal irrigation scheme is one of the projects that have collapsed under the watchful eye of the ANC-led government. We are being told that there has been notable progress in relation of the four irrigation schemes through investment, and revitalisation of the infrastructure development and yet there is nothing concrete on the ground to prove this.

Hon Speaker, the department lacks coherence and radical strategy to create jobs for youth and people living with disability. All they do is abuse EPWP during the employment process to hire ANC youth deliberately excluding people that have different political views, and that must come to an end. Therefore, because of this bias and nepotism of the investment of jobs reduction of poverty and tightness of the cost of living remains a challenge.

Conditional grants are abused and not being used to bridge the gap of unemployment through the creation of real work opportunities and training and not these unsuitable programmes arranged we see every day. How many black emerging farmers have been supported during the 2023/24 financial year, and what progress have they made since then? How many extension officers have been recruited during the 2023/24 financial year because part of the support will be to hire extension officers to give farmers support on site. How many smallholder producers and subsistence farmers have been supported in the last financial year? The "EFF government" will lead the massive programme of food production by ensuring that all arable land in South Africa is placed under production. We will do that after we shall have implemented our first cardinal pillar, which is expropriation of land without compensation in 2029.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Baloyi for managing our time. We will now call the chairperson of the committee, Hon Bella Constance Ramadimetja.

MS KUPA

Thank you, Hon Speaker; Members of the Legislature and distinguished guests. I rise today to express my unwavering support for the Budget presented by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. This Budget is testament to our government's commitment to revitalising the agricultural sector and ensuring food security for our province. It is a Budget that not only addresses immediate needs of our farmers but also raises the groundwork of sustainable growth and development in the years to come.

Let me highlight that the initiatives outlined in this Budget such as the reopening of the Lebowaqomo chicken abattoir and the broiler house assessment programme are commendable. These projects will not only create jobs but also enhance business opportunities for local farmers. Hon MEC, it is a common call that the opening of the

abattoir has been on the agenda for years. As the ANC, we are confident that the 2024/24 financial year will be the year in which these projects are finally operationalised and start benefiting the people of Limpopo.

The ANC welcomes the allocation of R125 million for Sustainable Resource Management, and this demonstrates the department's dedication to long-term agricultural practices and infrastructure development. This commitment to sustainability is crucial as we face the challenges of climate change and the need to preserve our natural resources for future generations. The reopening of the Lebowakgomo chicken abattoir is a particularly noteworthy initiative. This project will not only create a much-needed boost to the local economy but also create at least a thousand jobs. The broiler houses assessment programme which has already been carried out within a 100 km radius of the abattoir will further support this initiative by ensuring that existing broilers are refurbished to full functionality.

This comprehensive approach to revitalising the provincial poultry industry is a clear indication of our government's commitment to supporting local farmers and creating sustainable business opportunities. We commend the department for allocating R759 million to support smallholders and subsistence farmers in the province. We see this as a crucial step towards empowering our local communities. By providing technical and advisory services, infrastructure and training, the department ensures that our farmers have the tools they need to succeed. The success stories of individuals like Mme Hloladi Ramohabi and Tumisho Ngoepe are shining examples of what can be achieved with the right support. Ms Hloledi Ramoabi, a backyard vegetable producer and a broiler from GaSekgopo in Mopani District, is feeding her family with produce from her garden. Tumisho Ngoepe, a graduate of Sir Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural High School has gone on to become a professional engineer and the brain behind the Rahlagane Grapes Project, where Hon Kupa hails from. That the transformation power of targeted support and investment in our farming communities. Honourable Members, the support of smallholder and subsistence farmers is not just about providing financial assistance, it is about creating an enabling environment for those farmers to thrive. This includes providing access to markets, technical training and infrastructure development. By investing in this area, the department is ensuring that our farmers can compete on a level playing field and contribute on the overall growth of our agricultural sector.

Hon Speaker, whilst we celebrate these achievements, we must also acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. Issues such as land degradation, climate change and the recent black frost and veld fires require urgent attention. I implore the government to work hard to combat soil erosion. Mobilising additional resources and the partnership with UN agency are the steps in the right direction. However, we must continue with these stakeholders by taking proactive measures to mitigate their impact on our agricultural sector. The recent black frost and veld fires have had a devastating impact on our farmers, and it is crucial that the department provides the necessary support to help them recover. This includes not only financial assistance but also technical support and training to help farmers implement best practices on disaster management and recovery.

The ANC welcomes Sustainable Resource Management allocated R125 million for the 2024/25 financial year remains the cornerstone of agricultural practises. This

programme is about carrying for the very soil agriculture derived from the provision of infrastructure to support farming activities. We commend the department for investing in infrastructure projects and the department will implement 54 agricultural projects including livestock, water rehabilitation and recovery process within the province.

In 2024/25, a total of 36 irrigation projects will be implemented benefitting 257 smallholder producers with an injection of R100 million and creating 603 temporary job opportunities. As the ANC, we welcome the development of the Mogalatšane irrigation scheme infrastructure, which is now 100% complete with 40 ha planted with cotton, which is a prime example of the success of the department's sustainable resource management efforts. Hon Speaker, ka lebaka la nako ye le re beetšego yona ye nnyane, ke tla ema mo. Next time you must increase the time.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Kupa, the chairperson of the portfolio committee. We shall now call upon the MEC for Agriculture as represented by the MEC, Hon Mashego to respond on behalf of the MEC, Hon Nakedi Kekana, who is out today due to work commitments.

THE MEC FOR HEALTH [ON BEHALF OF THE MEC FOR AGRICULTURE]

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Limpopo will indeed, as Hon Mnisi said, remain the cornerstone of the economy. So, it is important for all of us here to support the department in ensuring that we change the norm of agriculture and start to make agriculture a lifestyle because it is true that when we ask the question whether you have eaten today, if the answer is yes, then we know that you should thank the farmer. It is very much important that we support and ensure that we develop them.

As the department, we support and will continue to empower the farmers through the Farmer Support and Development Programme. As the Honourable Members of the portfolio committee came here and brought comments and inputs, indeed, they are copied and will be reported to the MEC for Agriculture. The department with its mission will continue to promote economic growth and food security through its sustainable agricultural and entrepreneurship development ensuring that by doing that, we will not only be assisting in terms of food security, but also fighting the issue of poverty and unemployment.

Hon Speaker and honourable Members, as the Department of Agriculture, we remain committed to ensuring that all the support that is needed for our farmers will be there and also will ensure that the schools that are receiving basic training in agriculture are expanded. because where I come from, in Dennilton, we say, "ligotjwa lisesemanzi", meaning we must ensure that we train them in the early stages so that when they grow up, they know that agriculture is a way of life.

Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, MEC, Hon Mashego for responding on behalf of MEC, Hon Nakedi Kekana for the Department of Agriculture. We now proceed to Item 7.1.4, Consideration and adoption of the report of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure. Committee chairperson, Hon Khathutshelo John Netshifhefhe, the stage is yours.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity, and the entire august House.

The Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, held a meeting with the department, including RAL, to scrutinise and interrogate the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plans and Budget. In light of that, Hon Speaker, I hereby table the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and its entity, RAL, on the 2024/25 APPs and Budget for consideration and adoption by this august House. I so move, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable chair. Can we call for a seconder to move for the adoption of the report? Hon Mdaka, you are recognised.

MR MDAKA

Ndza khensa Manana Xipikara. Hi mina Falaza Mdaka, ndzi yimile ku seketela leswi boxiweke hi Tatana Khathutshelo Netshifhefhe. Ndza khensa.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Mr Mdaka, for seconding the report. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. The person to open the debate is Hon Matjomane Makua Asnad. The debate is on the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and Road Agency Limpopo. Your ten minutes starts now.

MS MATJOMANE

Thank you, Hon Speaker; Speakership; Hon Premier in absentia; Chief Whip and members of the Whippery; Members of the Executive Council; honourable Members of this august House; ladies and gentlemen; comrades and friends of our opposition parties, kgotsong.

The country is moving towards the closure of Women's Month, August. It is always during this month that we pause and pay special tribute to the more than 2000 women of our country who marched to the Union Buildings on 09 August 1956 in protest against the extension of pass laws to women. Our heroines: Ms Charlotte Maxeke, Ms Albertina Sisulu, Ms Dinoge, Ms Lillian Ngoyi and Ms Lydia Komape, etc.

Madam Speaker, this was the beginning of the struggle, with women at the forefront, against the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality today. We are reminded that the struggle continues. Despite much progress since the historic women's march to the Union Buildings, a symbol of apartheid at that time, our people, majority of whom are women, continue to experience a lack of infrastructure or poor infrastructure.

There are several factors that contribute to poor infrastructure. These include a lack or shortage of funds, insufficient provision of development resources, corruption, as well as poor repair and maintenance. Those hardest hit by the lack of or poor infrastructure, are women, children, and persons with disability.

Also feeling the impact of poor infrastructure are learners and teachers who have to endure spending a large part of their daily lives using pit toilets and other damaged school infrastructure. Poor or lacking proper infrastructure in schools, for example, not only affects academic performance but also infringes on the right to education. It further violates rights to safety and health for both learners and teachers.

The Department of Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure, through its Infrastructure Operations Directorate, should ensure that it builds adequate capacity to render its infrastructure management mandate efficiently for the Department of Education, Health and all other client departments.

We call upon the department to take its rightful place as the custodian of all provincial assets and implementation agent of choice in the province. We note that, due to capacity challenges, interim measures were implemented through the Infrastructure Technical Committee Resource Unit to allow the Departments of Health and Education to implement their own infrastructure projects. This was a temporary arrangement. The department has increased its capability and is ready to execute its mandate in this regard. Let us give it space and the necessary support.

We suggest that, where permissible, the capacity that the two departments assembled under the Infrastructure Technical Committee Resource Unit be placed at the disposal of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure to benefit the entire government and the people of the province. We welcome the conclusion of the service delivery agreements (SDAs) between the client departments and the Department of Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure (DPWRI). These agreements regulate the relationship between all parties insofar as infrastructure implementation is concerned, outline roles and responsibilities as well as deliverables. We believe that aspects of payment to service providers for undisputed invoices for contractors, regulated by the SDA, would also be addressed by the framework.

We know that client departments often take time to pay contractors, even when their invoices are undisputed. This is not in line with the imperative of paying suppliers within 30 days for undisputed invoices.

We heartily appreciate the strides that the department has made to improve social infrastructure, having completed 579 classrooms, three health facilities and ten Department of Sport, Arts and Culture facilities, respectively. It is our firm view that more can still be done in this regard.

At an administrative level, it is an indictment on our part that, 30 years into democracy, out of the 44 posts within the senior management service (SMS) level, women occupy only 13 positions. We must ensure that when we fill the six vacant SMS positions, we deliberately target women candidates. We must promote a culture of meritocracy and more rigorous selection processes within the department. All vacant, advertised and funded posts must be filled transparently with competent and qualified individuals who will help to professionalise public services. This will help restore and improve the legitimacy of the public service and the respect for our institutions as they regain and proclaim their ability to do their job.

It is a reality that must be acknowledged by everybody that women in our society are gradually and progressively growing tired of the chauvinistic patriarchy that permeates all racial and ethnic groups. They are often more educated than their male counterparts and thus can no longer be pushed to the periphery as drawers of water or hewers of wood. The women of our country are active agents of change and transformation

Regarding the construction of offices of Magoši, it is time we prioritise those for women senior traditional leaders. If such offices do not yet exist, we urge the department and the broader government to develop plans to realise this noble cause. Recently, during the debate on the report of the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, the Hon Mmakgabo Sepuru indicated that tša eta ke ya tshadi pele di nwa maswi.

We wholeheartedly welcome and support the adoption of the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, and its entity, the Road Agency Limpopo (RAL). Ka ona mantšu ao, ke fetša ke re, kgwedding ye botse ya bomme, bomaragathetho, bahubetšane ba tšate.

Let us not abuse our women. Ke dikotakotane dikota di šia nkong, re a le rata, re ka se le tlaiše le lena basadi bao le tlaišago banna, le a kwa ke sello. Kgwedding ye go šetše matšatši a mararo, a re ithobeleng re basadi ba sello.

Ke a leboga, Madam Speaker, Malibongwe!

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. We now call upon Hon Velile Jack.

MR JACK

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, and my colleagues in the House.

Hon Speaker, do not be surprised that I do not have anything with me here. You must not think that I am intelligent; it is because of the limited time that you have allocated to us. It does not deserve to have a speech.

One request that we have made to Public Works is that they should retain the EPWP work. It must be controlled by them, and if needs be, people must apply. We must

never give it back to the corrupt municipalities to be distributed by the corrupt councillors, because it would become a fiefdom of corruption. If every child applies for that, it will assist in the reduction of unemployment.

I plead with Public Works to take ownership of the EPWP because, as you know, these councillors even kill each other for EPWP appointments. Others go as far as Moria to drink water to retain them.

Hon Speaker, we requested the department to provide us with the numbers of those farms that belong to Public Works because a black child wants a farm to plant vegetables and do what other people are doing.

Regarding the houses that are being vandalised, or the houses that are being occupied by employees of the same department without paying a cent, we need the statistics on those houses. They must be returned because we still have military veterans who are neglected by your GNU party, who have no houses and no place to sleep. You are happy about that and even go as far as clapping hands.

The Road Agency Limpopo has been doing wonderful work, it is just that your government has decided to make it a fiefdom of corruption. Some of you, as you are seated here, are benefiting from RAL, and then you come back here and blame RAL for making commitments without a budget.

When you campaign for elections, you make promises, but when it comes time to deliver, you fail to keep your word. You must allocate funds to the Road Agency Limpopo to build proper roads in rural areas. We don't want your 'dikgerekgere', nor should our people endure sitting on gravel roads. Our cars are being damaged when we travel to the villages.

Let me end with the following: Igama labafazi!

THE SPEAKER

Hon Jack, it is important that you write a speech. Our time is highly restricted, and you are correct about that. However, annually, we produce the Hansard Report, a document that records everything that every Member says. It serves as a record that remains in the Legislature for future generations. We don't want your grandchildren to come and find that there is no record of what their granddad was doing. Hence, I am simply indicating that everything is recorded properly. Time restrictions should not be the reason why there is no speech. I shall now call upon Hon Helm to debate.

MS HELM

Thank you, Hon Speaker, Members of the EXCO present and guests. Hon Speaker, I would like to thank our MEC for attending the meeting of our portfolio committee with a large group of the officials from the department. It shows his commitment to transparency, and I hope the MEC will maintain this willingness to share information or respond to questions moving forward. Furthermore, I would like to thank the chair of the committee, Hon Netshifhefhe, and the officials who make it all possible. Running a portfolio committee is indeed a huge task, and we are very grateful for their efforts.

The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure is a very important department. This department can have a massive impact on creating an enabling infrastructure environment to facilitate economic opportunities for our citizens. Therefore, the responsibility of the department is immense and for the sake of the people of Limpopo, it cannot afford to fail.

The department is allocated R5,272 billion for the current year, with R2,577 billion of that going to Road Agency Limpopo (RAL). It is indeed encouraging to see that so much effort is being put into blading and regravelling of roads. A well-maintained gravel road is a valuable asset to local communities, and hopefully, this project continues to make progress.

A major concern is the impact of mining trucks on our roads. First, the main roads are weakened and then the smaller roads which were not built to carry these massive heavy trucks are deteriorating rapidly. The R40 and now the R530 Mica Road are prime examples. It is urgent that our department starts negotiations with the national Department of Transport to fix the rail system and get the mining trucks off the roads.

The road from Musina through Alldays to Lephalale is damaged beyond belief by mining trucks. This road is now being maintained mostly by farmers. The question is whether the department will reimburse farmers for their contributions in light of the court case. I remind you of the judgement in *“Agri Eastern Cape and Others v MEC for the Department of Roads and Public Works and Others”* and its potential impact on the department’s finances.

It is time that we consolidate our mandate. In terms of section 25(1) of the RAL Act, RAL is to perform all strategic planning with regard to the provincial road system, as well as the design, construction, operation, management, and rehabilitation of provincial roads, and is responsible for the financing of all these functions. There seems to be much confusion regarding to the roles of the department, RAL and SANRAL, as you so eloquently informed me in the meeting. It is unclear where SANRAL gets its mandate to maintain provincial roads such as the R40 and the R71. It also seems that a further 21 roads will be handed over to SANRAL. The question is who will fund the maintenance of those roads if they are indeed transferred. We need a list of those roads and the reasons for their apparent transfer.

Road users are also confused because the names or numbers allocated to roads differ. Hopefully, there is a list of the names or numbers of roads indicated by RAL and those that are actually on the road signs. It is very difficult for us to understand which road is being referred to when we receive complaints.

State-owned properties must be rented out to farmers for grazing. We know that our farmers in communal areas suffer greatly during drought times and also just before the first summer rains when there is hardly any grass. The department can increase its revenue by renting the grazing land to these farmers and support them in this way. May I remind you, Hon MEC, that the farmers are willing to pay for it. They don’t want it for free.

A well-maintained and updated litigation register is imperative to assist in holding the department accountable for claims of damage. From the DA's side, we cannot support this Budget due the financial situation at RAL at this stage, and we hope that this will be the last time this is the case.

Hon Speaker, this is the beginning of the Seventh Administration, and I am looking forward to working with our department in the spirit of the GNU to build a strong department and to create an enabling environment for infrastructure development, economic upliftment, and growth.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Helm. Our next speaker is Hon Baloyi from the EFF. Your seven minutes starts now.

MR BALOYI

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

There are more bad things in this department than good things, and therefore, there is nothing to celebrate. Despite money being allocated to this department every financial year, infrastructure development continues to be a challenge. Nothing on the ground is a testimony to the fact that money has been allocated to improve the lives of our people.

Firstly, the HOD of the department has been parked at the Department of CoGHSTA, while no details are given as to why he has been removed from his position. The RAL board has been dissolved. Why was the board dissolved, and does RAL have a new board in place, and who constitutes the board? Previously, the RAL board was dissolved twice, only to be reconstituted by the same people. This time around, we are watching you very closely.

The recycling of people in the departments, entities, and municipalities in the name of cadre deployment is the primary reason why the provincial government is collapsing. This government has no regard for quality and merit. All they do is hire people on the basis of political loyalty. Why did it take two years for the department to terminate the EMS building that was supposed to take one year? The EMS officials are congested in one room in the government complex.

You say that seven traditional council projects have been completed in the last financial year. How many are still outstanding, and do they have the budget to implement them? RAL needs a total of R2,8 billion to complete the prioritised Bermuda roads (289 km). Do they have the money? If yes, when are they going to start implementing?

RAL needs a total of R3,9 billion to fund the pavement of roads categorised as prioritised political commitments (397 km). Do you have this money to implement the road infrastructure backlog in the department? If not, why? Do they have the budget?

If yes, when are they implementing? RAL also needs R10 billion to finance the prioritised road paving projects of 1,004 km. Do they have the budget? If “Yes”, when are they implementing? I think we need answers to this.

When was the dikgerekgere project conceptualised, and where did the department get the money to buy the dikgerekgere? The “EFF government” will adopt a long-term funding framework for infrastructure development and will explore different build, operate, and transfer model as a means of infrastructure delivery, working with the community and the private sector to build infrastructure through public-private partnerships and the use of community bonds.

We will maximally use infrastructure development and expansion as a means for massive, labour-absorbing industrialisation in the upstream and downstream sectors. Furthermore, the “EFF government” will adopt technological advancements to improve the sustainability and efficacy of infrastructure and implement intelligent infrastructure solutions to enhance maintenance and management. We will establish state-owned companies and provide them with strategic and financial support. What is the plan for the department to insource government functions, particularly the building of infrastructure projects like roads and bridges in the province?

I thank you

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable Member, for managing your time. You were still well within your time. We now request the chairperson of the portfolio committee to close the debate. Your ten minutes starts now.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. Greetings to the Chief Whip of the ruling party, Leader of the Opposition, Members of the Executive Council, chairpersons of various portfolio committees, and our distinguished guests.

Hon Speaker, let me take this opportunity to particularly greet the female Members of this august House in the Seventh Administration of Limpopo. As Women's Month draws to a close, let us celebrate the beautiful mothers, sisters, grandmothers, and daughters of our land. We do this to remind ourselves of the journey traversed towards full women's emancipation. This is indeed a historic month, stemming from the organising efforts of women in August 1956.

The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure's capacity and ability to implement policies and programmes to deliver social infrastructure, such as schools, health facilities, libraries, and administrative buildings, as well as economic infrastructure in the form of roads and bridges, is predicated on several factors. These include educated, skilled, experienced, and committed public servants, who are embedded and dedicated in the efforts of public service delivery.

These are the people who work within a transparent and accountable political system, where public representatives lead by example. It has been a year and a half since the

erstwhile head of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure was put under professional assessment. His contract of employment even expired while under assessment. To date, the post has not been filled, let alone advertised.

I must indicate that the inability to fill this important position of responsibility quickly is leading to the erosion of capacity and the decline of public trust in the department.

The same can be said about the Roads Agency Limpopo, which coincidentally faces serious leadership challenges. Its operations are being overseen by an interim board. Lack of stability at the senior leadership level in any institution is a recipe for gross maladministration, poor accountability, and corruption. Hence, these interim commissions do not encourage accountability but rather exacerbate negative practices, including mismanagement of funds, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, employment and procurement irregularities, dereliction of duty, and the flouting of processes. The worst form of mismanagement bedevilling our department occurred in its agency, the Roads Agency Limpopo, where overcommitments totalling R335 million were made.

The Member of the Executive Council is also concerned that this could be underestimated. We share his concerns as the portfolio committee. Sadly, this happened when the agency had a fully-fledged board of directors. We urge the relevant authorities to speed up the restoration of permanent leadership in the department and its agency.

We must engage in concerted, sustained efforts at multiple levels to reverse the erosion of capacity and confidence in our institutions. Leadership stability at the highest echelons in the department of RAL is directly linked to the provision of adequate social and economic infrastructure.

For example, our people face the longest commuting distances. Most of them live in the poorest households and are far from centres of economic activity. They bear the largest burden of transport costs, using gravel or unpaved roads. This breeds a deep sense of injustice and resentment, which often results in frequent violent public protests.

These protests are considered by our communities to be the most effective way of drawing the government's attention. We urgently need better roads for our people in this province.

It is quite disturbing that in the current financial year, only 40 km of roads will be paved at a staggering cost of R400 million. What is more disturbing is the fact that it costs a staggering R10 million to pave 1 km of road. One really wonders how much is needed to pave the approximately 13,450 km of gravel and unpaved roads in the province.

However, Madam Speaker, we welcome the Dikgerekgere Wednesday initiative that was unveiled by the department. We hope that through this initiative, the department will be able to regrade or blade most of the gravel roads so that they are drivable. We should confirm as the portfolio committee that we really appreciate this initiative because it is meant to expedite the service delivery programme to ensure that our

people have access roads that connect them to other communities. Indeed, we do appreciate this.

Still on the Dikgerekgere Wednesday, as presented by the department and confirmed by the MEC, the resources they are using are in-house. It is just a matter of utilising the machinery that was accumulating dust to ensure that we expedite this programme. Therefore, it is an initiative that needs to be applauded.

In April this year, 2024, the country celebrated 20 years since the launch of the Extended Public Works Programme. This unveils phase 5 of this initiative. This programme is one of the policy instruments at the disposal of government to tackle unemployment and reduce poverty.

Sadly, the programme is beset with allegations of nepotism, favouritism, bribery, corruption, and cronyism, and public confidence in its ability to reverse the situation is almost non-existent.

We must improve the quality of work experience acquired and the quality of service delivery to the beneficiary communities. Government is losing a lot of revenue due to the rampant hijacking of government property by a network of mafias operating across the province, with Vhembe and Mopani Districts being the hotspots.

We hope that operation vhuysa thundu ya muvhuso will put a stop to this practice. We are looking forward to the conclusion of the forensic investigation that is being commissioned to unravel this practice.

In conclusion, we, as the portfolio committee, welcome the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and the Roads Agency Limpopo.

We believe that through these management and implementation tools, we will turn the tide to ensure that we remain the biggest landlords in the province, keep our facilities and roads functional and properly maintained, provide accommodation, professional and technical services to client departments in respect of buildings and related infrastructure, increase revenue, and enhance the generation and collection of capacity through our properties, leasing of our properties, implement new EPWP initiatives such as waste management and greening initiatives, and capacitate our institutions with skilled and competent officials to deliver a better life for all.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Ro livhuwa nga maanda mudzulatshidulo vha Public Works. While the MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Hon Rachoene, will be coming to the podium, the Presiding Officer will take over this session. He will preside over item 5.1.5 and 5.1.6. I will return to take over at item 8. Dikgerekgere, dilo di tšhentšile, zwithu zwo shanduka, swilo swi cincile.

THE MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker; Hon Premier in absentia; Members of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, chaired by Hon Netshifhefhe; esteemed Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the ruling party; MPLs from the opposition benches; and Honourable Members of the Legislature, greetings to you all.

Our Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, delivered her State of the Province Address where she was clear about the determination of the Seventh Administration to ensure improved service delivery in the province. In her address, she outlined the plans of the provincial government, supported by all the Members of the Executive Council.

We are in the Seventh Administration, which is anchored on priorities as outlined by the Premier in her State of the Province Address. She consistently articulated her vision of a province that we must all strive to build; a vision that constitutes our shared destiny, which is building a modern, dynamic, and growing economy.

Having listened to several speakers today, particularly those representing the African National Congress in the Limpopo Legislature, we can safely agree that the provincial government is determined to make significant strides in building massive infrastructure in the province.

They raised several key service delivery issues that need the special attention of the Executive Authority, as well as both the accounting officers of the department and its entity, Roads Agency Limpopo.

We welcome all the constructive comments that have been raised in good spirit. By doing so, this will assist the department a great deal in its effort to reclaim its mandate as a leader in the provision and management of provincial government buildings and road infrastructure.

One key issue that is causing us sleepless nights in the department is the manner in which we handle our properties, and the overcommitment by our entity, Roads Agency Limpopo. It is my strong conviction that once we resolve the accrued revenue on rentals, we will be able to improve on how we manage our properties.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform this august House that the department is currently finalising the forensic investigation into these material findings. This will allow us to root out the issues related to rental of our properties and the hijacking of our buildings by thugs. The department has also opened cases with law enforcement agencies to investigate this matter.

This thorny issue prompts the department to start a campaign to reclaim our properties, including buildings and land. The department will launch operation vhuysa thundu ya muvhuso which will help us claim back our property. This operation will be a joint initiative by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and the Department of Transport and Community Safety, led by Hon Susani Mathye.

In the spirit of empowering women, I commit before this House that our women will find expression as we address gender equity. The fruits of our democracy compel us to do so, and we shall implement policy as expected.

Tomorrow, I will be joining MEC Makamu as we hand over the newly built Raphahlelo Traditional Council offices. This is one of the many strides that we are making to support the Magoši a rena.

Regarding RAL, we are on the right track to stabilise the entity. We have just appointed the accounting authority, Mr Moses Tseli, and are finalising the appointment of the new board of directors. The interim accounting authority for RAL has been appointed in terms of section 49(3) of the Public Finance Management Act of 1999. The interim accounting authority was appointed after the previous board ceased to exist last month when three of its members resigned, leaving the board unable to form a quorum.

The department is also working hard to ensure that all prestige buildings are kept clean, and that security is prioritised at those buildings. The challenge of water scarcity at Parliamentary Village has been noted with concern, and the department is working tirelessly to address this matter. We are currently in the process of installing a water tank at Parliamentary Village to augment the water supply at the facility.

We have shown our commitment to serving the people of Limpopo with diligence in this Seventh Administration of government. We have moved with speed to ensure that our roads are drivable by placing graders and related machinery on gravel roads, as part of the Dikgeregere Wednesday campaign. Others have referred to this as a tourist of yellow fleet moving up and down on our roads. This so-called tourism has attracted interest from other forward-thinking public servants who want to adopt the same strategy in their areas of deployment.

We also appreciate the public-private partnership with the mines and farmers' organizations that are joining hands with us in building and maintaining our roads, as the road network in our province plays an important role in socioeconomic activities and the flow of goods.

Our people in the province, strategic stakeholders, including our traditional leaders, have welcomed the initiative and even support our workers on the ground. It is now up to the honourable Member of Zuma's MK party to wake up and smell the coffee.

We have taken note of all the input made by honourable Members, and we commit to continuing to work hand in hand with the portfolio committee, as led by Hon Netshifhefhe. We really appreciate the guidance and oversight carried out by these honourable Members.

As all of us in this House, we owe it to the people of Limpopo who have sent us here to represent them. As the ANC-led government, we remain resolute and determined to realise the service delivery commitments we have made to our people. We have made significant strides in improving the lives of our people, and we know that there is still more to be done by this government of the people, the African National Congress.

All hands should be on deck to give practical meaning to the commitment previously announced by Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba. On this note, let us grow our province together.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, honourable MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Hon Rachoene, for your response to the debates by honourable Members of this august House. Honourable Members, if the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Chairperson, and Deputy Chairperson of Committees are all absent at a Sitting of the House, the House must select one of its Members to act as a presiding officer at that Sitting only. This should not cause any confusion.

Without further ado, with all powers vested in me, allow me to call upon the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Transport and Community Safety, Hon Kedibone Lebea, for the consideration and adoption of the reports of the portfolio committee.

Let's move to the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for the Department of Transport and Community Safety. Hon Lebea, it's over to you.

MS LEBEA

Thank you, Hon Speaker, and a blessed day to honourable Members. Hon Speaker, having met in a constitutionally constituted meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Transport and Community Safety, I hereby table in this august House the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for the Department of Transport and Community Safety. I so move, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Lebea. Do we have any seconder? Hon Shai, you are recognised.

MR SHAI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Sonnyboy Mpho Shai, ke emelela mo go thekga 2024/25 APP and Budget yeo e lego gore e tlišitšwego ke Hon Lebea.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Shai. Honourable chair, you may proceed.

Let's move to the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for Gateway Airports Authority Limited

MS LEBEA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I hereby table for consideration and adoption by this august House the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for Gateway Airports Authority Limited. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, chairperson. Do we have any seconder? Hon Nempumbuluni, you are recognised.

MR NEMPUMBULUNI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Nempumbuluni T C, stand to second the motion as presented by Hon Lebea.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Nempumbuluni. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List, and we call upon Hon Shai to open the debate.

MR SHAI

Thank you, Hon Speaker; Hon Deputy Speaker, in absentia; Members of the Executive Council; Chief Whip of the House; leaders of opposition parties; ladies and gentlemen; good morning.

The committee raised concerns regarding the operations of GAAL. We proposed that GAAL should prioritise organisational functionality and the filling of critical posts. The entity should develop a strategy on service quality and competitive advantage to improve services to attract more users and operators at the airport.

The entity should revisit and update the provincial strategy to enhance supply chain efficiency, create jobs, and support other industries. There should be regular maintenance of critical equipment both inside and outside the aerodrome to meet ACSA requirements, and this should be a standard practice.

The entity was established in 1995 with the expectation of becoming self-sustainable over time. However, it continues to struggle with revenue generation and job creation. The entity should not hesitate to seek assistance from experts such as ACSA and other entities managing airports of this magnitude. What we, as the portfolio committee, would like to see is a professionally run entity that creates jobs.

The entity has reported new routes from Polokwane International Airport. As the committee, we welcome this report and will conduct an oversight visit to the airport to ensure that the developments meet our expectations.

The committee calls on government officials, including MECs, to utilise the services of Polokwane International Airport. This will encourage interest in the airport's services and help generate profit for self-sustainability.

GAAL should ensure that security at the airport is enhanced. As new routes and airlines are introduced, the number of people coming to Polokwane will increase, which may also lead to a rise in crime.

The entity has reported that one of its targets is to reinforce the perimeter intruder system and upgrade the fence as part of its security measures. We believe that this target should be implemented as planned, as it will significantly improve security.

During our interaction with the Department of Transport and Community Safety, we observed that some officials and bus companies were defrauding the department. These officials and companies claimed kilometres that were not travelled and received payments from the department.

The department must institute corrective measures against those officials and bus companies that have defrauded or misled the department into making fraudulent payments. It should ensure that all misappropriated funds are recovered.

Additionally, the department should intensify road safety and education awareness. It should also conduct compliance and monitoring of driver's license testing centres, registering authorities, and vehicle testing stations.

The committee has observed that the department has reviewed its performance indicators under the Administration programme and incorporated additional indicators in line with government priorities for the Seventh Administration.

Previously, there were five indicators for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. These indicators have now increased to nine. We question whether the department will be able to implement the additional targets this financial year, given that they are accustomed to having only a few targets. The new targets include skills development, learnerships, 100% compliance with financial interest disclosure, revenue collection, and ICT initiative implementation.

The department must ensure that it implements the targets it has set for itself. We will work together with the department in our oversight role.

During our interaction with the department, the committee expressed concern over delays in finalising the Integrated Transport Plans (ITP) in one local municipality, which are crucial for introducing new bus contracts. These new bus contracts were scheduled to be introduced during the current financial year, but the department now plans to implement them in the 2025/26 financial year. The department must explain to the House why the implementation has been postponed from this financial year to the 2025/26 financial year.

The committee also raised concerns about the Thohoyandou intermodal facility. The department cited legal challenges that have affected the project over the years. It was reported that the construction of the project was transferred from the department to the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, which then handed it over to the Independent Development Trust for completion. The committee encourages the department to follow up with both the Department of Public Works and the Independent Development Trust.

We will work together with the department during our oversight to ensure that this project is completed.

The portfolio committee supports the adoption of the Budgets for both the Department of Transport and Community Safety and Gateway Airports Authority Limited.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much for staying within your time. We call upon Hon Kobodi Maila. You are allocated three minutes, which starts now.

MR MAILA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, and all the Members of the House.

On behalf of the UAT, I would like to take this opportunity to present our views on the Budget allocated for the Department of Transport and Community Safety. It is interesting to hear that new buses will be procured. This will enhance the efficiency and quality of service in the Department of Transport and Community Safety. However, in terms of safety, we still need to improve as our people deserve to be protected. We have already paid a heavy price due to criminal activities that seem to be beyond control. This issue needs to be addressed, and the department should employ more police officers to be deployed to various stations to improve services.

Regarding transport, we appreciate the fact that GAAL is expected to contribute significantly to those who will use it. We suggest that in this financial year the airport should be upgraded to a level where we have airlines offering routes from Polokwane to Durban or Cape Town. This step would demonstrate a serious commitment to improving the lives of the people of Limpopo.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you for observing time. We now call upon Hon Maritz. Three minutes are allocated to you.

MS MARITZ

Thank you, Hon Chair, Hon Speaker, Hon Premier in absentia, honourable Members and esteemed guests. Good afternoon.

Hon Speaker, we remain optimistic that all 150 traffic learnerships scheduled for training from January to December 2024 will successfully complete their programmes, with the expectation that the department will subsequently integrate all 150 individuals into its workforce. The dangerous condition of our roadways is exacerbated by the

actions of impaired drivers, who unfortunately cause the loss of innocent lives nearly every day across various regions of the province.

It is alarming that traffic enforcement personnel are rarely seen on the busier roads; instead, they tend to be positioned at intersections with little traffic, while nearby, individuals frequently ignore red lights and exceed speed limits.

The Limpopo government appears to be struggling in its efforts to combat taxi-related violence, as evidenced by a recent incident in Lebowakgomo where both a passenger and a driver were tragically murdered just a week ago. It is imperative for the department to reclaim its authority and take decisive action to address this escalating issue. It was previously stated that certain agreements had been established and that lasting solutions were implemented. However, what exactly are these lasting solutions?

Periodically, there is a spike in violence involving taxis, which must be addressed to ensure the safety of passengers and other individuals on the road. The honourable MEC acknowledged in the APP that GAAL has been plagued by mismanagement and corruption for the past thirty years, which has hindered its ability to achieve self-sustainability and has placed a significant financial strain on the department. In response, the department is currently working to support the entity in implementing a Revenue Enhancement Strategy as part of a broader effort to facilitate its turnaround and future self-sufficiency.

However, one must question what will be different now, given that these issues have persisted for three decades. Without substantial change, it is likely that this entity will continue to impose a financial burden, diverting resources that could be more effectively utilised for the benefit of our province's residents.

The residents of our province are required to embrace cost-cutting measures that will impact the delivery of services related to transportation projects, potentially leading to the discontinuation or reduction of initiatives such as the Giyani intermodal facility and the newly structured bus subsidy contracts.

Consequently, these bus subsidy contracts may be scaled back or eliminated, adversely affecting the most vulnerable population in our province, while GAAL receives a financial boost that is almost double last year's budget after three decades of underperformance.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you, honourable Member. Our next speaker is Hon Helm. You are allocated five minutes.

MS HELM

Thank you, Hon Speaker, Members of the Executive Council, honourable Members of the House, and our guests.

The department is charged with the mandate of coordinating public transport operations, promoting road safety, supervising police functions in the province, and overseeing and managing the Gateway Airports Authority Limited (GAAL). This is indeed a substantial responsibility and will require significant dedication and commitment from both the department and the oversight function of the committee.

Our chair, Hon Lebea, sets the tone, and I am confident that this committee will fulfil its mandate. One of the pressing issues is the roadworthiness of vehicles. Too often, traffic officers focus on speed violations while vehicles without number plates and other defects go uninvestigated. We must also ensure that when number plates are missing, they are investigated for any related criminal activity in the area.

Regarding buses, the department must urgently address the capacity of GNT to manage its budget, maintain its buses, and prevent overloading. This issue is particularly problematic in the afternoon.

Road networks are critical for communities to enhance economic, educational, and social activities, and we can no longer permit GNT to fail in meeting its obligations. I am grateful for the emphasis on violent crime against women and children, but more must be done. Victim empowerment centres and safe houses must be actively promoted.

According to the former Minister of Police in a parliamentary reply in May 2024, 68,75% of dockets stolen from SAPS stations were open cases of rape and sexual assault, all of them in Limpopo, raising serious questions about the effectiveness of docket management within the SAPS and the maintenance of docket safety.

In addition, there is a shortage of 913 detectives in the province, which is 38%. The consequence of this shortage is dire: more dockets and longer hours for detectives, and longer delays in the finalisation of cases. Justice delayed is justice denied.

The police secretariat must take up these challenges with the national department to ensure that our province does not become a playground for criminals. Violence and crime in rural areas, especially on farms, need attention. Stock theft is out of control, and the SAPS do not even bother anymore to investigate cases, as related by the Vhembe Livestock Forum members. Stock theft increased by 8,2% in the last reported quarter, to 729 reported incidents.

The court watch programme must continue, and it is important that the local community gets involved. I was surprised that Gauteng does not have such a programme. Limpopo set the tone in this regard. That's really good. Congratulations!

GAAL remains an ongoing challenge. In the previous financial year, an amount of over R39 million was transferred to GAAL, which was later adjusted to R77 million in the third quarter. From this adjusted Budget, the entity was able to spend R56 million, with an underexpenditure of R20 million.

The entity obtained a qualified audit opinion, which was an improvement from the disclaimer obtained in the previous financial year. The committee expressed concern

that for the past five years and beyond, the entity had failed to extricate itself from dire audit outcomes to an acceptable one. Most personnel within the management echelons were in their acting capacities, though plans were underway to fill critical management positions.

GAAL must first prove to be profitable and then grow into its ability to provide national and international traveller services. May I remind our MEC that Hoedspruit Eastgate Airport has now applied for an international licence, so the question is: "Do we need an international licence in Polokwane?" GAAL is not working and is not profitable. Maybe we must make sure that they focus on the areas where they could generate revenue and take it from there. I wish the department a successful five-year term and look forward to participating in this important committee.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, honourable Member. I now call upon Hon Baloyi, to whom seven minutes is allocated.

MR BALOYI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. The EFF rejects this Budget because moneys are being allocated to departments, including the Department of Transport, on an annual basis, yet services to the people continue to decrease at an alarming rate. Despite these allocations, our people continue to receive inferior services, which is a direct violation of their constitutional rights.

The question is: if these Budgets do not positively impact the lives of the people, where does the money go? It surely does not return to the provincial fiscus. Does the department have a bus strategy for bus subsidies that can create a viable network, alleviate the financial burden on people commuting long distances for livelihoods, and increase the economic viability of vulnerable communities?

The department is charged with the responsibility of overseeing and managing GAAL, and yet the entity has collapsed under the watchful eye of the ANC-led government. Can the MEC furnish this House with the names of all board members of GAAL and their qualifications?

Does GAAL have a turnaround strategy to resuscitate it, so it can fully render services to our people? How many routes were subsidised in the last financial year, and how many subsidised trips were monitored?

There are officials and bus companies that have defrauded or misled the department into paying claims for the number of kilometres and trips undertaken. Did the department apply consequence management, and has the department recovered the money from the implicated officials and bus companies? If not, why? The EFF is also concerned about the number of women traffic officers employed by the department, which leads us to this question: Of the total number of traffic officers in the province, how many are male and how many are female?

The noncompletion of the Thohoyandou intermodal facility is a long-standing matter. Site visits after site visits have been conducted to this facility, yet no progress has been recorded or made in this regard. What happened to the budget for this project, and why has the project been stagnant for such a long time? The department is seriously challenged by a lack of resources at police station level. The police officers at our police stations do not have the tools of trade, and this has gravely lowered the morale of the police. Thohoyandou police station, which is within the area declared as one of the hottest crime spots in South Africa, does not have resources.

The police do not have enough vehicles for visibility and to arrest criminals. How many people with disability are in the higher management echelons of the department, and how many have you hired in the last financial year? How far is the department with the implementation of the new bus contracts, because there is no progress in this regard? The finalisation of municipal ITPs is an urgent matter, so how far is the department with the finalisation of this arrangement?

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much. The clarion call we make to honourable Members as they debate here is to consider the unintended implications of rejecting the Budget. If the Budget is rejected, the men and women in that department, along with all the matters you are raising for the MEC to address, will not happen. That is the implication. I just wanted to caution the Members as you debate. Let me now call upon the chairperson of the portfolio committee to close the debate. You are allocated ten minutes.

MS LEBEA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. In one of his writings, Samora Machel of Madragoa (now known as Chilembene, Gaza Province, People's Republic of Mozambique), in his work *Mozambique: Sowing the Seeds of Revolution*, stated: "The liberation of women is a fundamental necessity for the revolution, the guarantee of its continuity, and a precondition of its victory."

Hon Speaker, Members of the Executive Council, honourable Members of this august House, distinguished guests, and members of the media fraternity tuned in via various live streaming channels, I wish you a divinely blessed day.

Like our predecessor, the principal himself, Kgolane Rudolph Phala, would say: "This debate takes place in the month of August. A significant month in the body politics of this country." On that note, this debate is dedicated to one of the resilient, selfless, ethical, and accountable women of virtue to ever walk this side of heaven, Ms Joyce Mashamba.

Ms Mashamba was an anti-apartheid activist with her husband, veteran, Mr George Mashamba. She was imprisoned from 1977 to 1982 for running an underground ANC cell in Turfloop, the then Northern Transvaal. In 1994, she was elected to the National Assembly, and in 1999, she was elected to this Limpopo Legislature, where she briefly

served as Deputy Speaker from 2012 to 2013, and then spent the rest of her career here.

She served as an MEC in six different portfolios, including Safety, Security and Liaison, now known as Transport and Community Safety. With the exodus of the month of women warriors, queens, and heroines, may her gentle soul continue to rest in eternal peace of our Lord Jesus and Savior.

As we are closing this Women's Month, we would like to send words of salutations and ululations to the women in blue, brown, low and high heels at the department of Transport and every other woman of the province at their different corners, the country, the diaspora and the world.

We are saying to you, whatever challenges and setbacks we are going through, this too shall pass, for our capacities and abilities know no limit, and we are therefore just enough.

Now, back to the business of the day. Hon Speaker, in exercising our constitutional mandate, we took stock of the teachings of Michilia who said: "Oversight is not an optional extra. It is essential to ensure that money is spent wisely and appropriately."

As a committee, we met with the department on 22 August 2024 for a briefing on the APPs and Budget for the financial year, including that of the Gateway Airports Authority Limited. I must say, as a committee, we were elated by the extensive knowledge displayed and expressed by the department.

Hon Shai spoke very well with regard to the ITP (Integrated Transport Plan) of the department. Upon its successful conclusion with municipalities, the department will then be able to issue permits to taxi owners. We believe this effort will put an end to the unfortunate scourge of taxi violence here in Polokwane and elsewhere in the province.

Furthermore, the portfolio committee appreciates the work done by the department in terms of revenue collection during the previous financial year. We commend the department for collecting R828,06 million, which translates to 99,4% of their target. We encourage the department to work hard and collect more revenue because revenue collection contributes to significant Budget allocations, which in turn supports service delivery.

While noting the good work, we are still able to play an adequate oversight role. section 206 of the Constitution of the Republic mandates the department to oversee the efficiency of police services. Hon Mathye has also reported that, "The province has the best model and most functional community policing forums in the province." She noted that we have CPFs in all 104 police stations. We commend this substantial task of appointing CPFs. The CPFs must be given specialised training to address these types of crimes, where police focus on major crimes. On this note, I would like to send special appreciation to a forum in Seshego named SCACAG, which stands for Seshego Community Against Crime and Gangsterism, led by Mr Vincent Kunutu and Mr Slide Mabotja.

They have selflessly dedicated their peace of mind, quality time with their families, and efforts to the betterment of the community and its surroundings through their crime prevention initiatives.

However, the department must work very hard, honourable MEC, to ensure that the rate of GBV crimes is reduced. One of the strategic areas we are closely monitoring is the establishment of victim empowerment centres in all police stations in the province. While we appreciate the centres that are operational, we still believe that GBV strips victims of their dignity. If victims are not protected by providing them with a conducive place to lay their charges, it could catastrophically impact their wellbeing.

One of the thorny issues we have identified during our meetings with your department, honourable MEC, is related to the Gateway Airports Authority Limited. The airport must fill all vacant positions; that is the number one priority. The airport should contribute to job creation in the province. A significant issue we raised as a committee is that the airport does not present as a very classy facility where travellers would want to depart from Polokwane and elsewhere. This area should ideally be addressed.

You further reported, honourable MEC, that there are 150 traffic police officers in training who are expected to complete their training in December 2024. One critical issue we raised as a portfolio committee is that we hope the department will absorb all 150 officials upon the completion of their training.

We believe, Hon Maritz, that this effort will assist in increasing the visibility of traffic officers on the roads. Their return could also help in reducing road carnage while simultaneously increasing revenue for the department.

Taking from the words of one of the steadfast, tenacious, and extraordinary minds produced by the congress movement, Kedibone Lebea of the African National Congress, when she said: "Where there is a plan, there is hope for tomorrow." A great man who once walked this side of heaven, a great man from Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, a revolutionary and a thinker who taught us about honesty and a commitment to a struggle for truth and justice, rather than seeking easy victories through deceit or manipulation, said: "Tell no lies and claim no easy victories." The great Amílcar Cabral. Hon Helm is a clear example of what Albert Einstein mentioned when he said: "Greatness is not measured by what a man or woman accomplishes but by the opposition he or she has overcome to reach his or her goals." I believe that Hon Baloyi, seated on my left, will also emulate what the committee seeks to achieve of assisting the department in adequately fulfilling its primary mandate.

In conclusion, the committee supports the adoption of the Budget for the Department of Transport and Community Safety at R2,610.612 billion and Gateway Airports Authority Limited of R127 million for the financial year, 2024/25. We, therefore, implore that the Annual Performance Plans and Budgets for the department and its entity, GAAL, aimed at providing necessary services, namely transport, community safety, and air freight to the citizens of Limpopo, be adopted as a report of this august House.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, chairperson of the committee, Hon Lebea. We shall now call upon the honourable MEC for Transport and Community Safety, Hon Susani Mathye, to respond to the debates made by honourable Members.

THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Thank you, Hon Speaker; honourable Members of the Executive present here; honourable leaders of the opposition parties on my left; HODs from different departments; chairpersons of portfolio committees, with special reference to my chairperson, Hon Lebea; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

Hon Speaker, allow me to take this opportunity to thank the portfolio committee members who participated in the debate this afternoon, as a way of making us work as the department.

Before I start responding to the debates and the comments that were raised, allow me to indicate that as the provincial government, we have put measures in place to mitigate against the high traffic volumes ahead of the ZCC pilgrimage this weekend. We are expecting a few hundred vehicles on our roads because the Zion Christian Church will finally be opening its gates since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, our efforts to promote road safety continue to be undermined by human behaviour on our roads, as was mentioned by Hon Maritz. Just yesterday, I visited the accident scene that claimed the lives of ten people in Makhado, coming from Zimbabwe. According to the report, the driver of the bus, who was travelling from Bulawayo to Johannesburg, was reportedly speeding.

Our work is largely measured by the number of accidents that happen on our roads. We continue to employ superior traffic management and monitoring methods, and our roads are counted among the safest in the Republic. I repeat, Hon Baloyi, our roads are counted among the safest in the Republic of South Africa. Our road safety programmes and law enforcement initiatives are aimed at achieving the country's objective of reducing road fatalities by 50% by 2030, as long as we adhere to the rules.

Once you get onto our roads, you must follow the rules. There are signs in place, but we have realised that some drivers cannot differentiate between a speeding zone, yield signs, and traffic circles. These are the types of drivers we have in our country.

We are concerned about the increasing trend of pedestrian fatalities. Although I emphasise the need to follow the rules, many pedestrians do not adhere to them. It could be that they are simply enjoying our beautiful roads, but regardless of the reason, the fact remains that they are not following the rules.

We have made notable progress in stabilising Gateway Airports, as highlighted by Hon Shai, Hon Maritz, and Hon Baloyi. Despite this progress, our chairperson has pointed out that the airport still lacks a certain level of sophistication. I share this concern and agree that further improvements are necessary. We are confident that the entity is heading in the right direction through the intervention of our newly appointed Chief

Financial Officer and CEO. You would agree that GAAL spent most of its time without these two positions being filled.

During our engagement with the portfolio committee, we demonstrated a key commitment to help the entity attain a state of self-sustainability. We have mandated the board to explore a number of ways through which the entity would be able to generate more funds and become more sustainable.

We are in constant contact with other industry players with a view of increasing competition on the Polokwane to Johannesburg route. We are also looking at increasing our footprint to other parts of the Republic. Someone once said: "It is not a sin to have a flight, which can go to Durban." I'm sure it is possible to have direct flights between Polokwane and Cape Town or Durban, even if it is once per week. We shall be pondering our options on that front.

We continue to assist municipalities with the development of the Integrated Transport Plan to help them determine their public transport needs, but they are failing. For the period under review, we shall be finalising the ITPs in Maruleng, and a process is underway to conclude the same in Blouberg Local Municipality. It should be noted that the inability of municipalities to finalize their ITPs has a significant impact on how we allocate operating licenses for public transport operators.

As the department, we do not purchase buses; we only issue permits. The issue of bus procurement falls under LEDET, not our department. I mention this because once the mace is up, anything we say from this podium becomes a resolution of the House. We must ensure that what we say is accurate, to prevent any future claims of falsehood. As long as the mace is standing upright, we must ensure that our statements are true.

We are also in the initial stage of rolling out a programme to lift the moratorium on issuing operating licenses within the taxi industry. You may have noticed that our taxi drivers are happy; they were even seen celebrating in August, with male drivers dressing up for the occasion.

This positive development is due to our sustainable relationship with the representatives of the taxi industry in the province. In the event of any issues, we continue to work closely with taxi organisations and the South African Police Service to manage and contain them, as noted by Hon Maritz.

We have the most effective system of community policing and safety forums in our Republic. These individuals are undergoing training. However, there is a saying: "When you are asked to cook two things, a head of a person and a stone, some of the heads may not turn out well, while the stone will cook perfectly." This highlights some challenges we face.

Our community policing forums (CPFs) are the envy of other provincial governments in the Republic, Hon Velile Jack. Through our constant monitoring of the police's work, we have ensured that the 104 police stations in the province have implemented...
[INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Please move to conclusion, honourable MEC.

THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

As I conclude, I would like to extend my gratitude to all the honourable Members who participated in the debate on the Annual Performance Plan and Budget of the Department of Transport and Community Safety. I also wish to acknowledge all the comments made and the directives given to the department. I assure this august House that each comment will be thoroughly investigated, and all directives will be implemented as outlined by the Members who contributed to today's debate.

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon MEC. We shall now move to the next item. I call upon the chairperson, Hon Tshivhase to present the next report.

Let's move to the consideration and adoption of the report of Oversight Mechanism Committee.

MR TSHIVHASE

Hon Speaker, honourable Members, honourable MEC. I, Midiavhathu Prince Kennedy Tshivhase, hereby present the report of the Oversight Mechanism Committee on the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for consideration and adoption by this august House. I so move.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, honourable Member. Is there any seconder? Hon Sebopela, you are recognised.

MS SEBOPELA

Honourable Presiding Officer, ke le Mohlomphegigadi Sebopela, ke emela go thekga le go amogela lenaneno tshepedišo la ngwaga le palo ya mašelang on Oversight Mechanism.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, honourable Member. We shall now move to the Speakers' List, and I call upon Hon Shimane Morris Mataboge to open the debate. You are allocated ten minutes.

MR MATABOGE

Thank you very much, Presiding Officer, Hon Monama; Hon Speaker, Ms Makoma Makhurupetje; honourable Members of the Executive Council; Hon Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip of the Legislature; Chairperson of Committees; honourable Members present in the House; Leader of the Opposition; and the guests in the gallery, please receive my greetings.

The Oversight Mechanism Committee provides an oversight function over the performance and activities of the Limpopo Legislature. The committee derives this mandate from the Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, 2009, the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislature, and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

The committee is empowered to conduct its oversight functions through section 114 of the Constitution, which is amplified by section 4(3)(4) of the Financial Rules and Orders of the Legislature. Section 4(3) of the Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, 2009, [Act No: 10 of 2009], provides that the Oversight Mechanism Committee may require the accounting officer or any other officials of Parliament to appear before it. Section 4(4) states that the committee has the powers that other committees of Parliament have under sections 56 and 69 of the Constitution of the Republic.

Allow me to start by congratulating the Limpopo Legislature for sustaining an unqualified audit opinion without findings, commonly referred to as a clean audit. Achieving and maintaining a clean audit is a significant accomplishment, and it is possible to continue sustaining it as long as good systems and control measures are in place. We want to appreciate the guidance and efforts of the Oversight Mechanism Committee for steering the Legislature in the right direction and ensuring this unqualified audit opinion without findings.

The Legislature has the following programmes: Administration, Facilities for Members, Political Support, and Parliamentary Services. The purpose of the Administration programme is to provide strategic leadership and overall administration to the Provincial Legislature. This programme comprises the following subprogrammes: The Office of the Speaker, the Office of the Secretary, Financial Management, Corporate Services, Internal Audit, and Safety.

The programme was allocated a budget of R173,208 million, which represents a decrease of 2% compared to the amount allocated in the previous financial year. Due to the population increase in the province in recent years, the Limpopo Legislature also increased the number of seats from 49 to 64.

The committee raised a concern regarding the budget decrease for this programme. This reduction will impact the plans and functions of the Legislature, especially considering the additional number of honourable Members in this august House.

Under this programme, the Legislature is expected to conduct numerous activities to capacitate honourable Members of the Seventh Administration. They must be trained to properly discharge their mandate of oversight, public participation, and law-making as expected from them.

For Facilities for Members and Political Party Support, the purpose of this programme is to provide the payment of remuneration and claims of Members, constituency allowances, and protocol services. For the 2024/25 financial year, this programme was allocated an amount of R169,603 million, which is an increase of 14% compared to the adjusted budget allocated for the 2023/24 financial year.

Of the total budget of R39,986 million, R39,986 million is allocated for Facilities for Members and Political Parties, while R129,617 million is allocated to Political Party Support Services.

The programme includes the following subprogrammes: political support services, parliamentary exchange, and protocol. The allocated budget will be used to provide compensation for Members of the Legislature and support to political parties in the form of constituency allowances as well as protocol services.

Considering that the programme delivers the core mandate of the Legislature, the committee is, however, concerned that the budget will not be sufficient to cover the training of political party staff, protocol and exchange services, Commonwealth parliamentary activities, and other activities that are part of this programme.

Of the allocated budget for Political Party Support, the Legislature plans to transfer 100% of the funds to political parties by the end of the current financial year, with 25% of the funds targeted for transfer in the first quarter of the financial year and 75% of the funds planned to be transferred by the end of the second quarter. This target was achieved in the previous financial year.

Parliamentary Services: The purpose of this programme is to provide services related to the core business of the Legislature, which includes oversight, law-making, Public Participation, House Proceedings, and Hansard and Language Services. It has subprogrammes which are Library, Records Management, Research Services, Committee Services, House Proceedings, and Legal Services. An amount of R132,103 million was allocated to this programme for the 2024/25 financial year, which is more than the adjusted budget of R120,462 million for the 2023/24 financial year.

From the total allocation of R132,103 million, R110,103 million is allocated to compensation of employees, while R21,617 million is allocated to goods and services. The allocated budget will be used to provide services necessary for achieving its core business as mandated, as indicated in the strategic objectives and annual performance targets.

The committee has made the following recommendations:

- Since there has been an increase in the number of seats from 49 to 64, there is a need for an additional budget to accommodate the salaries of the additional Members and provide adequate accommodation, as the existing facilities were designed for only 49 Members.
- With the addition of more political parties, the Legislature requires additional vehicles, as well as fleet repairs and maintenance.

- Refurbishment of the Legislative Chamber, in collaboration with the Department of Public Works, must be completed by the end of the first quarter of this financial year.
- Completion of the demarcation fence around the Legislature is necessary to clearly secure the precinct in accordance with the National Key Point Act.

In conclusion, the committee supports the 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan and Budget for the Limpopo Legislature.

Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, honourable Member for observing time. Our next speaker is Hon Evelyn Rayne Wilson. You are allocated five minutes.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker. The day Members accept their election to this House and stand before all to take their pledges or oaths, they commit to the following to protect the Constitution and all that it stands for. It is considered one of the best constitutions in the world, and if adhered to in its entirety, what a wonderful country this would be.

Furthermore, in taking a pledge or oath in this House, you are aware and must accept that all Acts and laws, and there are many, are the laws of this country in terms of the Constitution, and they must be respected, upheld, and adhered to.

We cannot be seen as serious lawmakers in South Africa while taking it upon ourselves to break or ignore these laws because it suits us when it suits us. This is not what we pledge or take an oath on when we are sworn in.

When we take an oath to respect the Constitution and laws, we must also respect the law and the standing rules of this House. These rules are part of that commitment, and they apply to all of us.

Portfolio committee meetings, House meetings, requirements for Sittings and appropriate quorums, debate, and oversight are all covered in these regulations, Speaker. Oversight is not restricted to visiting facilities; it involves proper and well-functioning committees, financial oversight, performance oversight, the functioning of this House, and representing ourselves to our electorate. It must also consider and assess best practices across all spheres.

If we are going to revert to tick-boxing and protecting the political elite, we might as well throw the rule book into the bin, as it becomes absolutely irrelevant. The oaths taken in this House become mute, null, and void, and the province will regress into a cesspool of corruption and maladministration.

I cannot speak for all in this House, but I took my oath seriously and will fight for the protection of all that the Constitution sought to protect.

If we are not all on the same page, if we continue tick boxing, we are wasting taxpayers' money. I implore you, Speaker, let's bring credibility back to this House.

In conclusion, Speaker, please, this is a place of work. Can we please get our offices?

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Wilson. Honourable Members, and particularly the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Mapoulo, in the future, when we are scheduling speakers, it is crucial that the person identified to speak is the one who actually does so, to ensure we remain aligned with the Standing Rules and procedures of this House. The concern is that if someone who is not a member of a particular committee speaks, they may risk presenting something that has not been properly processed by the committee or standing committee. I now hand over to you, Hon Mapoulo.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, my honourable colleagues, and my Premier in absentia. She should not follow her predecessor in not occupying her seat.

The EFF is disappointed by the conduct and attitude of the current Speaker towards Members of the opposition, particularly the EFF, which represents the hope of the people of South Africa. The Speaker has adopted a serious political posture by using Eurocentric rules to undermine Afrocentric culture, all in order to suffocate the EFF, simply to appease her political masters, the ANC.

What is the origin of these current practices in the House? Thokane ye e lego mo pele gaka e tšwa kae, manele a, monna o apere jase ya mosela? Where do they come from? We don't know these things. I am an African. Let me educate you, Speaker. When you need to walk alongside your ancestors, you should go to Thithabone and bring the old lady here, yo a tlo retago boMmakoma. A re boMmakoma! ba go tšwa GaMamaila. You are too shy to call your mother or grandmother to come and sing for you here and praise you. Instead, you are praised by something we don't know.

Please, let's not be surprised in this House by an imported culture we don't know. As the EFF, we will continue to fight this foreign culture that you are currently embracing. You are suffocating your own culture. We will never allow the partisan and conflicted Speaker to abuse her position to purge, intimidate, and bully EFF Members. Never. Not while we are still alive. We call upon all political parties to rise up and defend democracy, because it is enshrined in the Bill of Rights that our cultures must be respected.

I am deeply touched because today, women were killed and actually fed to pigs. Those from the Freedom Front Plus, DA, and other white parties are not addressing this, because the life of a black woman seems to mean nothing during this month of August. You should be ashamed of yourselves because, on those farms, we are not producing to feed our people; instead, we are producing to kill our people. That is what is

happening on the farms. One example is the chairperson of the Freedom Front being caught manufacturing drugs worth R2 billion. This is why we are saying that we must expropriate these farms without a blink of an eye.

The Speaker in this House must choose between being a Speaker and being a spokesperson for the ANC. Let me remind you of a Speaker in Australia who, in one financial year, she booted out opposition members more than 200 times. This is what I see in you—a dislike for opposition parties. When I look at you, you don't see me as your colleague in this Chamber, but as your enemy, someone whose ideas you can suppress. She is turning out to be the worst Speaker this province has ever had since the dawn of democracy. The Speaker is irrational, emotional, and fails to apply her mind properly to issues. We were not elected by the Speaker; we were elected by the people. Stop pleasing the ANC's factional members here. We speak the truth in this House. We were elected by the masses, not by the Speaker. The sooner she deals with her chest pains, the better, or she will continue to make many mistakes along the way... [INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Hon Mapoulo, you are left with two minutes.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

One thing that we appreciate, is that you are trying to play marbles with the rules here in the House, but you failed, and we are going back to the Rules Committee to discuss that when you come in, we must sit, because we are not in a class here. We don't know which laws we are abiding here. You must come and show us in the rule book. Let us go to the Rules Committee so that we can resolve the matter once and for all.

We are also rocked by allegations of irregular expenditure that has increased from R15,877 billion to R18,684 billion during the 2023/24 financial year. No one is being held accountable for this mess, because all of you may have benefited from this irregular expenditure. [INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Hon Mapoulo, you are left with two minutes.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

I'm looking at my time here. Why do you keep on distracting me! One thing which we appreciate is that you try to play babbles in terms of the Rules here in the House, but you failed, and we are going back to the Rules Committee to discuss that when you come in, we must sit. Because we are not in the class here and we don't know which law are abiding here.

You must come and show us in the Rule Book which law you are talking about here, let's go to the Rules committee, so that we can resolve this matter once for all. We are robbed also by allegations of irregular expenditure that increased from 15 877 billion to 18 684 billion during the 2023 financial year.

No one is accountable for this mess, because all of you, you've benefited from this kind of irregular expenditure. If you are not going to punish those that have led us to reach 18 billion, we'll see that indeed ka mina ka wena. Your officials are doing ka mina ka wena with you.

Furthermore, we are deeply concerned about, there is GNU this sides I can see. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned that budget is increasing every financial year, but service delivery continuous to decrease with majority of our people disparate and I think all of you seated in this House. We know what is happening don't bring audit opinion which are cooked. The service deliver is nowhere... [INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Your time is up, honourable Member.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

And lastly, Oversight Mechanism Committee is radically failing to provide intervention and resolve challenges facing our communities. You, DA and Freedom Front, let's go and bury those women who were killed by picking up rotten food in one of the white agrarian farms. Please don't kill our people, serve our people.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thanks very much, Hon Mapoulo. You'll educate us more about modicum of the decorum of the presiding of the House when we have a workshop next week, now we are discussing about the Budget.

Thanks very much, honourable Members. Let me call upon Hon Tshivhase as the chairperson of the Oversight Mechanism Committee.

MR TSHIVHASE

Presiding Officer, Hon Monama; Hon Speaker; honourable Members of the Legislature; Hon Leader of the Opposition Party, Hon Chief Whip. Some of the honourable Members did not attend the committee meeting because some of these issues we have raised them in the committee meeting, and you don't attend. Which is not fair, is not fair to us and is not fair to the democracy. [APPLAUSE]

Members of the Legislature, distinguished guest ndiavha rhesha. Ba re kgwedi ye ke kgwedi ya basadi. Which is true. Re a phadima ka lebaka la lena. Re a phadima ka lebaka la gore le a re hlokomela. Which is good. That's why we must respect women, even at home Chief Whip. Ka dinako tše dingwe o swanetše o mmitše o re, mogatšaka wa mmakgonthe a kgodi a kgokgo. Le yena o a kwa gore aowa o a ratwa. Sepedi. [INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

You are left with 7 minutes, honourable Member.

MR TSHIVHASE

Hon Speaker, I want to quote Joe Dumars when he once said, “In good teams, coaches are responsible for holding players accountable; in great teams, players hold each other accountable”. I stand before this august House today to say we can be a great team.

The Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje, tabled the report on the Annual Performance and Budget for 2024/25 financial year. The Committee on Oversight Mechanism has considered inputs on what is expected from Limpopo Legislature in order to achieve its plans, goals and targets.

Hon Speaker, we are guided by a section of Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislature Act of 2009. In compliance with this policy the committee held a briefing session with the speakership of the Legislature and supported by administration. It is a privilege to present the findings and recommendations of the Oversight Mechanism Committee regarding the Legislature’s APP and Budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

The Legislature has been allocated a Budget of R550 million for 2024/25 financial year. This represents an 11,6% increase from the previous allocation. This increased allocation reflects an effort, demand and objectives outline in the APP for the upcoming year.

The Administration Programme has been allocated 173 million. It is crucial that the budget supports empowerment of new Members through comprehensive workshop training and induction programme. We urge the Legislature to ensure this programme directly addresses its constitutional mandate and contributes to effective oversight, public participation and law making. We commend the induction committee effort and will monitor its progress closely.

Programme 2, Facility for Members and Political Support staff has been allocated R170 million. This programme represents a 14% increase from the previous financial year allocation. The increase will support political parties represented in the Legislature.

Programme 3, Parliamentary Services with allocated R130 million. This programme focuses on core services including oversight, law-making, public participation and house proceedings. However, the committee identified a risk to information security. We recommend modernising of this system in the library and record services.

Parliamentary Village, the current state doesn’t meet the standard of the National Key Points Act. We urge accelerated effort for its refurbishment and improvement. The halted demarcation projects need urgent attention to ensure compliance with the National Key Points Act.

On the legislative chamber refurbishment, we hope for timely completion of the refurbishment to ensure smooth legislative operations. We encourage the legislature

to address space constraints in boardrooms to facilitate public attendance at committee meetings.

Recommendations, in light of these findings, are the following:

- Allocate additional Budget for accommodation and vehicles due to the increased number of Members;
- Complete the infrastructure project to comply with the National Key Points Act; and
- Procure library and records system.

Hon Speaker, in conclusion. the Oversight Mechanism Committee has thoroughly viewed the APP and Budget for the 2024/25 financial year. As chairperson of the Committee on Oversight and Mechanism, I move for the consideration and adoption of the 2024/25 APP and Budget vote of the Limpopo Legislature as the official report of this esteemed House. I so move. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Member, maila go šupšwa. Honourable Members and the august House. One author called Henry Miller once said, "One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things". It is my honour and privilege honourable Members and the august House to call upon the Speaker, Hon Makhurupetje, to respond to the debate made by honourable Members. It's over to you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

I will join honourable Members to call you Presiding Officer. She's able to do it because, she is at the Whippery, so she doesn't lose anything, I might call it, but I don't know what's going to happen to me after the Sitting.

Thank you very much, Presiding Officer for giving me this opportunity to respond to the observations made by honourable Members, but before I respond I'm just disappointed at the speaker because the presentation made by EFF. firstly, it was irrelevant, because they want to play the man not the ball. It's irrelevant because the person who participated in the Oversight Committee meeting is Hon Molapo who unfortunately is not here.

Hon Mapoulo ke lefšega. Go and tell him that he's a coward. He ran away from a woman. He can't speak and run away. He must wait for me to respond; you know why he's running away? We were together at the Ranch, we worked together. He told me that he was going to be the next government, and I told him that he will not.

So, we were together reading the seats. Now, he is still angry, he is still at the Ranch, counting results so he must wait for 2029. He must wait for me until then. Unfortunately, he still left at the Ranch, and we were fighting at the IEC PLC meeting. This is not a PLC meeting; it is the Legislature. We are in government.

Thank you so much, Presiding Officer for giving me the opportunity to respond to the observations. Allow me to appreciate the comments and inputs and suggestions put

forward by the chairperson Vho-Tshivhase as well as the other Members of the Oversight Mechanism Committee. I can indicate upfront that Hon Mataboge and the chair, the inputs you have given us were valuable as well as the inputs we got from the DA. We really appreciate it. We are just disappointed by the EFF as they decided not to focus on the discussion.

Your oversight work contributes significantly to the improvement in the way resources are managed in the Limpopo Legislature, it further enables us, as the Executive Authority, to account before this House on the decisions or actions we have taken when committing Legislature resources.

The Rules will be respected without fear or favour, so the EFF must agree that the Rules adopted by the House must be followed to the letter, until we have another session where we will change them. For now, the rules stand.

Last week, we had a meeting with the Limpopo Office of the Auditor-General and they briefed us on the audit outcome of the entire Limpopo provincial and local government. It is exciting to report before this august House that Limpopo Legislature has obtained a clean audit in the financial year, 2023/24. This is the second clean audit obtained by this institution.

I therefore take this opportunity to thank Hon Molapo and Hon Tshitereke Matibe for laying a good foundation and we commit that we are not going to disappoint this Seventh Administration because we are starting this Seventh Administration on a clean slate.

I'm happy we are leading by example. As also alluded to by honourable Members, the Limpopo Legislature's APP has not changed. The only difference is that number of Members of the Limpopo Legislature has increased from 49 in the Sixth Parliament to 64 in the Seventh Parliament. On that note, there's going to be a budget pressure.

We have already started writing a motivation to the Provincial Treasury so that they can increase our Budget from the next financial year moving forward, because those financial implications are around Members' salaries, accommodation, capacity development programmes, ICT requirement, transport, security and the staff. The DA Member, Hon Wilson, you are correct that, we need to give you offices and the offices must have enough to ensure that all the political parties do their work without any disruption.

Presiding Officer, the chairperson of the standing committee as well spoke about the issue of National Key Point, other Members spoke of the refurbishment of the Chamber and the completion of the fence. We do this work together with Department of Public Works as it is their responsibility.

We have been having a number of sessions with Public Works and I can assure you that the MEC, Hon Rachuene, has promised us that in a very short space of time, most of these things will be much better. We have also raised the matter of maintenance, because for example, some of the lifts here don't have lights. There are many other issues that need maintenance in buildings of the Legislature, together with the space that we need at the Parliamentary Village so that we can have more meetings. Other

Members were even suggesting that we have the public coming to observe our Sittings. It is something that we are looking at, working together with the Department of Public Works.

We have temporary measures on the accommodation of Members. The MEC for Public Works together with the MEC for Treasury, have promised that in the next 24 months, we'll be having permanent accommodation for Members.

On the allocation for Programme 3, Parliamentary Services which is the core business of the Legislature, the mandate of the Legislature in terms of oversight, law-making, and public participation is under this programme. However other programmes are enablers for the mandate to be effectively executed.

We concur with the committee that Parliamentary Services Programme should be adequately funded to enable oversight, site visits, study tours, capacity-building for Members and public participation activities. We will request additional funds during the Budget adjustment to take on the matter above.

We humbly accept what the committee is saying, and we have agreed with the committee that at least we have started on a high note and we are still going to have some sessions where we will brief each other on other matters. The chairperson was saying that we can call the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker at any time, and we are willing to be called anytime, chair.

As I conclude, I would like to thank the chairperson of the Oversight Mechanism Committee, Muhulisi Vho Tshivhase Madiavhathu Kennedy Prince, iwe maila-umsumbwa, iwe tshivhasa-midi-ya-vhathu for ensuring that the Legislature accounts before this august House. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank all Oversight Mechanism Committee members for ensuring that Legislature resources are effectively and efficiently and economically managed. Eupša EFF, re satlo kopana.

Ke a leboga.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I've been called names here, gore ke nakana tša go rwešwa. Now the owner of dinakana must come back and take over nakana tša go rwešwa.

Thank you very much for your cooperation, honourable Members. I really appreciate and feel honoured and overwhelmed by the support and confidence bestowed in me.

Thanks.

MR JACK

It's for the second time you've been recalled.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Monama, I thought you are the best, but they were complaining about you, so I don't know whom they want. As long as re kwana gore yamadoda ayipheli, sizodibana.

Honourable Members, it's been a long day. Those who are coming now remember that we have not yet eaten. We are now at item 8: Motion for the suspension of Rule 173. Hon Chief Whip, it's over to you.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Good afternoon to honourable Members, very hungry honourable Members but very cooperative. We thank you for that.

Hon Speaker, House Rule 173 provides that: "Unless otherwise provided in these Rules not more than one stage of a Bill may be taken on the same sitting day if objections to a further stage is made by four or more Members". It has therefore become necessary to evoke the provisions of House Rule 5 to suspend the provisions of House Rule 173 in order to allow the House to finalise the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B02-2024] today.

I move accordingly, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Chief Whip. Do we have a seconder for the motion?

MS MNISI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Gloria Dzunisani Mnisi, rise in this august House to second the move.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Rule 173 is now suspended; we are now on item 9.

9. MOTION FOR THE THIRD READING OF THE LIMPOPO APPROPRIATION BILL, 2024 [B02-2024]

MEC for Provincial Treasury, it's over to you.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Hon Speaker, honourable Members. Now that the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B02-2024] has gone through all the relevant stages of this House, I now move that the Bill be read for the third time in terms of House Rule 170.

I move accordingly, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder? Hon Kupa, you are recognised.

MS KUPA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Constance Kupa, rise to second the move. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, we are now at 9.1.

9.1. Third Reading of the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B02-2024]

Honourable Members are now going to adopt schedule by schedule of the Bill. When you agree that we must adopt the Bill, you'll say "Yes", when you don't adopt, you'll say "No". I'm going to listen to the voices – as to which one is higher than the other.

So, I'll start now, Schedule 1: Definitions?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Schedule 2: Appropriation of money?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Schedule 3: Amounts listed specifically and exclusively appropriated?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Schedule 4: Conditions of appropriations?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Schedule 5: Authorisation of expenditure?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Schedule 6: Spending before commencement of the Appropriation Act?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

2026 financial year?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Schedule 7: Short title?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

We shall now adopt vote by vote of the Bill. Those who agree to the vote will say “Yes” and those who disagree will say “No”. Vote 1: Office of the Premier?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 2: Limpopo Legislature?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 3: Department of Education?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 4: Department of Agriculture?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 5: Department of Provincial Treasury?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 6: Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 7: Department of Health?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 8: Department of Transport and Community Safety?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 9: Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Is that a hand?

MR SMALLE

Hon Speaker, I just want to make sure that you did hear the two “No’s” on the Department of Health, and the Department of Roads. You were too fast.

THE SPEAKER

You were alone, the majority was saying “Yes”.

MR SMALLE

It’s your objections, it’s fine.

THE SPEAKER

Remember those that say “Yes” must be more than those who say “No”. So, I would suggest that we complete and when we are done, I’ll check if there’s any individual that wants to object, so that it can be properly recorded. We were at Vote 9: Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 10: Department of Sport, Arts and Culture?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 11: Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 12: Department of Social Development?

BACKGROUND

Yes.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any Member who has any objection that he/she wants to raise, so that it can be recorded in the Minutes and indicate which Vote you are rejecting on? Hon Smalle, It's over to you.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker, I wish you could note the objection of Democratic Alliance on Department of Health, which is Vote 07, Vote 09 Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and Vote 11 CoGHSTA. I thank you

THE SPEAKER

Is the objection for the DA or for honourable Member?

MR SMALLE

That is for the DA, thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, the objection from the DA will be recorded as such. We shall now call the Secretary of the Legislature to read the short title.

MS MAKGATO [ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARY OF THE LEGISLATURE]

Thank you, Hon Speaker. This Act is called the Limpopo Appropriation Act, 2024. Thank you.

10. SNAP DEBATE ON WOMEN'S MONTH

THE SPEAKER

The Bill has been passed; can we just clap hands. [APPLAUSE] Thank you so much. Finally, we have the Appropriation Bill passed by the Legislature.

We shall now move to item 10: Snap debate on the Women's Month. Without any wasting of time, before I can allow any Member. I was not able to thank Hon Monama. Hon Monama thank you so much for presiding. When you said I'm taking over, I was so happy that indeed you took over, that's why other people felt your presence. Thank you so much really for assisting us as the presiding officers. We really appreciate it.

We are going to have five Members debating. Please don't wait to finish your ten minutes but say everything you want to say. After Hon Matjomane, we are told that

there's an error we excluded Hon Maritz, so we'll call her to be part of the debate. Hon Matjomane Delly, you may take the floor.

[SONG]

MS MATJOMANE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker Makoma Makhurupetje, let me also extend my greetings to the Chief Whip, Hon Essop Mokgonyana and the Deputy Chief Whip; MECs present, chairpersons of portfolio committees, the Leader of the Opposition, basadi ba ba le go gona lehono, in this august House le basadi kamoka ba Limpopo, ke re lotjhani.

Hon Speaker, the month of August serves as a reminder of the important event that took place many years ago, in line with celebrating historical activities that took place years back. We annually commemorate the strength and resilience shown by women activist who took upon themselves to fight for their liberation.

The month commemorates the 1996 courage shown by approximately 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to register their demands and to petition against the country's pass laws by the then apartheid regime. The date 09 August was first declared and celebrated in the year 1995, just after the democratic breakthrough and the first democratic free and fair general elections.

Madam Speaker, the place of a women is no longer in the kitchen like it was known to be. They too have the right to work and hold positions which previously were known to be held by men. I want to also indicate that the notion was echoed by Hon Maila to say we need to join them in the chorus that he was singing of being a women following women, that we deny Hon Maila.

Women are now at helm of positions of leadership. They are having equal employment opportunities which enables them to show their skills and capabilities though there are still areas where patriarchy is still the order of the day. We have women, as heads of state and presidency in parts of the world not as the result of monarchical arrangements, but as a result of changes that we witness as and when the country gains independence.

It has been 30 years since the ANC-led government took over in 1994. The issues of women empowerment and emancipation are no longer something that we speak about only during the Women's Month, but it are one of the priorities for the government of the day.

We have more women leading political parties, we also have a pool of capable and educated women leading in different spheres of government. One of Sepedi idioms says, tša etwa ke ya tshadi pele, di wela ka leopeng, but we can attest that it's a thing of the past because we have turned things right, tša etwa ke ya tshadi pele di nwa maswi a maforeše. [APPLAUSE]

Not everything is where we want it to be, but when we look back, we are proud because a lot is making sense. The total emancipation and empowerment of women

is possible. Our province is amongst the luckiest province to benefit from the democratic changes by having the first female Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba under whose leadership we are so confident that we are going to see tangible and realistic changes. In her opening speech, she introduced the slogan “Dilo di tšhentšhitše” – Izinto zitjhenthjile, ngesiNdebele sekhethu. We are indeed seeing changes. Though there were positive strides made from back then regarding women empowerment, there are challenges that need to be addressed:

- The issue of gender-based violence and femicide which President Ramaphosa declared a pandemic must come to an end because women must walk free in our land.
- Political underrepresentation wherein men still believe that there are political responsibilities that women cannot perform,
- The issue of racial injustice is still a thorny challenge because there are some ethnic minority groups which still believe that some responsibilities are of manly nature, woman cannot perform them. Poverty still has a feminine look and character; it manifests through women having to make the means to feed their families.
- We have series of programmes that are meant for women development which have been adopted by government and relevant stakeholders, but they are implemented at a slow pace. We need to move from the era of planning and start implementing the good initiatives that we come with as the government.

Hon Speaker, as I conclude, the provincial government commemorated the day whereby the Premier of the Province, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, called all women to uplift and embrace each other and to love one another.

She further called all women to be the light that brings hope and accelerate towards an equal, sustainable and peaceful future for all of us. Forward with total liberation, empowerment and emancipation of all women in all the sphere of life, forward! Bomaswara thipa ka bogaleng, today you look so stunning, you look so beautiful. Malibongwe igama lamakhosikazi!

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo. Hon Maritz, your three minutes starts now.

MS MARITZ

Thank you, Hon Chair. Ek wil net ietsie mooi in Afrikaans sê: Mans hou van vroue, want vroue sit die pot op die stoof, en hulle eet lekker.

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, I'm honoured to be here at Limpopo province representing the FF Plus as the first female MPL in the province. Now we have the first female Premier which demonstrates the significant impact women are making in the society. It is imperative that we unite to combat gender-based violence. We must empower women as they are the backbone, supporting the youth that will succeed us.

When women thrive, the entire community flourishes, therefore it is essential that we prioritise initiatives to uplift women ensuring women that they have resources and support they need to lead and inspire. Together we can build a society where women are safe, respected and empowered to reach their full potential paved away for better, brighter future for all. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Maritz for managing our time. Hon Helm Marie, it's over to you.

MS HELM

Thank you, Hon Speaker. At the end of Women's Month, we need to focus on our responsibility to make life better for women. We have listened today to many speeches and we must constantly emphasise this. I'm not going to repeat any of that with every right. There is an equal responsibility.

Gender-based violence is that one thing we need to focus on. We said a lot today, we speak of infrastructure, agriculture and we empower women but there's one thing that we need to tackle; that is gender-based violence, murder by intimate partners, violence in the community, that is all too familiar for many women.

This type of violence is now much worse than 30 years ago and there are many reasons for that. But that is not an excuse. The fact is that we need to do something to break this viscous cycle.

I think what we can do is to make sure that we enable women that are victims of crime by making our victim empowerment centres powerful and we can do it by using the organisations which are already existing in our structures, but we have to put more emphasis on it.

So, we must make sure that we have victim empowerment centres, and those NGO are represented on our CPFs. Our MEC has alluded that we are blessed, because we have so many CPFs. Maybe we must bring victim empowerment centres into that. So that there can be open and we discuss on how we can make it better for those victims of violence and crime.

There can be no denial that women are better off than 30 years ago. We just need to look at the representation by women in this House, our Speaker and our Premier to understand that the strength of women today is informed by the struggles of women yesterday. However, we have little to celebrate when some our sisters remain subjected to poverty and abuse.

Hon Speaker, women are strong, we are strong. Residents of Limpopo are strong. Let us take a definite stand and unite across party political lines to bring an end to the abuse of women in Limpopo.

Thank you

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, I was expecting my friend Mphahlele Selaelo Regina, is she here? Who's coming?

MR MOGOLO

Thanks, Hon Speaker, I was briefed thoroughly by my fellow caucus Member, being Mphahlele, who was supposed to be here, but I'll try to be brief to respect time... [INTERJECTION]

MR MATHE

Are you willing to take a question?

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Member, the honourable Member is asking if ever you are willing to take question.

MR MOGOLO

I might consider taking that question after delivering the message.

THE SPEAKER

It's fine, honourable Member, you can proceed. He's not willing to take a question now.

MR MOGOLO

Thanks, Hon Speaker, as I've said there's very little to celebrate in our province for women. We have few women who are successful to call for celebration, we can celebrate the appointment of our Speaker, Premier, CEO, Head of Department in that department, but that's just a drop in the ocean.

There are rural woman who are suffering as the result of failure to deliver services in our province. Women in the rural areas where there are no roads, provision of water as we speak now. They are at the rivers. A lot of resources are spent in the city. At the moment, the provincial government is busy trying to build a state theatre at a huge amount, but the women in the rural who do not have water, a basic need.

We are supposed to spread the delivery of services throughout the province. We must recognise those women in the deep rural areas, there are no roads in those rural areas, travelling from rural areas in Mohlalotwane, Serithing, Mabitsi going to Ramogwerane. There' are no road there... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

There's an order, can we listen to Hon Mathe.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, I want to establish the relevance of women at GaMapitsi and other villages without tarred roads with what is being discussed here in terms of celebrating Women's Month and further establish if ever the honourable Member is now prepared to take a question. It is two things here.

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Member, are you ready to take a question?

MR MOGOLO

Let me answer the question first because the question is only to delay me, I'm about to finish and I said I'll take the question when I've concluded.

THE SPEAKER

Order, Hon Mathe! Can we hear if ever he's responding to your question.

MR MOGOLO

No, I'm not going to respond to that question. I believe it is irrelevant. We feel entitled to celebrate and ignore the reality of the situation outside... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Please conclude, honourable Member.

MR MOGOLO

Thanks, Hon Speaker, as I was indicating the brunt of the failure of delivering services is suffered by those women in all those villages. In Malebitsa there is no water there. In Maonkane women are fetching water from rivers there, therefore, the call is for the provincial government to really equally distribute services throughout the province, in all the regions, not that 99% of the resources should be spent in towns, where there's a flowing of pipes water to the settlement of those rural areas.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Magolo. We are now going to listen to chairperson of the portfolio committee on the status of women in the Legislature to close the debate.
[SONG]

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker, Makoma Makhurupetje; Deputy Speaker, Tebogo Mamorobela; Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; Hon MECs who are here; Chief Whip of the Legislature, Hon Essop Mokgonyana; leaders of the opposition;

honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature; ladies and gentlemen, receive revolutionary greetings.

Hon Speaker, this year's Women's Month takes place at the time where in the country is celebrating 30 years of freedom and democracy hence the theme: "Celebrating 30 years of democracy towards women development."

Hon Maila, polygamy and polyandry is not healthy because juggling the needs and desires of severe partners can be mentally and emotionally taxing, so we know it's our tradition to do so but sometimes there are consequences in that regard.

Hon Speaker, this month of democracy which makes it important juncture recollective reflection and commemoration of the events that took place 68 years ago by thousands of South African women from all walks of life to protest against the apartheid ruling.

August month is dedicated as month to honour and celebrate the strength and courage shown by the likes of Lilian Ngoyi, I would not mention all of them and many other whom were at the forefront of fighting against discrimination and harassment of women in different areas of life, unequal payment system, lack of access to education as well as sexual and oppression and reproductive health services for women.

Hon Speaker, the commemoration also allows us to take stock of achievements and the challenges that are recurring from the past, while we continue to forge ahead for the total emancipation and empowerment of women. The issue of 50/50 or 60/40 representation of women is no longer something is used to balance gender but is the policy position for women empowerment across the country.

Though it is not wholeheartedly implemented, there is progress regarding the deployment of women in strategic positions. Women leaders in South Africa have been at the forefront of radical change, championing laws, policies and initiatives that have made gender awareness and responsiveness integral to our country's governance.

These changes have not only redefined institutional norms but have also opened doors for countless women who were once excluded from leadership and power in which we have seen several provinces having female premiers with our province being one of them.

Hon Speaker, it is indeed true that when you empower a woman, the whole nation gets empowered. The emphasis of this is on the initiative that women leaders have embarked on to empower their fellow women. Women are celebrated across the globe as active agents of change and social transformation. We proudly acknowledge the progress we have made with women occupying prominent and strategic leadership positions across various sectors.

Recently, President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed Judge Mandisa Maya as the first female Chief Justice, a landmark moment in our history. We also have Tsakani Maluleke as the Auditor-General, Kholeka Gcaleka as the Public Protector and many other women leading as Ministers and Deputy Ministers, MECs, HODs and DDGs.

These are not just an individual achievement, but they are a collective victory of all women illustrating that the barriers of the past can indeed, be broken.

In his address of Women's Month, President Ramaphosa referred to himself as a son born from a woman, a brother to a sister, a husband and a father of daughters. We draw courage from men of this calibre for honouring women as the backbone and pillars of the nation.

Today, we are standing on the shoulders of giants who came before us, the wise, caring, selfless, loving, responsible, capable beings of our struggle who led and fought for the liberation of women. As we move forward, we are saying the struggle must continue because we need to understand where we are coming from in order to sail smoothly as women.

There are still areas where changes are critically needed. I'm shaking because I'm hungry, significant progress has been registered in the empowerment of women although it is at small scale. We are confident that a lot is about to change for good under the government of the day. We are saying nothing about us, without us. I'm saying it again, nothing about us, without us because we believe that we are better placed to fight for our dignity, our rights and wellbeing as well as our freedom.

Hon Speaker, in conclusion, allow me once again to congratulate Hon Phophi Ramathuba as our first female Premier since the dawn of democracy. In her we see true reflection of ourselves as women. Sheryl Sandberg once said, "We need women at all levels, including the top, to change the dynamics, reshape the conversation, to make sure that women's voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored." Wathint' abafazi!

BACKGROUND

Wathint' imbokodo!

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Wathint' imbokodo!

BACKGROUND

Wathint' abafazi!

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Uzokufa wena. I just wanted to say you strike a woman, you strike a rock and you'll be crushed, completely crushed. I thank you Hon Speaker, and Members of this august House. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Malibongwe!

BACKGROUND

Igama lamakhosikazi!

THE SPEAKER

You strike a woman!

BACKGROUND

You strike a rock!

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We now proceed to item 11.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. On Announcements, Hon Members, sorry, can I get the order here, I'm the Chief Whip here. Members of the provincial Legislature are reminded of the second induction which will take place at the Bolivia Lodge on the 15 and 16 which is next week, Thursday and Friday, starting at 8:30. That's the first announcement.

The second announcement is obvious – food is ready where you always get it.

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Sefepikgolo o a re hlokomela. Honourable Members, I wish to take this opportunity to thank all for you for really sitting the whole day, it was necessary but unfortunately, we had no choice to stay up to now. We really thank you; the House is adjourned until further notice.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
THURSDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

MS RAKGOALE

[NO AUDIO]

Honourable MEC, it is achievable. The two quarterly reports under review will lay a foundation, in determining whether it is achievable or not, to the political leadership of the department, MEC; Hon Nakedi Sibanda Kekana and her administration team. – That should motivate the department to push harder in order to pursue the goal of acquiring a clean audit.

The department in these two quarters under review, the budget allocation was equal but most, of which is the eye opener or the interesting part, is the spending. On the second quarter they have spent 23%, and on the third quarter they spent 66% of the allocated budget. There is an improvement on the second quarter and the third quarter in terms of the budget.

Most of the common areas the committee is concerned about are lower or under spendings by the department. With the leadership of the MEC, Hon Nakedi Sibanda, we are certain that she will make sure that that area is prioritised and that there is no budget that is not spent. The department reported that in the third quarter, 394 participants were trained in skills development programmes in the sector, which was more than the target of 150 participants.

The reason for the overachievement is that there were more requests for training by both colleges during the quarter under review. The committee applauds the department on this overachievement but, we also believe that the department rather has to look at how they put their targets, because we also understand or believe that they need to be guided by how they were able to spend their previous budget.

The committee welcomes the efforts that the department has planned to collect 1 258 samples for animals disease surveillance, however, 7190 samples were collected. The department cited that the shortfall was due to the fact that more samples were in the first quarter and further indicated 3 001 visits were conducted to a pomological units for veterinary interventions, and this has exceeded the target of 2750.

More units were visited during the 2second quarter and the units worked towards closing the Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in the province, and the report also indicated about 400 dip insertions for communal cattle, but 944 dip insertions were conducted to increase a turnup on Foot-and-mouth disease inspection points. And the outbreak was expected to be under control during the 2022/23 Third Quarter, however, the vaccination with FMD protection zone continues to maintain the highest protection against the disease.

The way in which FMDs were handled is good and we request the department to continue to do the good job. The committee reaffirms its commitment to prioritise regular oversight visits in both the department and portfolio committee's workplace within our communities, where our people live.

The department's plans and mandate underscore the vital importance of three visits, therefore, if resources are limited, additional funding should be allocated to support the essential activity.

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, the committee has full confidence in the leadership of MEC; Hon Nakedi Sibanda Kekana. We believe that with a unified approach, she will address areas where progress has been slow, and we also encourage the MEC and her team to make fieldwork and oversight a priority, as this will accelerate improvement in areas where challenges persist. I want to believe that from now on, she will be able to be so informed, so that when she comes to the committee, she will be able to engage because when she comes here, she would say what was discussed in the committee.

Thank you, Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much for managing my time so well. We will now proceed to Hon Velile, he is not here. Is he here yet? If he is not here, we will go to Hon Maila, it is your time to debate.

MR MAILA

Again, thanks very much, Speaker. I would like to indicate that it is good for us as the people of Limpopo to give information to subsistence farmers who would need financial assistance because there are so many people that need financial assistance in order to practise agricultural activities. At this particular moment, they don't know where they can get that particular information.

Therefore, I would like to request the department to make the information available for our poor people who are suffering there. The department should also give them agricultural skills so that they can do something in their lives. They must know how they can produce food themselves; they must know how to do farming because many of these families are suffering. They are facing a lot of sufferings in their homes.

They don't have food, they are struggling. Therefore, they need to be assisted. So, what I am saying in this kind of situation, is that it is up to the department to make sure that the people of Limpopo are getting financial assistance so that they can start their own agricultural businesses. So, I don't want to go too far, thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, re a leboga Hon Maila. We will now proceed to Freedom Front Plus. Hon Andre Moss, it is your turn.

MR MOSS

Thank you, Hon Speaker, Deputy Speaker, esteemed Members of the Executive Council, leaders of the opposition party.

It is concerning to observe that 37% of the budget designated for veterinary service remains unutilised with only 461, out of the target of 1 258 samples were collected primarily due to insufficient human resources. It is imperative that our province has an adequate number of veterinarians to meet its needs. The department must ensure that all available resources are employed efficiently and promptly. The department must conduct a thorough assessment of its current resources and identify any gaps which need to be filled. Additionally, strategies should be developed to streamline operations and enhancing efficiency of all resources and allocations.

Hon Speaker, the report highlighted that the total number of 150 household benefited from the assistance provided through various agricultural food production initiatives. This number, while indicative of some level of support, falls significantly short of the department's ambitious target of reaching 2000 households.

This initiative was supposed to enhance food security and improve livelihood. The primary reasons cited for the underperformance was a disruption in seeds and delivery, which was directly linked to expiration of the contract for seed procurement. Without timely access to quality seeds, many households were unable to engage in agricultural activities that would have allowed them to produce food and generate income. This situation not only hindered the department's ability to meet its goals, but also affected the overall agricultural productivity in the region. The department must closely monitor the expiration date of contracts to prevent the recurrence of the situation.

The department has utilised 66% of its allocated budget, which falls short of the target that was set of 75%. The shortfall of 9% represents a considerable gap that could have significant repercussions for our farming communities. The underutilisation of funds means essential programmes and initiatives designed to support farmers may not receive the necessary financial backing. This could lead to delays in implementing critical agricultural projects, reduce access to resources such as seeds, fertilisers and equipment and lack of support for training and development programmes that are vital to enhancing farming activities.

Moreover, the impact for the shortfall could extend beyond immediate financial constraints, it may hinder the ability of farmers to adapt the changing environment condition, invest in sustainable practices or respond to the market demand effectively. As a result, the livelihoods of many individuals and families within these communities could be jeopardised, potentially leading to the decreased agricultural productivity and economic instability.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We will now proceed to the DA. Hon Marie, your five minutes start now.

MS HELM

Thank you very much for the opportunity again, Hon Speaker, and honourable Members of the House. We now have, before us, the 2023/24 Second Quarter and Third Quarter Financial and Performance Reports of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. These reports highlight the department's performance against the key performance indicators and policy priorities set out in the Annual Performance Plan. They play a vital role in our oversight of the department.

Our role, as the committee, in exercising oversight includes reviewing, verifying, and analysing the financial and performance information provided, identifying any gaps or discrepancies, and make recommendations for improvement.

It serves little purpose if these identified gaps, discrepancies and recommendations for improvement are not acted upon by the department and the responsible MEC. In this regard, it is concerning that five of the ten recommendations made by the portfolio committee in quarter two are repeated in the committee's report for quarter three.

These recommendations include that the department should develop a strategy to prevent underexpenditure in economic classification categories, especially in provincial and local government projects. The department should implement disaster relief schemes to assist Matsika Farm, this is one of the problems we see in the report. The department should develop and monitor implementation plans for programmes to avoid unnecessary delays and prevent both over and under expenditure. Remember that is something that has to do with planning, so, both are equally unacceptable. The department should report on progress at the Norjax Tomato Processing Plant near Tzaneen and consequence management actions must be taken.

More troubling, many of these issues were also highlighted in the 2022/23 Oversight Report, which we debated earlier. I must reiterate my earlier statement: There is little value in exercising oversight if gaps and recommendations for improvement are not implemented by the department and the responsible MEC.

The Democratic Alliance must therefore question the capability, both in terms of competence and ability, might and also will of the department in these circumstances.

The Democratic Alliance also questions the efficacy of the department's spending. Is it truly achieving its own government strategic priorities? Where is the revitalisation of primary agriculture and agroprocessing? Do small-scale and emerging farmers have better access to markets, including export opportunities so that they can grow and become commercial farmers? What concrete measures have been put in place to mitigate the vulnerabilities and risks associated with climate change? Is there a growing group of successful and sustainable black commercial farmers? Are we contributing to growth, job creation, and poverty reduction?

In his recent address to Limpopo Executive, the President outlined the GNU's, - of which the DA is a partner -, key priorities as follows:

- Driving inclusive growth and job creation; and

- Reducing poverty and addressing the high cost of living and building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

As partners in the GNU, we share these priorities. Where we may differ, in many respects, is in how to achieve these outcomes.

The Democratic Alliance is clear that the ANC's developmental government ideology based on strong state intervention and ownership to redress historical injustices and promote inclusive economic growth has failed. The DA, on the other hand, believes in a free-market economy with minimal state intervention, which creates a business-friendly environment that attracts investment, creates jobs and reduces poverty. We acknowledge hereby the committee's reports, I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, we will now proceed to the EFF, Hon Magolo. I hope I am not wrong, is it still you? Okay, should I pass?

We shall now call upon the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Hon Nakedi Kekana to respond to the debate made by honourable Members. Honourable MEC, you may take the podium. [APPLAUSE]

MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you very much. Hon Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Chief Whip, Members of the Executive Committee, leaders of the opposition parties, honourable Members present here, including our officials, good morning.

Let me take this opportunity to indicate that we acknowledge all the questions, inputs and comments raised by members of the portfolio committee for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Indeed, we are going to make sure that as the department we address all the questions and the comments raised by the members of the portfolio committee.

Without any waste of time, let me indicate that on the issue of drought, the Department of Education is up and running to make sure that implementation of the Drought Resistance Programme is implemented effectively. We have already started with the first batch, which is the Mopani District and subsequent to that will be Sekhukhune District and we are waiting for the delivery of the second batch. By the end of next week, all the districts will be covered in terms of distributing all the agricultural inputs for drought resistance.

And as a result of the disaster that we have already reported to Department of CoGHSTA at provincial level and national level, we want to report that there is almost 80% progress in line with that. I can attest that even last week, we were discussing with the national department for disaster management and the matter is on their table, ready to be implemented.

In terms of tightening our internal control, of course, we are doing that. On the issue raised by Hon Rakgoale regarding the attainment of a clean audit for this financial

year, we are going to make sure that it is attained. This is the target of the Executive Committee.

Some of us were given the target by the very same Executive Committee to make sure that a clean audit is realised. We are going to make sure that the systems are in place, the audit action plan is implemented, and also that the internal controls respond to the resolutions as highlighted by the Audit Committee and internal auditors. We make sure that on weekly basis, we check progress made in response to the Auditor-General's action plan.

On the issue of Foot-and-mouth disease, we want to register from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, that the issue of Foot-and-mouth disease is the thing of the past in our department. We are doing this precisely because we have since realised the issue of Foot-and-mouth disease in 2019, and for now we are making sure that we intensify our campaigns.

Our animal health practitioners, together with our veterinary services are up and running to make sure that the issue is not realised again. We are saying this precisely because we are getting the assistance from veterinary services across the provinces. If it happens that there is Foot-and-mouth diseases in the province, the veterinary services are deployed to that particular area, because we understand that if we don't deal with the issue of Foot-and-mouth disease, we would be at risk. We make sure that we get access to international training and compliance with the south african good agricultural practice and the global good agricultural practice for trading purposes. That in itself will help in making sure that we grow the economy of our country by expanding on all the production of the Department of Agriculture. We make sure that all of the commodities; be it the crop or the livestock commodity, are expanded accordingly.

As a result of the foot-and-mouth disease, we are happy to report that most of the strategic partners, more especially the previously disadvantaged farmers, are willing to construct abattoirs, at least in the areas that are affected by the Foot-and-mouth disease, which are Mopani and Vhembe Districts. That in itself will assist all those livestock farmers to have access to the market through the abattoirs that are going to be constructed within their own jurisdiction because they are not allowed to trade their livestock with any other district or province. So, the construction of abattoirs will assist those black emerging farmers to make sure that they have access to the market. That in itself will be able to maximise the issue of food security and not only the food security, but expanding or the growth of the economy of this province and the GPD.

On the issue of smallholder farmers support, I think we are diligent in ensuring that through our programmes for Presidential Economy Stimulus, Ilima/Letšema projects, and the CASP projects, smallholder farmer support is received accordingly. We can attest to many areas that we have touched, I am not going to mention them. Those of you, who are serving in the portfolio committee, you know that a number of hectares have been provided with the aim to improve on the smallholder farmer support. They have the record, and I can attest to what I am alluding to.

In terms of the unemployment rate, we want to indicate that we have a programme to place unemployed graduates in different agricultural schools. We have got 430

unemployed graduates who are placed in all agricultural schools, not only the agricultural schools, but also in the emerging farmers who need support. They get practical experience and after 24 months, they also open their own farming entities.

We are going to sign an MoU with MEC for Education. We are also going to expand the very same services to the ECDs and people with disability. Of the eight agricultural schools that we have identified, we have added another one; Helene Franz, which is a disability school. We are going to make sure that we make an impact.

I want to indicate that this is a rainy season. We have already developed a programme, and we are going to commence with the launch of the ploughing season in Thabazimbi tomorrow. We are inviting everyone of you to come and witness the launch of the ploughing season. We are going to demonstrate what we mean by transforming the sector, the vulnerable and previously disadvantaged, women and children. . We empower them and help them convert from smallholder farmers to commercial farmers.

I am not going to give you full explanation, but you must come and see the name of the farm – the Dikiwe Farming in Thabazimbi Municipality that we are going to empower. I am telling you, that lady will be promoted from ploughing the 7,5 hectares to ploughing 100 hectares. That, in a way, will convert her from being a smallholder farmer to being a commercial farmer.

On the issue of the non-functional machinery in Tzaneen, the department will investigate the matter. On the issue of Norjax, already as I am speaking, there is strategic partner in place. Those of you who visited the farm with the portfolio committee members, can attest to that. We have sent strategic partners there., You can now hear with your own ears as to how far we are in terms of revitalising the Norjax.

If things go well, by next year the issue of revitalising Norjax will be realised effectively, because by now the land that was leased to Tomato Grower Association has been purchased by the very same strategic partner. In terms of the investigations regarding the Norjax Tomato Farm, consequence management is already taking place.

Most of the officials have already started to feel the heat. Majority of them are on suspension. The portfolio committee has requested the report and already submitted the very same report for scrutiny in the portfolio committee meetings.

In terms of the migration of Madzivhandila College, we want to indicate that this is a policy matter, We are quite sure that with the consent from all the provinces, except the Western Cape, there will be collaboration with the national department and the Minister for higher learning institutions The issue of migrating Tompi Seleka and Madzivhandila will be realised effectively.

We note the concern of underexpenditure, and we want to report and thank Treasury that most of the amount, almost R20 million we got the approval for rollover because we already have committed in other projects.

In other aspects such as compensation of employees, which also led to the underexpenditure that the department has realised, the recruitment processes are in place. I think you can see that each and every week there is an advert that is coming from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in order to curb the problem of underexpenditure.

I thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC for your response to the debate. We will now proceed to 7.3, where we will allow the chair of the Portfolio Committee of Transport and Community Safety, Hon Lebea to present the reports: 7.3.1 and 7.3.2.

MS LEBEA

Hon Speaker, a blessed morning to you. I rise to table for consideration and adoption the 2022/23 Annual Report: Department of Transport and Community Safety. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPAEKER

Thank you, chair. Is there any seconder to the report? I can't see there, Hon Shai you are recognised.

MR SHAI

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I, Hon Shai Mpho Sonnyboy, rise to second the consideration and adoption of the 2022/23 Annual Report as presented by Hon Lebea. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much., We can now proceed, honourable chair.

MS LEBEA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I rise again for consideration and adoption of the 2022/23 Annual Report of Gateway Airports Authority Limited by this august House. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, chair, can we get the seconder honourable Members. Hon Mokoale you are recognised.

MS MOKOELE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Hon Mokoale, stand here to second the 2022/23 Annual Report of GAAL.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable Members. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. As per the Speakers' List, Hon Bongani Abednigo Nkonyana, it's your turn. [LAUGHTER]

Why are they laughing at you honourable Member? He is the one who is opening the debate, is it his maiden speech? Your ten minutes starts now.

MR NKONYANA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I have enough time Hon Speaker, o se ke wa nthopa.

The Speakership, the Deputy Chief Whip, Members of the Executive Council, the chair of the Committee on Transport and Community Safety, honourable Members of the august House, the community in the gallery, let me start by welcoming the appointment of Dr Timothy Maake as the Secretary of the Legislature, and formerly thank Dr Nkuna for the sterling work that he has done.

Let me start by reminding this House that we are approaching an exciting, yet delicate period on our roads and in our province as we are going into the festive season. It is important to highlight that this time of the year when our people, from all walks of life, would be travelling to various destinations to celebrate the festivities with their loved ones, after taking long and deserved breaks from work.

This is the time when the global stars, Master KG and Makhadzi will be singing "Namela o tle Limpopo, December ye di boya Limpopo, Dzi ya vhuya Limpopo". These lyrics are a constant reminder that Limpopo receives very high number of visitors, domestic, international and "makarapa".

It is during this period when most people get so excited that they disobey the rules of the road, leading to deaths and injuries which are caused by preventable road accidents.

At the beginning of the year, the former Minister of Transport in the Republic, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga announced 8,4% decline in road fatalities in Limpopo for the 2023/24 festive period. Furthermore, 181 fatalities were reported in 2023, as compared to 196 in 2022/23. This improvement comes because of the ongoing collaborative efforts between law enforcement officials, road users, and other social partners. This tells us that the department must continue to deploy a comprehensive intergovernmental approach towards road safety, where road safety operations are conducted in conjunction with the South African Police Service and other sector departments like Health, Home Affairs and so on.

We must also applaud the enormous work by traffic officers throughout the province, my former colleagues, who continued to maintain a heightened presence on the roads.

Almost every year, the department is losing my former colleagues, either through greener pastures or deaths. In order to close the gap, the department has appointed

150 traffic wardens who are currently undergoing a 12-month training that started in January 2024 and will be deployed to different areas of the province after completion of their course.

The government, through the Department of Transport and Community Safety, has invested a lot into GAAL with the view of getting it to become a dominant player within the aviation space and to help propel the provincial economy to unimaginable levels.

As former President Thabo Mbeki puts it, “As we speak and we act today, thus we should not forget that there was yesterday that carried in its hands both despair and hope; and that born out of past of deadly conflict between darkness and light we will have a today, tomorrow and day after. Who is very being the generation of what we live and have power to define.”

We have held several engagements with the executive leadership of GAAL to consider various ways and means to assist GAAL to attain a state of financial self-reliance. A turnaround strategy has been formulated, and it is our firm view that, if properly implemented, this entity will attain an optimal level of self-sustainability.

The bus subsidies programme has helped in the creation of around 2 000 jobs in the form of drivers, cashiers, dispatchers, bus washers, inspectors and clerical staff, within the 18 bus companies involved in the subsidy scheme. There are more jobs which are also created within the value chain, like petrol attendants and so on.

In our quest to transform this bus regime to allow new entrants and create a healthier competition within the market, together with the Council for Science and Industrial Research, we will finalise and oversee the implementation of new service contracts and rationalisation of the old ones.

Through the provincial regulatory entity, we will continue to oversee and monitor public transport affairs in the province, and ensure a fair balance between the need and demand for public transport services in specific areas. We will do this cautiously and diligently with utmost care.

It is refreshing to see the department sustaining its relations with Santaco (South African National Taxi Council), because we are alive to our commitment of ensuring a peaceful taxi industry that remains profitable. It is these good relations we have maintained with the taxi industry that have yielded to positive tranquillity in the industry, thus far.

As part of fulfilling the mission of the South African Police Services, which is to prevent, combat and investigate anything that may threaten the safety and security of any community, the department has on its records, over 400 Young Civilians on Patrol (YCOP), distributed throughout the province, at all police stations.

This is an EPWP (Expanded Public Works Programme) whereby the young people conduct patrols in their respective residential and business areas, under the supervision of SAPS members. The department also conducts regular crime awareness campaigns in the form of workshops throughout the province to address

rural safety, with emphasis on stock theft, drug abuse and crime against vulnerable groups.

Together with our community structures, we continue to wage a ferocious war against drug trade and use, within our communities. The only way to nab drug peddlers, is to swell ground with community structures, such as Community Police and Safety Forums, in order to identify the traders, and intercept their operations.

Through the assistance of these structures, the Police have registered impressive successes and have arrested numerous kingpins, and the conviction rate is also high. Our fight against GBV (gender-based violence), will never cease until we record a complete state of zero occurrence, where women and children will always feel safe, where we serve a society where a girl child will grow up without any trauma or fear of the unknown. We want a society of role models and not molesters. We want a community of heroes and heroines and not convicts. Vaclav Havel, the former president of Czech of Czechoslovakia Republic, and may his soul rest in peace, puts it, "I am not an optimist, because I am not sure that everything ends well. Nor am I a pessimist, because I am not sure that everything ends badly. I just carry hope in my heart."

These words describe how we live and continue on how to navigate our daily lives while the scourge of GBV continues to rise, and we say this must stop, and it must stop now.

As we commence with the 7th Provincial Administration, I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of Limpopo, for placing their trust in the ANC as a leader of government. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Indeed, you were monitoring your time. [LAUGHTER] I really appreciate Hon Nkonyana. We now proceed to Hon Maila.

MR MAILA

Again, thanks very much, Hon Speaker. While the South African government recognise the pivotal role of rural public transport in achieving societal goals like employment, the allocation of R5 million from the Department of Transport and Community Safety to the Limpopo Taxi Council for administrative purposes raises concerns about equity given the diverse needs for rural communities. It is essential to consider alternative modes of public transport beyond taxis. This presentation highlights the critical shortage of accessible and affordable transportation options in Limpopo rural areas. This is hindering residents' access to essential services such as work, education and healthcare. Lack of reliable and affordable transport hinders access to opportunities.

Limited services like the single bus in GaMaphotho operating twice early restricts mobility. Poor road condition contributes to transportation challenges. The national government prioritise the rural public transport for social development, however,

Limpopo residents face limited options. As the United African Transformation, we proposed a solution as follows:

- Implement a bus system for Limpopo residents for over 66 years of age similar to the national pension programme;
- Introduce a provincial bus system so that it will be run by the Polokwane Municipality, modelled after Leeto la Polokwane, specifically catering to rural areas and offering subsidised fares;
- Involve community leaders and residents in planning and implementing transport solutions;
- Enhance security: Install surveillance cameras and improve lights at bus stations;
- Hire local youth for community policing patrol to ensure passengers and community safety;
- Infrastructure development: Construct a bridge on the R71 road to reduce traffic congestion between Dalmada and Savanna City;
- Rail infrastructure restoration: Implement comprehensive refurbishment of Dikgale/Makotopong railway line to enable its full operation capacity for passengers and trains.
- Traffic safety enhancement: Install a traffic light at a four-way intersection at Mathibaskraal to mitigate the risk of accidents that occur frequently in that area.
- Skills development: Launch learnership programmes to train young people in rural schools for road traffic management;
- Integrate a trained youth into community policing forum. Improved public transport will enhance access to education, healthcare and employment opportunities.
- Subsidise fares to ease the financial burden on residents, especially those living in poverty.
- Increase security to improve safe travel for passengers. Infrastructure development will improve traffic flow, reduce comity at times.
- Skilled youth will contribute to a more efficient transport system and strengthen the economic safety.

In conclusion, the UAT embusses the Limpopo Department of Transport and Community Safety to prioritise these solutions. By investing in rural public transport, we can empower communities, unlock their potential, and contribute to a more inclusive and prosperous Limpopo. Thanks very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much Hon Maila.

MS MOKABA

Sorry, Hon Speaker, I've been raising my hand I wanted honourable to clarify us, where is Savanna City? Is it in Limpopo or somewhere else, so that the MEC would know how to deal with that?

THE SPEAKER

That question will be answered in the next debate, thank you. Hon Moss, the floor is yours.

MR MOSS

Once again, greetings to the House. Hon Speaker, adverse findings were identified concerning the existing bus contracts, particularly regarding the quantity of routes, trips and subsidies received. The findings revealed that bus companies did not fulfil their contractual responsibilities to follow the designated subsidised routes and trips in delivering public transportation services.

In certain cases, it was uncovered that a significant number of the subsidised routes and trips were altered with an intention of misleading the department. It is essential to impose penalties on individuals who seek to deceive the government for their own benefit.

The citizens who depend on public transportation daily are the ones who bear the consequences of such actions. I am concerned that the expenditure amounted to R779 000 646, leading to an underutilisation of funds totalling R31 million. The number of speed operations conducted remains unfulfilled primarily due to the department's inability to procure the necessary products for the calibration of speed operation machines.

Speed enforcement operations are essential for preserving lives on the road, particularly in light of the alarming rates of speeding and resulting fatalities. These operations should be conducted consistently to discourage individuals from exceeding speed limits. Furthermore, failing to properly calibrate the equipment exposes the department to potential lawsuits, a risk that is financially inevitable.

Concerning GAAL, the Attorney General was unable to verify or ascertain the accuracy of the cash flows related to the interest received, as these figures were not disclosed separately from the trade and other receivables. The business development programme had four objectives, of which only two were successfully met. It is simply unacceptable to accomplish only 50% of the intended goals.

In the financial year under review, the entity planned to lease, at least, part of its eight units as part of its revenue generation strategy; however, this initiative did not come to fruition. Consequently, the entity seeks to engage a facility management firm with the objective of attracting investors and enhancing the appeal of its properties, many of which are currently in despair. In other words, additional funds will be expended by the entity to entice investors to lease properties that are not in optimal condition. These properties require renovation due to the entity's failure to perform the necessary maintenance to preserve them adequately.

In conclusion, the business operation programme included six performance indicators, of which only three were achieved, despite being the programme that receives the highest level of funding. There was also a failure to maintain the Airport's Category 7 licence which was caused by the fire truck. The entity should prioritise maintenance to prevent such occurrences. It happened with the fire truck, and they also have to

procure new fire equipment to meet the SACAA (South African Civil Aviation Authority) requirements which they should have known. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Marie Helm.

MS HELM

Again, thank you very much, Hon Speaker, and honourable Members of the House.

The department needs to be congratulated for again collecting 100,6% of its own revenue. This is one department we can be proud of. Under programme 02: Transport Operation, the department spent more than R822 million on 26 subsidised bus contracts. The number of buses used to ferry commuters was reduced to 701 in main because Great North Transport failed to provide the fleet to honour its obligation. This resulted in reduction of more than 4 000 000 passengers from the previous financial year.

The passenger subsidy programme is an important catalyst for poverty alleviation, but unreliable bus companies defeat this objective. The department must procure more reliable service providers. A budgeted R6 million for the completion of the Thohoyandou taxi rank facility, has been returned to Treasury. This is disappointing given the economic benefit this development could provide to the community.

The funds are said to have been allocated to reprioritise resources to fund budget pressures within the department, which is clear indication of financial mismanagement. GAAL is funded from both the government grant and the revenue it generates. It largely depends on government's grant which is allocated annually as its revenue that is generating is not enough to sustain its operations.

The government under the auspices of the Limpopo Provincial Department of Transport and Community Safety will be allocating R67 million to GAAL for the 2022/23 financial year.

During the period under review GAAL's downward trajectory continued, R11 million was collected and almost a million short of the projected target. There were 2 827 aircraft movements, 5 173 less than the targeted 8 000 and the board appeared only once before the portfolio committee, in October 2022.

Under programme 03, it is commendable that road fatalities decreased by 9% from 1 293 in 2021/22 to 1 164 in the year under review. So, we can make changes; and we can go better. The Moutse traffic station was not providing comprehensive services to the residents in the area. When the state-of-the-art traffic station opened in 2009, it was meant for providing all the driving, traffic and licensing services. The station provides only law enforcement and a registering authority.

The department must initiate engagements with the RTMC (Road Traffic Management Corporation) to provide a learners' driving licences and driving licences system to keep the station operational, cost effective and relieve pressure on the other traffic stations.

We get very much complains about other traffic stations, which is unnecessary. If this one functions well, the pressure on the other one can be relieved.

The provincial secretariat of Police can play a more meaningful role in combating crime and providing victim support. Under the period under review, the province is losing the battle on crime. During the first quarter, crime statistics painted a bleak picture. The province recorded 197 murders, 1 031 sexual offences, 247 attempted murders and 2 832 assault GBH cases, that's a huge number.

Limpopo had four police stations namely: Mankweng, Thohoyandou, Giyani and Seshego ranked in the top 30 stations nationwide for rape offences. These police stations were also ranked in the top 30 for sexual offenses. It is unacceptable that these police stations are recurring feature on the country's top 30 rape and sexual offences list quarter after quarter.

This highlights a lack of support and resources at these stations to improve their response. The sustained large numbers of sexual offenses prove that the SAPS and Limpopo provincial government are still failing to keep residents safe in their communities and their homes. There is a need for concerted effort and greater resources to address high numbers of sexual offences and domestic violence.

Finally, the portfolio committee recommended that the department should ensure that all Community Policing Forums are provided with training and capacity-building programmes as outlined in the APP.

As the last remark, it is very important that on the local level the police stations are equipped with at least trauma centres to assist with any form of sexual offences and domestic violence. We hope that this administration will make that possible.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Honourable Member. We will now give an opportunity to Hon Jacob Lebogo to debate on behalf of the EFF.

Next debate? Okay, thank you so much. We will now allow the chair of the committee to close the debate. [APPLAUSE]

MS LEBEA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Members of the Executive Council, distinguished guests, and members of the media fraternity logged on different livestreaming channels and in the House, I greet you.

Hon Speaker, Robin Chase alluded to the idea that transportation is the centre of the world, it is glued to our daily lives. When it goes well, we don't see it. When it goes wrong, it negatively colours our day, makes us feel angry and impotent, curtails our possibilities.

Hon Speaker, following all the constitutional prescripts and provisions that require us as the committee of this august House to monitor, enquire and to make necessary recommendations related to the department's budget, strategic plans, restructuring and rationalisation, amongst others, this clearly means, the departments are held accountable to ensure that they spend the appropriated amount not only accordingly, but effectively too.

The department has been advised to effectively plan performance targets, fill all vacant and funded positions, and implement corrective measures to ensure that our funds, are recouped from officials and bus companies who have defrauded them. In addition, the department will then be required to submit reports on progress made on implementation of the said new bus contracts.

It was Jonh Dough who said, "The heights of excellence are reached by those who are not satisfied by doing very well, but those who constantly seek to do better."

It is imperative that the department ensures that they thoroughly plan their performance targets to boost their efficiency. There can be no satisfaction with mediocre outcomes, and we must strive for excellence at all material times. The department's executive leadership need to produce more leaders that will drive the department to achieve its planned performance within their allocated budget.

Encouraging leadership skills amongst personnel can have a lasting and far-reaching effects in the department. These simple actions can unleash great energy in its workforce that can have tremendous positive effect on its operation. The department should further ensure it institutes corrective measures against the officials who have defrauded It. This has been long ongoing, and we need to, when we come to debate on Annual Performance Plan or Annual Report of the following year, come to the House with remedial actions that have been taken.

Total accountability can ensure that those who are responsible for defrauding the department are held accountable and necessary measures are taken to recoup those funds, as those funds belong to the masses of this province. The department, on that note, should submit monthly reports on progress made on implementation of envisaged bus contracts in the 2024/25 financial year. It is very critical that the department be open to change and be flexible enough to adjust these plans as needed. Therefore, constant monitoring and reporting of progress is an excellent way of achieving this.

On the entity, GAAL, it is very essential that GAAL generates sufficient revenue that will sustain it in the long run, with not only minimal reliance but complete non-reliance on government grants.

Hon Speaker, as Friederich Nietzsche said, "Without music, life would be a mistake." Similarly, without adequate revenue streams that would be unsustainable, it would be a mistake for the government to assist GAAL over and over again, without GAAL being able to be self-sufficient. Moreover, transparency and ethics are almost critical. Therefore, it is critical that the outsourcing of the facility management of a company is conducted in a transparent manner which provides no room for corruption or malfeasance.

This approach aligns with certain ethics, and it will ensure that GAAL is conducted in a manner that is universally ethical. Hon Speaker, one thing that worries us as a portfolio committee, and that came out very strongly, is the airline that we have at GAAL. We cannot sit over; yes! with one airline that is ferrying our people from Polokwane to Gauteng.

GAAL needs to come with sustainable measures for new airlines, to come and give competition to the airline that we are subjected to by the entity. This needs to be done expeditiously so. When we come here as a portfolio committee, we need to report to the House about a new airline that GAAL shall have has propelled.

One thing that we were once worried about is with regard to the procurement of fire equipment that is so paramount to safe operations of the airline there. GAAL must make sure that they adhere to the requirements, norms and standards, and ensure that the fire equipment in use is up to date. We would not want to witness the airline being downgraded again, we don't want to see that as a portfolio committee.

Maybe before I also close Chair, just to report to the House that the 56-year-old male suspect was also nabbed for a brutal murder of a nurse in the Lebowakgomo precinct. This was done by the member of the Provincial Tracking Team together with Murder and Robbery Unit. This 56-year-old male was arrested the murder of his wife, a 52-year-old victim in Lebowakgomo.

What this means, honourable Members on my left, is that not all hope is lost. Men and women in blue are really putting an effort to make sure that the province of Limpopo becomes the safest place to live in.

Let me also thank the honourable Members for their insight and for being forever available to make sure that we hold the department, the entity GAAL and, by extension, the South African Police Services accountable. It is their insights, inputs and collectivism that ensure that we conduct effective and adequate oversights to build the department and the entity.

I, therefore, move that both Annual Reports of 2022/23 be adopted as the reports of this august House. Ke a leboga.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, chair. I will request you not to leave. If you have your papers, just take them. I am saying that because we are not going to allow the MEC to respond now. We will allow the next debate so that as you debate, the MEC can be able to respond on the two debates of the Annual Report and the quarterly reports.

While you are still seating down, honourable chair, we can proceed to item 7.4.1

MS LEBEA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to table for consideration and adoption the 2023/24 First Quarter Reports for both the department and the entity, GAAL.

THE SPEAKER

You must table them separately.

MS LEBEA

Thank you, Hon Speaker, I rise to table for consideration and adoption, the 2023/24 First Quarter Report for the Department of Transport and Community Safety.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Is there any seconder? Hon Nkonyana, you are recognised.

MR NKONYANA

Thank you, Hon Speaker, I rise to second the adoption and consideration of the first quarter report for the Department of Transport and Community Safety.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, the next report: 7.4.2.

MS LEBEA

I rise for consideration and adoption of the 2022/23 First Quarter Report for Gateway Airports Authority Limited. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder, honourable Members? Hon Faith Sebopela, you are recognised.

MS SEBOPELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker, I stand to second the adoption and consideration of the report as presented by the portfolio committee chair.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Let's move to item 7.4.3, Hon Lebea.

MS LEBEA

Thank you, Hon Speaker, I rise to table for consideration and adoption the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report for Department of Transport and Community Safety.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder, honourable Members? Hon Pheedi, you are recognised.

MR PHEEDI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the submission made by the chairperson for the second quarter of the Department of Transport and Community Safety.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon chair. We are seeing those who deserve bonus, and today is the 14th. Over to you, chair.

MS LEBEA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to table for consideration and adoption the Second Quarter Report for Gateway Airports Authority Limited.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you chair. Hon Shai, the podium is yours.

MR SHAI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I second the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report for GAAL.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Let's move to item 7.4.5, chair.

MS LEBEA

Again, thank you, Speaker. I rise for consideration and adoption of the Third Quarter Report of the Department of Transport and Community Safety.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Hon Manthata Mahasela, you are recognised.

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to support move as presented by Hon Lebea.

THE SPEAKER

I can see some don't want to miss the bonus.[LAUGHTER] Thank you so much. We will now proceed to item 7.4.6.

MS LEBEA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Lastly, I rise to table for consideration and adoption the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report for Gateway Airports Authority Limited.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Is there any seconder? Hon Matjomane, you are recognised.

MS MATJOMANE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 report of Gateway Airports Authority Limited. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, so much honourable Members. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. According to my Speakers' List, Hon Mankwana Christinah Mohale is opening the debate. [APPLAUSE]

We will allow the honourable Member to debate from where she is seated. So, your ten minutes starts now, honourable Member.

MS MOHALE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Honourable MECs, Hon Deputy Chairperson of Chairpersons, Members of this august House, ke a le dumedisa, o kwa Bolobedu.

THE SPEAKER

O tšile go seka, honourable Member. [LAUGHTER]

MS MOHALE

Madam Speaker, let me first start by appreciating the privilege and opportunity to speak on behalf of the African National Congress (ANC) on the 2022/23 Quarterly Report of the Department of Transport and Community Safety and its entities.

The mission of the Department of Transport and Community Safety is to provide safe, affordable, sustainable and integrated transport services. Indeed, today we would all agree that an efficient and functioning transport sector that moves people and goods safely, speedily and affordably across the length and breadth of our province speaks to our vision.

We have noted with concern that there were adverse findings relating to the current bus contracts, especially on the number of routes and trips subsidised. Amongst others, the findings discovered that bus companies failed to comply with their contractual obligations to adhere to agreed subsidised routes and trips in the provision of public transport. Furthermore, in some instances, it was revealed that most of the subsidised routes and trips were manipulated with the view of deceiving the department.

However, the Department of Transport and Community Safety set out a process to phase out the current 26 bus service contracts which were concluded more than a decade ago, and an operation of new contracts is expected to commence in April 2025.

One of the core functions of this department is to maintain and promote road safety. However, we are concerned with the 9.1% fatality increase that was recorded in the past financial year. We further noted the increase of pedestrian fatalities throughout the various parts of our province, even though ba beile di “grr grr” at GaSekgopo, we still have fatalities.

The department has appointed 150 traffic officer learners, and we are confident that, upon completion of their learnership, at the end of this calendar year, the 150 candidates enrolled at the Limpopo Traffic College will be a positive injection into the number of our traffic officials on our roads.

We are also looking into a number of ways, to make the Gateway Airports Authority Limited (GAAL) to generate sufficient revenue that will sustain it in the medium to long run with minimal reliance on government grants for support for sustained growth, profitability, and competitiveness. A turnaround strategy has been formulated. This strategy if implemented properly, the entity will attain an optimal level of self-sustainability and become a dominant player within the provincial aviation space.

We are hoping that the board we are currently having is making inroads towards this objective. Section 206 of the Constitution of the Republic mandates the department to oversee the efficacy of the police services. As the ANC-led government, we have the best model and the most functional system of community police forums (CPFs), in our province. We have CPFs in all the 104 police stations.

Our CPF members will receive proper training. The main aim of this training is to familiarise CPF members with what the task of the CPF is. The department is involved in an ongoing engagements with various municipalities, throughout the province, to conclude the establishment of Community Safety Forums, which is another programme that aims to swell the ground and suffocate various forms of crime.

We have noted with great concern the unavailability of victim friendly rooms (VFRs) in some of our 104 police stations currently monitored by the department and the impact this has on the rendering of services to victims of crime, especially sexual offences and other serious violent crimes. Lack of victim friendly rooms infringes on the privacy and dignity of victims and thus subjecting the victims to secondary victimisation. This, thus, defeats the purpose of victim empowerment as victims will most likely be fearful of seeking further assistance. We will closely work with SAPS in making sure that the VFRs are available in all our stations.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a profound and widespread problem in South Africa, particularly in Limpopo, impacting on almost every aspect of life. To ensure that perpetrators of gender-based violence and other crimes against the vulnerable groups meet the wrath of the might of the law, the department has introduced the Court Watch Programme which is conducted on a number of four courts annually.

The purpose of Court Watch Programme is to observe and monitor progress on cases relating to gender-based violence in courts. The department considers expanding the Court Watch Programme to other magisterial districts which are having a high number of GBV cases.

As I conclude, Josiah Stamp, an English industrialist, writer and economist, reminds us that, "It is easy to dodge our responsibilities, but we cannot dodge the consequences of dodging our responsibilities". We shall do everything possible, to ensure that the Department of Transport and Community Safety delivers services to our people in a responsible and accountable manner. Ke a leboga. [APPALUSE]

THE SPEAKER

But it looks like the English, I suspect Hon Monama there, that it is from Wits. We will now proceed to the UAT, Hon Maila.

You must know that the only person who is educated here in this House is Hon Monama who is from Wits. Is it challenged? [LAUGHTER]

Okay, let's allow Hon Maila to proceed.

MR MAILA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Thank you very much, Hon Nkakareng for your listening skills. It was supposed to be Savanna Mall not Savanna City. Thank you very much for your correction. Thanks [LAUGHTER]

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Member, your three minutes is on already.

MR MAILA

Thobela, avuxeni, ndi masiari. Thanks very much.

As the UAT, we would like to thank GAAL for the appointment of new board members whom we believe that they will bring improvement in financial management and generate enough revenue, as well as improving efficient operational system. Therefore, we expect GAAL to do better and qualify for a clean audit opinion in the future.

We want to fly from Limpopo to Tanzania in future. The flights availability will create job opportunities for the people of Limpopo. But please don't hire people from outside Limpopo. Thanks very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Maila. We will proceed to the Freedom Front Plus, Hon Moss.

MR MOSS

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Hon Premier, Deputy Speaker, esteemed Members of the Executive Council, leaders of the opposition parties, honourable Members and guests, I greet you.

It has been observed with concern that the performance targets established for the eDisclosure of financial interests by state employees with the Department of Transport and Community Safety was not met in the second quarter. Furthermore, there were no corrective measures or plans devised for implementation in the third quarter. It is imperative that significant repercussions be imposed on employees who fail to disclose their financial interests. Compliance with this legal requirement is mandatory for all, and those who neglect this obligation must be held accountable.

The department needs to engage in substantial discussions with the bus companies concerning the alarming trend of submitting fraudulent claims, which is resulting in financial losses for taxpayers due to underperformed work. Many of our citizens rely on public transportation, and we must ensure that their needs are met rather than allowing a few to profit at their expense.

The establishment of the Court Watch Programme was intended to observe and monitor the progress of cases related to gender-based violence in courts. This initiative should be extended to include magisterial courts, where there is a higher prevalence of gender-based violent cases that requires oversight.

Regarding GAAL in light of the unserviceable and aged fleet of firefighting trucks that forced the entity to self-downgrade, the entity should consider procuring a new fleet of aerodrome rescue fire fighting trucks. The entity was unable to meet the performance objectives regarding the implementation of ICT initiatives, the reason given was that encountered legal hurdles with service providers.

The entity must evaluate service providers. It has been verified that a new service provider has been appointed, we hope that there will be no legal obstacles moving forward.

The organisation ought to endeavour to restore the category 12 license to the designation of an international airport, which would considerably increase the number of flights. However, given its current performance, this goal appears to be unattainable for this entity.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. I am so impressed. Since you started, your debate you are on time. That is appreciated. Hon Marie, it's your turn.

MS HELM

Again, thank you, Hon Speaker and honourable Members in the House.

Oversight reports serve to evaluate, question, and monitor the activities and effectiveness of the government department in question. This includes making findings and recommendations on issues such as underperformance, misuse of funds, and policy implementation challenges.

If we speak specifically to GAAL, we note the previous resolutions of the portfolio committee, regarding the following:

- That the newly appointed board of directors should ensure that the envisaged turnaround strategy is aligned with the APP;
- That the entity should ensure that its supply chain processes are strengthened with the necessary capacity to execute;
- That the entity should implement all outstanding training programmes; and
- That the entity adheres to maintenance plans. and to SACAA regulations.

The Limpopo Provincial Department of Transport and Community Safety has allocated R127 million to GAAL for the 2024/25 financial year, with an increase of R57 million since 2023/24 financial year, which is also allocated towards the attainment of the targets set within its turnaround strategy. The funds are mainly for the maintenance and management of Polokwane International Airport's operations, which is a good thing. We need maintenance.

It is of grave concern that since its establishment 29 years ago, there was an expectation that GAAL should contribute to provincial revenue. During 2021 following an intensive hearing, SCOPA took a resolution based on the 2017/18 audit outcomes that the CEO of GAAL must take steps to ensure that over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, the entity winds-off from provincial fiscals and ensure sustainability. This has yet to be implemented.

Instead, what we do find is the department forked out almost half a billion since 2019 to keep GAAL afloat. It is highly doubtful that the entity will meet its revenue target of R24 million for the financial year through its aeronautical services such as flight tickets and other aeronautical service, including renting out office space, retail, parking spaces and conferencing.

The unsanctioned and rogue decision by GAAL to put out a tender to revitalise P R Mphaphu Airport, now reduced to a mere airfield is perplexing, to say the least. An oversight revealed neglected buildings, no fire-fighting equipment, a runway constructed from cement blocks, houses built close to the fence, which will have to be demolished for an airport due to proximity to the runway.

There is poor access roads and no tourist or business attractions close by to lure the passengers. Most concerning, however, is that the portfolio committee is oblivious to GAAL's plans. Instead, GAAL should take note of the portfolio committee's recommendations to engage Maruleng Municipality, the National Department of Transport, the Department of Defence and Military Veterans, and other critical stakeholders to repurpose the Eastgate Airport in Hoedspruit and acquire an international operation license for this airport.

The prognosis is not good; the department has been throwing good money at a critical dysfunctional entity, and we all hope that this would fix GAAL, but less it didn't. We cannot afford to pay for failing state owned entities. The Department must use its money to improve tangible public services and increase accountability from within. We take note of the committee's recommendations that GAAL reviews and update the Provincial Freight Strategy, which was last developed over a decade ago, but maintain that it is high time for the department, as the shareholder, to cut loses and wind with GAAL. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Member. We will now proceed to Economic Freedom Fighters. Hon Jacob Lebogo, it's your turn.

MR LEBOGO

E re ke go tamiše, Mohlomphegi Mospikra; ke tamiše Ntlo ka moka le moetapele wa EFF yo re na go le yena. Re kopane mo letšatši morago ga gore Tonakgolo ya profense a gane go tšea memorantamo go tšwa go badudi ba Polokwane bao ba be go ba lla ka ditirelo. Taba ye ke maswabi le mahlabiša dihlong go badudi. Gape, re kopane mo re ekwa molaetša wa gore go na le serutegi se se tee ka mo. Ke be ke tšea gore re na le Dr Mdaka. Re godile re tseba Dr Mdaka e le yo mongwe wa dirutegi tše kgolo.

Mohlomphegi Mospikara, ngwageng wa go feta kgoro e filwe tšhelete ye e ka ba go R2.4 billion ye e be go e le ya go thuša setšhaba. Ngwageng wo e ya bontšha gore e fokoditšwe ka R118 million ye e le go gore e tšile go dira gore ditirelo di se ke tša išwa go batho. Sa go swabiša ke gore ditirelo ga di be gona. Batho ba nyaka ditirelo gomme tšhele e bušetšwa morago. Se sengwe se se makatšago ke gore ge go e ba le go fetošwa ga ditekanyetšo e tloga, phetošo e ama tekanyetšo ye e le go gore e swanetše e iše ditirelo go batho. Se se a bontšha gore ga gona boetapele bja nnete bja ANC. Dilo tše di sa dirwego tše botse ka go ANC di ditela mmušo, ke ka fao batho ba tšwelago pele ba hlaka gore ba hwetše ditirelo.

Go na le bothata bja batho ba dipese mo profenseng ya Limpopo, moo e le go gore ba dira manyofonyofo eupša, le ba okeletša dikotraka ngwaga ka ngwaga. Le gona bjalo kontraka ye e le go gore e swanetše go ba e thomile ka Aporele le e okeditše gomme ga re tsebe gore na lebaka ke eng. Ka ge diboledi ka moka di bontšhitše gore go na le manyofonyofo a a le go gona gomme ga gona magato a le a tšeago bjalo ka kgoro.

Se se bontšha gore ditirelo di ka se tsoge di bile gona ka lebaka la bomenetša bjo bo le go gona. Le tšea dilo tša manyofonyofo tše e le go gore di direga kua mokgatlong wa ANC la di tliša ka mo mmušong. Go ipontšha gape gore thušo ya mašeleng ya maeto ye e badilwego bontšhi bja yona bo na le manyofonyofo eupša ga gona magato a le a tšeago bjalo ka kgoro. Re le Economic Freedom Fighters re kgopela gore magato a tšewe le maina a batho ba e le go gore ke karolo ya manyofonyofo a phatlalatšwe gore setšhaba se tsebe gore ke bomang ba ba le go lenaneong la badira bosenyi.

Gape, ye nngwe ye e bontšhago gore ke bothata, ke tlhokego ya dipese kua Great North Transport. Ke mang yo a rwelego maikarabelo a gore go be le dipese tše e le go gore di tla sepetša batho ba gabo rena ka ge e feleletša e eba lona lebaka la gore batho ba dire manyofonyofo. Re kgopela gore taba ye ya dipese tša go hlaetša e lokišwe ka pela. Dikontraka tše e lego gore ga di sepedišane le molao wa gona bjalo di lokišwe. Ye nngwe ye re e lebeletšego gape ya mathata a kgoro ke taba ya gore ge kgoro e botšišwa dipotšišo ka taba ye ya dipese le tša mola boemafofane ba fetola o ka re ba dutše ka fase ga mohlare wa morula. Taba ye, re kgopela gore e fetoge gomme ba ipontšhe gore ba na le maikemišetšo a go ba mmušo.

Ye nngwe ye re llogo ka yona re le ba Economic Freedom Fighters ke taba ya diphemiti tša boradipesana. Yona e fetša e dira gore go be le dintwa mo metseng ya ga bo rena. Ke gantšhi batho ba gwanta gore kgoro e tsene taba ye ka bogare eupša kgoro ga e na maikemišetšo a go lokiša ditaba tše. Mohlomphegi Mospikara, o tla gopola gore go be go na le taba ya tekolo ya bokgoni, kudu go bašomedi ba taolo ya godimo le ba taolo ya magareng, eupša ga se re tsebe gore ge e sa le e dirwa ke mananeo a fe a e le go gore a tlile go thuša ba e le go gore go nyakega gore go kaonafatšwe bokgoni bja bona.

Taba ya go hloka taolo ya go ba le ditlamorago go bašomedi ba ba paletšwego ke go ipolela ka pela e tlo tšwela pele go se na yo a e thibago ka gore ga gona magato a a tšerwego. Re kgopela go re le hlalošetše Ntlo ye e Hlomphegago go re ke bomang ba e le go go re ga ba obamele taelo yeo le go re magato a a tšerwego ke afe; ge go pala ba boele ka thoko. Re boletše ka taba ya go re go na le go phatlalatšwa ga sistimi ya elektroniki ya go bea dikoloi leihlo ye e swanetšego go re etle e thuše kudukudu go dipese tše di thekgwago ka mašeleng, eupša ga e phethagatšwe. Ke mang yo e lego go re oa holega ge taba ye e sa direge, kudukudu ge batho ba ba dipese ba tšwelapele ba dira manyofonyofo.

Re lebeletše gape le taba ya go re go se ke gwa ba le sephetho ka dipese le dithekisi le sa akaretše badiriši ba tšona dinamelwa tše. Tlhaelelo ye e le gona ya dipese Mokopane, Giyani le Marble Hall e tloga e ama banamedi ka maatla. E ama le letseno la yona Great North Transport. Ge go ka ba le dipese tša go lekanela di tla okeletša batho dinamelwa tša go botega. Ye nngwe gape ye re e lebeletšego ke tlhokego ya go ruta batho ka polokego mebileng. A go na temošo ya go kgotsofatša, kudu dikolong le metseng ye e le go gore ke mafelo a a na go le dikotsi tše dintšhi. Ba sa tšwa go bontšha mo gore kua motseng wa GaSekgopo le ga ba loketše di-trrr-trrr (methaladi ya go rora rora ya go lemoša baotledi ka kotse ye e ka hlagago) dikotse di tšwela pele di eba gona. Se se šupa gore di no lokelwa gwa se be le thuto ye e dirwago mola motseng wola. Ke tše ntšhi gomme di jele tšhelete ye ntšhi. Re kgopela gore kgoro e dire mananeo a go bontšha bohlokwa bja gore ke ka lebaka la eng ba dirile dilo tšela le maboto. Batho ba swanetše ba tsebe gore di ba hola bjang.

Gape ye nngwe ke taba ya gore kgoro e sa le e dira tlhahlobo ya kobamelo disenthareng tša diteko tša go otlela gomme ga re kgone go hwetša dipelo tša mmakgonthe tša go bontšha gore; naa ke eng ye e swanetšego gore e kaonafatšwe ka gore batho ba tšwela pele go dira manyofonyofo le balaodi ba boingwadišo le gona mo go lekwago dikoloi. Re tseba gabotse gore mo profenseng ya Limpopo re na le MEC ye re be go re lebeletše gore o tla rwala maikarabelo a botša Ntlo ye nnete, bjale,

ge yena a tšwetša pele tše e le go gore di be di pala mengwageng ya go feta, e ra gore kgoro ka moka e tloga e bodile. Taba ye e tla nyaka gore e lebelelwe gabotse.

Legatong la Economic Freedom Fighters re sa bušeletša re re, re kgopetše dikhwalifikheisene goba mangwalo a thuto a bašomedi ba GAAL. Ga se go be le pego, gomme ke sebaka taba ye re e kgopetše. Re kgopela gore e iponagatše ka pela ka gore re tla tšwela pele re romela dimilione mola di timela e le ka lebaka la batho ba ba se na go maswanedi a go ba mola. Naa e ka ba e le gore batho ba loketše batswala ba bona mola goba le khutiša eng ge pego yeo e palelwa ke go tšwa e be ya setšhaba.

Mananeokgoparara a mola GAAL a tšwela pele a senyega. Ga gona difofane tše di tlilego go fofela mola e le gore rena ga rena maikemišetšo a go tsošološa lefelo lela e be mo batho ba tla bago le kgahlego ya go tla mo Limpopo. Bjalo le tsebe gore mo re kgauswi le Zimbabwe le dinaga tše dintšhi tše e le go gore nkabe batho ba tloga ba le mo ba e ya go tšona ba se hlwe ba eya Gauteng ka lebaka la gore ga re latele melao ya balaodi gore naa boemafofane bo swanetše e be bja mohuta mang. Tekanyo ya rena e fase mola GAAL, bjalo re tlo kgopela gore a re lweleng gore re iphagamiše re le bath oba Limpopo gore re fetše re eba Gateway ya mmakgonthe ya Afrika. Re ka se no ba Gateway Airport ka leina go se na se e le go gore se a direga sa go laetša gore re na le maikemišetšo a go matlafatša boeti.

Ge re na le maikemišetšo re swanetše re ikemišetše bjalo ka Ntlo gore ba e le go gore ba palediša kgoro ye le ditheo tša yona a ba boele ka thoko ka gore ke kgale re dula ka mo manyofonyofong a e le gore kua morago go ile gwa ba le ditšhelete tša go timela tša diphešene le R118 million ye le e išitšego ka mola e ile go timela. Tše dingwe di tšhelete di ka se šomišwe gabotse. Re kgopela gore go be le dipese gomme le šomišane le badiriši ba dipese le boradipesana. Re a leboga.

THE SPEAKER

Re a leboga, Mohlomphegi Lebogo. We will now proceed to the chair of the Committee to close the debate. Hon Lebea, you may take the podium.

MS LEBEA

Hon Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Members of the Executive Council, honourable Members of this august House, distinguished guests, and members of the media fraternity, logged on different livestreaming platforms and here in the chamber, a divinely blessed day to you. Thank you.

Hon Speaker, allow me a second to educate a Member in red on my left-hand side. A great man once walked this side of heaven, a man from Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, a revolutionary and a thinker who taught us about honesty, and a commitment to a struggle for truth and justice, rather than seeking easy victories and deceit or manipulation. When he said, "Tell no lies, and claim no easy victories." The great Amilcar Cabral.

Hon Speaker, had the Member been in attendance of the portfolio committee meetings, he would be of the know that the Department of Transport and Community Safety set out now a process to face out, currently, 26 buses contracts which were

concluded more than a decade ago, of course. An operation of new contracts is expected to commence in April 2025.

This fallacious loaded Member on my left would have been aware of these critical issues if he had once attended a portfolio committee meeting. The honourable Member would have known that the airport went through an extensive process of maintenance. He would have known that at this moment GAAL entity, as an airport, would be able to accept and welcome airlines that want to land in gateway at night. Why is it like that Hon Speaker? It is due to the revamp that unfortunately my honourable Member doesn't know about, and who are we to be blamed for that?

In exercising our constitutional mandate, we took stock of the teaching of Mac Hiller when he said, "Oversight is not an optional extra, it is essential to make to that money is spent wisely and appropriately." When then met with the department and the entity and then realised that the extensive knowledge that is being displayed by both the department and the entity will take us to greener pastures, to at least give credit where it's due.

We are not a policing committee, but we are here to play an adequate oversight. One thing that we have also noted, Hon Speaker, is the integrated transport plan of the department and we acknowledge that its successful conclusion with the municipalities is just in the pipelines. This will ensure that permits to the taxi owners would be issued on time.

Unfortunately, some people will not know because they were not in this meeting, again. We believe that the effort to conclude the integrated transport plan will bring an end to the unfortunate scourge of taxi violence. Let me speak a bit on the integrated transport plan. We were also of the view that the department doesn't want to give taxi owners or operators, operating licenses, until we met with the department and in the absence of someone, of course.

They told us that it is not that they are not unable to issue out these permits, they can issue them out when the municipality and the department are done with this integrated transport plan. Because, on daily basis people who go on pension, people who have money somewhere, they go out and buy taxis and bring them on our routes without informing their municipalities in question. The department and the municipality should sit together, complete the integrated transport plan and be able to give people operating licenses, yes, someone would have known this, at least.

The portfolio committee then appreciated the work done by the department in terms of revenue collection. We commend the department that in all the three quarters, it has exceptionally exceeded all their planned target of collecting revenue. This makes them number one department in terms of revenue collection in the province. We are happy that we are the portfolio committee of that department, Hon Mahasela.

In noting the good work done, we still are able to adequately discharge our oversight role. In section 206 of the Constitution of the Republic mandates that the department oversees the efficiency of the policing service. Our MEC, Hon Mathye has then also reported that the province has the best model and most functional community policing forums in the province. We have CPFs in all 104 police stations. We commend all

tasks of appointing CPFs.

Hon Mohale from Bolobedu spoke very well and represented all of us exceptionally, when she spoke on GBV and victim empowerment centres. This is quite important, we know as a province that GBV is a dark animal that we are supposed to deal with. Therefore, if we have victim empowerment in all our police stations, it would assist in making sure that the victims of gender-based violence get adequate places where they feel safe and sound to report their challenges.

I am taking from the words of the one of the steadfast, tenacious and indomitable minds produced by the movement of the African National Congress, Kedibone Lebea when she said, “Where there’s a plan, there is a hope for tomorrow.”

One of the thorny issues in our province is the airport that does not aid in job creation. Gateway Airports Authority Limited must attract tourists and increase the number of inbound and outbound flights. We have met with the board and the executive of the entity. They came to us and told us about the great plans they have and if all these plans have anything to go by, if all these plans are to be implemented, they will ensure the attainment of optimal level of sustainability of the entity at all material time.

In one the meetings that definitely... you know what I want to say, I will not continue but the person knows. GAAL came to us and told us about the appointments that they are planning to make, and also informed us how many people they have on the board, how many people they have on the executive committee and how many people they have at entry level and as always, the meeting continued without others’ presence.

Hon Maila, we will definitely fly to Tanzania, swiftly flying through the skies of Savanna City, you are here to show us where Savanna City is situated.
[INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Honourable chair, please address the Speaker.

MS LEBEA

Hon Speaker, thank you. The training of about 150 traffic police officers that honourable Members spoke about will be concluding in December 2024. What we are putting forward to the department is that they should allocate these traffic police trainees according to the level of accidents that happened in all districts. Because if we are to say they must allocate them equitably that’s not going to work. We know there are areas in the province that are inundated with lot of fatalities.

Therefore, we are urging the department to allocate in terms of the number of accidents that happen in different districts.

Before I conclude, let me send ululations to one of our own, Hon Esther Mokoele, who has been appointed as the chairperson of Scopa.

THE MEC FOR COGHSTA

...we always get the reports and consequence management in the Department of Transport and Community Safety has been meted with people who could not necessarily disclose.

There are issues about traffic lights, I may not go into the debate of Savanna City or Savanna Mall, but the fact of the matter is, the traffic lights are not necessarily the responsibility of the Department of Transport and Community Safety. It is the responsibility of the municipality which the MEC, Hon Makamu standing here is responsible for.

Be rest assured, I will be taking that matter to the municipality. The traffic lights at whether the Savanna City or Savanna Mall will be able to attend to. You can be rest assured that this Seventh Administration is hard at work. We have got MEC Rachoene on the issue of the roads. The D roads that we are busy regravelling, we make sure that they are better so that the buses that we talk about can be able to last longer.

You can't resolve the issues of buses when you are not also resolving the issue of roads. This Seventh Administration is hard at work to make sure that our roads are user-friendly. That's why we do have Dikgerekgere Wednesday. Hon Lebogo as well Hon Speaker, is aware of that and can see that it is working for the people of this province.

I may also want to touch on the issue raised about the permits and the honourable chair of the portfolio did clarify it. We don't issue permits to taxi owners like we do with buses. There is integrated transport plan that includes municipalities and us. So, we don't issue taxi permits like we are signing exercise books as former teachers, some of us.

We had to consider whether lines require such people, and the department is hard at work and making sure that people who qualify and followed the normal process do get the permits. The issue of the revenue of the GAAL, at the beginning people responded and showed how much we could be able to get above 100% target, but of course, Members are raising the issue of meeting targets in terms of visibility, operation of speed limits in the province.

But GAAL is being resuscitated with capable people. I can confirm on behalf of the MEC that we will submit to the portfolio committee the qualifications of the members of the board and the staff. We are hiring qualified people, and the board is functioning well. The Auditor-General mentioned that now the board is working very hard, so they perform their duties.

Let me take this opportunity to thank each and every Member who has raised the matters pertaining to the department. As the department we are going to make sure that we follow and support the ideas that have been given here, more especially those that are facts and truth, not those that are mentioned just to please the gallery.

I thank you, Hon Speaker. [APPLASUE]

THE SPEAKER

Hi khensile, Muchaviseki Makamu loko mi hetile ku hlamula hinkwaswo, na leswi mi nga swi tekela enhlokweni leswaku mi ta swi yisa emahlweni. Ha khensa. We are now proceeding to item 8.

8. RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

Responses to the following questions have been received and are published on the ATC dated Wednesday, 13 November 2024 and are therefore disposed of:

- 8.1 Q01-2024] For Written Reply: Honourable MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development.
- 8.2 Q07-2024] For Written Reply: Honourable MEC for Provincial Treasury.
- 8.3 Q09-2024] For Written Reply: Honourable MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development.
- 8.4 Q10-2024] For Written Reply: Honourable MEC for Health.
- 8.5 Q11-2024] For Written Reply: Honourable MEC for Transport and Community Safety.

Please consider these responses that have been disposed of as per the ATC as already been indicated.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are there any announcements, Deputy Speaker?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Greetings to the honourable Members.

THE SPEAKER

If you don't listen, you won't know where we are going to wash our hands, and please don't follow us. [LAUGHTER]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much Madam Speaker, I'm rising to make these following announcements. The first one is that the Limpopo Legislature has concluded the recruitment and appointment processes for the position of the Secretary of the Legislature. We are happy to announce that the Limpopo Legislature has appointed Dr Timothy Maake as the Secretary to the Limpopo Legislature with effect from 01 November 2024.

Dr Maake is from Greater Tzaneen Municipality. He also has a Doctorate in Public Administration. I will not go through all his qualifications. You will see them as time goes on. We will share them with you. We want to thank Dr Nkuna for his work as he was acting. We have worked very well with Dr Nkuna as Limpopo Legislature.

Honourable Members, let's welcome the appointment of Dr Maake as the Secretary to the Limpopo Legislature. His appointment will add value to the advancement of our constitutional mandate as an institution.

We further announce that the Programming Committee has taken a decision that from next week, Legislature Sittings will be held on Thursdays and Fridays until we rise for this seasonal year.

Due to various concerns raised by Members residing at Parliamentary Village, we will have extended internal arrangement meetings, immediately after the Sitting. Members of Internal Arrangement Committee, Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Oversight Mechanism, as well as all Members residing at Parliamentary Village are kindly requested to attend the extended internal arrangement meeting. MECs are going to join us with the HODs.

We also want to thank Dr Nkuna Isaac, as I have said, for his commitment to the work of the Limpopo Legislature during his tenure as the Acting Secretary to the Limpopo Legislature. Dr Nkuna is still an employee of the Limpopo Legislature, and he has committed to support the new Secretary.

We will have our lunch at the Committees Boardroom. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We will now take this opportunity to request Dr Timothy Maake, just to stand up so that the honourable Members can be able to see him.
[APPLAUSE]

Once more, congratulations and you are warmly welcomed. We will now proceed to item 10.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The House is adjourned to Thursday, 21 November 2024 at Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber at 10:00. Thank you.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
POLOKWANE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHAMBER
THURSDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

We shall now observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you very much, you may be seated. It has been agreed in the Programming Committee that items 2–5 be deferred to the next Sitting of the House.

[ITEMS 2–5 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

We shall now move to item 6.

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

Are there any tablings of committee reports, other reports, and papers? There are none.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1 First Reading of the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B03-2024]

Honourable MEC for Provincial Treasury, the floor is yours.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje; Deputy Speaker of the Legislature, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Hon Premier of our province, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; fellow honourable Members of the Executive Council; honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature; Chief Whip and Deputy Chair of Chairs; leaders of opposition parties; chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders and Khoisan in the province, Hosi Ngove; Director-General and HODs; all guests, in particular, the guest of honour, our Provincial Secretary of the ruling party, Mr Madadzhe, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It is an honour for me to stand before this august House to table the 2024/25 Provincial Adjustment Appropriation Bill and outline the preliminary 2025 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The path forward for the current administration calls for absolute fiscal discipline and steadfast commitment towards the implementation of the purpose for every allocation, with strict adherence to the set time frames. All this should be done with precision, honouring our duty to the people of Limpopo, who eagerly await the tangible realisation of a better life for all.

As I take you through this Budget adjustment, we are guided by the unified national vision set forth by His Excellency, President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, and further emphasised by our Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, stating clearly the three priorities of our government, which serve as the cornerstone of this adjustment Budget, i.e., driving inclusive growth and job creation, reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living, and building a capable, ethical, and developmental state.

It is, therefore, against these policy directives that this Budget adjustment is strategically directed to fund some of our critical commitments, prioritising infrastructure programmes to ensure our continued growth and leaving no one behind.

Hon Speaker, as highlighted by the Minister for Finance, Hon Enoch Godongwana, during the 2024 Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS), the International Monetary Fund projects that global growth will moderate from 3,3% in 2023 and remain steady at 3,2% in 2024 and 2025. Persistent geopolitical challenges and the impact of elevated sovereign debt pose significant risks to this global outlook. Additionally, structural constraints such as low productivity and aging populations continue to limit potential growth in many economies to which our economy is inextricably linked. When they sneeze, we catch a cold. That is the unfortunate unintended side effect of globalisation.

Inflation has shown signs of easing, creating opportunities for interest rate cuts in major economies, including our country. However, service inflation and lagged wage adjustments continue to disrupt the normalisation of interest rates. On the other hand, despite the downward revision of our country's 2024 growth forecast during the MTBPS, medium-term prospects have shown some improvement. The South African Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is projected to average 1,8% between 2025 and 2027. A tentative return to confidence is reflected in the rebound of financial markets, a stronger rand, and comparatively lower sovereign borrowing costs.

Hon Premier, you gave a clear mandate to ensure fair procurement processes in the province. Therefore, in an effort to address socioeconomic challenges facing the province while stimulating economic development, the province is implementing its Provincial Procurement Strategy in the procurement of goods and services and the implementation of infrastructure projects. To this end, an amount of R6,883 billion was spent in the first half of the financial year on various designated groups, which include, amongst others, black-owned, women-owned, youth-owned, people with disability-owned and military veteran-owned SMMEs and rural and township businesses.

To increase spending and achieve the strategy, the province is currently participating in the processes set by the National Treasury for the finalisation of the regulations for

the newly promulgated Public Procurement Act. These regulations will provide meaningful participation for those who were previously excluded and disadvantaged, as alluded to by the Minister for Finance during the 2024/25 Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement.

Given the mid-term reviews held with departments and the provincial infrastructure workshop conducted, the main appropriation for infrastructure is proposed to be adjusted upwards from R7,8 billion to R8,3 billion, which represents an increase of 6,2%. This upward adjustment is predominately allocated to the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, and the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure. The catch-up plans for each department and their implementing agencies have been finalised taking into consideration the additional funds and will be monitored by the Provincial Treasury in collaboration with the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure on a monthly basis.

It is of paramount importance to inform this august House that for this Budget adjustment period, no additional equitable share funding has been received by the province from the National Treasury. You can guess why. It is self-funded, which means our financial health is sound. Nevertheless, our provincial available funding sources for the 2024/25 financial year have been adjusted upwards by R547 million or 0,7 % from R83,255 billion to R83,797 billion, which comprises:

- An increase in conditional grants from R11,779 billion to R11,911 billion as a result of R132,249 million approved rollovers; and
- An increase in provincial own revenue of R410,298 million from R1,851 billion to R2,261 billion.

We are improving our revenue collection, but it is not yet enough. The Provincial Revenue Enhancement Strategy continues to yield positive results, thus the increase in provincial own revenue from the set target of R1,851 billion to R2,261 billion for the year under review, which represents an increase of R410,298 million or 22,2%. This is something to be celebrated, since we have an upward trajectory in revenue. Maybe one day we can do much better. The increase is mainly because of the improved collections on interest generated from favourable bank balances by Provincial Treasury; horse racing taxes by the Limpopo Gambling Board under the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism; and the once-off surrender of unspent funds by the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL). We will explain this, it does not form a contradiction as to how finances are unpacked.

I, therefore, present the 2024/25 Budget Adjustments per department as follows:

Vote 1: The Office of the Premier. The office's Budget is adjusted upward by R4,202 million from R506,194 million to R510,396 million. This followed a total surrender of R28,397 million, additional funding requirements of R31,804 million and equitable share rollovers of R795,000 from the previous financial year. There should be no confusion, because what we are talking about is the net effect, but the actuals, what was moved from where, etc., are the figures I have just indicated. All you have to do is celebrate that there is something positive. We are still under fiscal consolidation, where the language is about cutting. Whatever you get should be a cause for

celebration. The additional funding will mainly augment the budgets for provincial priorities, and these include R1,640 million for Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRAAS) and the Provincial Energy Strategy, while R3,499 million would be for Provincial ICT Infrastructure Assessment, and R1,193 million for the completion of the Compensation of Employees, Management Research Study and Gartner IT Infrastructure Services.

Vote 2: Provincial Legislature. The Legislature's Budget, as the main beneficiary, is adjusted upward by R98,959 million from R549,516 million to R648,475 million as follows:

- R47,651 million for transfers and subsidies, inclusive of compensation of employees due to an increase in the number of Members in the Legislature. This was unforeseen. During the time of preparation, nobody knew that there would be more Members. An adjustment is therefore about the unforeseen and unavoidable.
- R47,558 million as retention of revenue surpluses as per Section 12 of the Financial Management of Parliament Act of 2014; and
- R3,750 million is transferred from the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure for temporary accommodation for the 15 additional Members of the Legislature.

Honourable Members, you would agree with me that the Legislature is actually, in terms of the Constitution, responsible for being the voice of the people. People cannot come here; they must be reached from where they are, because every seat here represents the people. It is in this context that the upward adjustment is meant to ensure that it performs its constitutional duty, whereby if you look at the accountability chain, it is the people who voted and elected the Members of Parliament. This means they account directly to the people. Therefore, without specifying what should be done, it should be funded adequately to perform its constitutional mandate.

Vote 3: Education. The Budget also increases by R30,710 million from R40,029 billion to R40,060 billion. However, a total of R425 million of the department's Budget will be reprioritised within the Vote to fund R189,5 million additional allocation for Scholar Transport, to increase the coverage for the benefit of eligible learners. Furthermore, a total of R223,5 million has been reprioritised towards e-learning for procurement and distribution of ICT devices to schools and R12 million to fund the SETA (Sector Education and Training Authority) levy.

It also receives an equitable share rollover of funds from the 2023/24 financial year to this current year amounting to R24,469 million, R7,434 million of which would cater for capital payments and R17,035 million for the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative.

Furthermore, the department receives a conditional grant rollover of R6,241 million, R3,598 million which is for the National Schools Nutrition Grant. We are conscious that it must be done to avoid what we have experienced recently. A further R1,6 million is allocated towards the Education Infrastructure Grant, whereas R967 000 is for Learners with Profound Intellectual Disability, and R76,000 is allocated for the Early Childhood Development Grant.

These details would enable the portfolio committee that holds this department accountable, to know the specifics of the Budget and ask the right questions.

Vote 4: Agriculture and Rural Development. The department will receive additional funding of up to R63,489 million, increasing its total Budget from R1,782 billion to R1,846 billion. At the same time the department will surrender R9,6 million for the compensation of employees. To augment in-year pressures in the department an additional equitable share allocation of R47,402 million will be made to also address the in-year pressures. The details are contained in the Speech and other documents.

Vote 5: Provincial Treasury. The department's Budget decreases – we lead by example – by R24,952 million from R478,062 million to R453,110 million. This follows a total surrender of R27,135 million, which is made up of R22,442 million for the compensation of employees, and R3,670 million for goods and services. However, the department will receive rollovers from the previous financial year of R2,183 million for the payment of firewalls and ICT equipment. You would note that the department's Budget is equal to the revenue that we collect.

Vote 6: Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism. This department's Budget is adjusted downward by R55,933 million, from R1,866 billion to R1,810 billion. This adjustment will move either up or down, depending on circumstances, as it is an Adjustment Budget. The decrease is primarily due to a surrender of earmarked funding for special economic zones, amounting to R360 million, which will be reallocated in the 2025/26 financial year.

To clarify, what we are stating is that the net effect reflects the original starting point, but the actual movement, reprioritisation and reallocation will cause the Budget to shift in certain directions, either up or down. The full breakdown is contained in the Speech, which you will be furnished with.

Vote 7: Health. The department's Budget increases by R117,526 million from R24,639 billion to R24,757 billion. The department will reprioritise and reallocate R645 million within its Budget, and an additional R100 million from the equitable share is allocated to ease budget pressures on operational items. The pressures on contractual obligations and non-negotiable items that will be funded are as follows:

- R200,897 million for medicines;
- R204,118 million for medical supplies;
- R70,116 million for food supplies in hospitals;
- R32,987 million for fleet services;
- R101,1 million for property payments; and
- R135,782 million for other contractual obligations.

There should be no excuses for providing hospital services, honourable MEC, as we have made provision for this.

Vote 8: Transport and Community Safety. The department's Budget increases by R31,410 million, from R2,611 billion to R2,642 billion. The department receives additional funding amounting to R95,040 million to augment Budget pressures, which include:

- R20 million for the construction of Seshego and Thohoyandou K53 testing stations;
- R8 million for the construction costs at the Traffic Training Colleges;
- R2,5 million for the procurement of land for Bandelierkop Weighbridge;
- R15,251 million for fleet services;
- R29,014 million for property payments; and
- R20,275 million for other contractual obligations.

However, the department will surrender a total of R62,288 million from earmarked funds, including funding for the training college kitchen and canteen; traffic facility refurbishment, Thohoyandou Taxi Facility, Gateway Airports Authority Limited (GAAL) infrastructure projects, and the compensation of employees. These funds will be reallocated in the coming financial year.

Vote 9: Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure. The department's Budget increases by R402,984 million, from R5,272 billion to R5,675 billion. It will reprioritise and reallocate R99,344 million within the department, and an additional R431,055 million equitable share is allocated to the department. Of this, R372,217 million will be transferred to Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) to address road project pressures and supplement the construction cost of the Steelpoort steel bridge project, while R158,182 million will be allocated to ease Budget pressures on operational items, including:

- R79,815 million for construction fleet operational costs and maintenance (Dikgeregere);
- R11,307 million to complete the Letaba Hospital project;
- R11 million to supplement the procurement cost of an office building;
- R7,255 million for the refurbishment of the Shamavunga and Unigaza Buildings;
- R800 000 for the replacement of the Executive Authority's vehicles;
- R8 million for professional services for the construction of 15 houses for the 15 additional Members of the Legislature;
- R6 million for infrastructure projects at Parliamentary Village and the Premier's guest house; and
- R17,505 million for contractual obligations and operational costs.

Provision has also been made for municipal rates and taxes to ensure that the government does not owe municipalities, thereby enabling them to deliver their services. Furthermore, the department receives rollovers from the 2023/24 financial year to the 2024/25 financial year, including R23,598 million for equitable share, R30,052 million for the Road Maintenance Grant, and R90,854 million for the Welisizwe bridges project. The department will surrender R172,575 million for reallocation in the 2025/26 financial year, of which R125 million is for the construction of the ZCC St. Engenas Interchange project; R36,250 million is for the construction of 15 houses for Members of the Legislature, and R11,325 million for other construction projects. Earlier, we mentioned this in respect of the construction.

Vote 10: Sport, Arts and Culture. The department's Budget decreases by R73,095 million, from R827,099 million to R754,004 million. This follows a R100 million surrender to the Provincial Revenue Fund of earmarked funding for the construction of the provincial theatre, which will be reallocated in the 2025/26 financial year... [INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Apologies, honourable MEC. Can the Member who is struggling with a phone please be assisted. You may continue, honourable MEC.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

The department will receive additional equitable share funds of R15,600 million for contractual obligations, which include R10,8 million for the Autumn and Summer Games, R2 million for the maintenance of the Schoemansdal Museum, and R2,8 million for other operational costs.

Vote 11: CoGHSTA. The department's Budget increases by R213,535 million, from R2,473 billion to R2,687 billion. The additional equitable share resources include:

- R50 million for human settlement infrastructure projects;
- A once-off allocation of R50 million to support the Section 139 intervention at Thabazimbi Municipality;
- R15 million for legal fees; and
- R3,631 million for other contractual obligations.

The department will receive equitable share rollovers from the previous financial year to the current financial year, amounting to R52,824 million, for the following:

- Payment of accruals for motor vehicles purchased for traditional leaders, valued at R35,515 million;
- R12,511 million to fund the construction of traditional council offices; and
- R4,978 million for ICT equipment.

The department will also receive conditional grant rollovers totalling R59,751 million for the Informal Settlement Partnership Grant and the Human Settlement Development Grant. However, it will surrender an amount of R17,71 million in earmarked funds for reallocation in the 2025/26 financial year.

These figures, which fluctuate, would be best understood during the portfolio committee sessions, where everything will be unpacked, including how the net value was derived and how the other amounts were reconciled.

Vote 12: Social Development. This department's Budget will increase by R27 million, from R2,077 billion to R2,103 billion, mainly to ease spending pressures on contractual obligations.

Hon Speaker, the net effect of all these adjustments is that the provincial allocation to departments and public entities is adjusted upwards by R835,835 million, from R83,111 billion to R83,946 billion.

It is important to highlight that these adjustments followed a rigorous assessment of the expenditure performance, provincial priorities, implementation progress, and in-year emerging pressures.

The additional resources are, therefore, allocated to address once-off spending pressures for the current financial year, as these funds may not be available over the 2025 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), due to the constrained fiscal environment. It remains the responsibility of each department and public entity to ensure that recurring costs are funded in the 2025 MTEF within the allocated baseline to improve measure to realise efficiency gains.

I will now share with this august House the 2025 MTEF, which sees the conclusion of the fiscal consolidation strategy announced and implemented by the National Treasury in the 2020 Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS). While the first two financial years of the 2025 MTEF period remain severely affected by fiscal consolidation, there is no further fiscal consolidation implemented during the outer year.

Over the 2025 MTEF period, the provincial equitable share allocation has been increased as follows:

- R450,163 million in the 2025/26 financial year;
- R737,422 million in the 2026/27 financial year; and
- R1,287 billion in the outer year, as a result of new data updates in the equitable share formula.

People have been complaining about the formula, but it has now been adjusted in a way that favours us. Despite, no Budget increases, we still benefit from these updates because our province's population has increased slightly, which is why we benefit from these updates in the equitable share formula.

No additional allocation for wage-carry through costs has been provided in all departments, including Education, and Health.

As a result of the above adjustments, the provincial equitable share increases from R69,625 billion in the 2024/25 financial year, to R73,375 billion in the 2025/26 financial year, R77,219 billion in the 2026/27 financial year; and R81,203 billion in the 2027/28 financial year.

Including conditional grants and provincial own revenue, total receipts available to the province will be R86,787 billion in the 2025/26 financial year, increasing to R90,839 billion in the 2026/27 financial year and to R94,922 billion in the 2027/28 financial year.

This is still below the pledge made at the recent investment conference, but it is encouraging to see an upward movement under these very difficult circumstances.

In support of the commitments of the Seventh Administration, a total of R7,282 billion has been allocated and ringfenced for provincial priorities over the 2025 MTEF period.

As I conclude, the road ahead may be tough, but our unwavering commitment to improving the lives of our people will guide us forward. I reiterate the words of the Hon Premier of Limpopo, Dr Phophi Ramathuba: “We dare not fail the people of Limpopo.”

Please allow me to commend my fellow Members of the Provincial Legislature in their respective portfolio committees for their swift consideration and approval of the Budget Votes shortly after the transition from the Sixth to the Seventh Administration.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to our Premier for her exceptional stewardship and guidance, as well as the Executive Council Budget Committee and the entire EXCO for their unwavering support. It would be remiss of me not to not acknowledge the important role played by the Portfolio Committee on Finance in providing robust oversight of our finances, which has contributed significantly to our current position.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Team Limpopo Provincial Treasury, led by the HOD, Gavin Pratt, for their prudence and dedication, which are evidently very effective.

I herewith table before this august House the following documents:

- The Limpopo Adjustments Appropriation Bill, 2024;
- The Mid-Term Provincial Budget Overview 2024;
- Adjustment Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure 2024;
- The Adjustment Budget Speech, 2024; and
- Relevant *Gazettes*.

Ndo livhuwa. Ke a leboga. Ndza khensa [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Ro livhuwa, MEC Mahoi. The Bill and all other relevant documents are referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration and report back to the House, in accordance with Rule 165(2).

7.2 Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Health

I now call on the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health, Hon Malebana, to table the report.

DR MALEBANA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity. Hon Speaker; Hon Premier; honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature; Members of the Provincial Executive Council; distinguished guests, particularly the Provincial Secretary of the African National Congress, Mr Madadzhe; ladies and gentlemen, I rise to table the report of the Portfolio Committee on Health for the 2022/23 Annual Report of the Department of Health, for consideration and adoption. The report provides progress

on achieving strategic objectives, challenges faced, and plans for future improvement. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Malebana. I shall now call for a seconder. Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. I hereby second the honourable chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mathe. We shall now call on Hon Thabo Mabotja to open the debate on the tabled report.

MR MABOTJA

Madam Speaker; Madam Deputy Speaker; Chief Whip and Whippers; Members of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature; Hon Premier; Members of the Executive Council; ladies and gentlemen; distinguished guests; and Provincial Secretary of the ANC, Mr Madadzhe, good morning.

Thank you for this opportunity to address this august Sitting of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature on the consideration and adoption of the report of the Portfolio Committee on Health on the 2023/24 Annual Report. As I do this, I would like to take this august House down memory lane and remind honourable Members that the Department of Health in our province is housed at a revolutionary building called Fidel Castro Ruz House, located at 18 College Street, Polokwane. The ceremony to name the building was held in May 2016.

This event formed part of the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of South Africa-Cuba bilateral cooperation. During the ceremony, Cuba made a commitment to support the University of Limpopo's Medical School, which has since produced several medical doctors, and continues to train more, including registrars. Fidel Castro, the former President of Cuba, after whom the building is named, espoused the concept of Primary Healthcare (PHC), through which Cuba became a success story with few parallels in the field of healthcare.

During this occasion, eight years ago, the building that houses Emergency Medical Services of the department was also named after the freedom fighter, Dr Ernesto Che Guevara. "Che," as he was popularly known, advocated for social medicine. He believed that the best way to deprivatise healthcare was to put it in the hands of the people. I believe that, in as much as we are advocating for the NHI, we would be taking healthcare into the hands of the people. The sooner we implement it, honourable MEC, the better.

The ANC, since its establishment and ascension into power, has consistently advocated for the provision of universal, free, and quality healthcare for all its people, in accordance with section 27 of the Constitution. This model prioritises the concept of Primary Healthcare, as championed by Fidel Castro and his comrade, Che Guevara. It was by mistake that, in 2016, the department, under the stewardship of the former MEC and current Premier, Dr Ramathuba, chose to name the building after these outstanding and distinguished community health workers. As you remember, Cde Che Guevara was a medical practitioner, so it is not by accident that the buildings were named after them.

Today, the department has established Ward-Based Primary Healthcare Outreach Teams (WBPHCOT). Through these teams, the ANC has fulfilled the dream of Che Guevara of putting healthcare in the hands of the people. These teams, supported by other categories of health professionals, have successfully integrated community health workers and communities, forming a bridge between the communities and healthcare provision within our facilities. They are a testimony to our long-held belief that better health outcomes depend on the collective will and ability to build and sustain relationships across all sectors of society.

It is through these teams that we bring together other government departments, development partners, institutions of higher learning, research institutions, civil society organisations, organised labour, hospital boards and health councils, our organs of people's power, that we can launch an onslaught against the health maleficence that continues to plague our people, employing the primary healthcare approach.

The approach, whose backbone is health promotion, seeks to empower, educate, and raise awareness among our people about HIV and Aids, STIs, TB control and prevention, mother-to-child transmission, women's health and nutrition, and disease prevention and control.

This aligns with the ANC's 2024 election manifesto. Ward-Based Primary Healthcare Outreach Teams are now confronted with the rise of a demon in the form of foodborne diseases and deaths, which have reached alarming proportions among school children.

Nkhensani District Hospital recently reported 92 cases of learners who were treated at the hospital's casualty department due to alleged food poisoning at Dzumeri Primary School. Eleven of these children were admitted for further observation, while the rest were assessed and discharged with medication.

We are pleased that the eleven learners have also been discharged. This is why we are making a call to encourage our community members not to register spaza shops on behalf of illegal foreigners. [APPLAUSE] This scourge can be defeated if we coordinate all our efforts and energies and work together through multi-disciplinary Ward-Based Healthcare Outreach Teams. We must broaden the membership of these teams and invite the South African Police Service, municipalities and regulatory bodies to address these incidents. Our outreach programme must focus on proper food storage, the availability of hand and dishwashing facilities, and ensuring that food outlets are registered and comply with the minimum health regulations and standards.

History has shown that the people are their own liberators. The President, addressing the nation on 15 November about a matter that has deeply saddened and distressed our country, said: “We all have a duty as a state, as society, as parents and families, working together to protect those amongst us who are vulnerable and overcome great difficulty.”

Our efforts to deliver quality healthcare to our people will not be possible if we do not recruit and train healthcare personnel to deliver these services. We need to increase the number of professional nurses, operational managers, and specialists in our healthcare facilities and clinics to strengthen and deliver quality primary healthcare. The ANC has committed itself to move decisively towards the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI). This requires proper health infrastructure, skilled and knowledgeable personnel, and a single electronic health record.

What we have observed as a committee is that the state is being overburdened by medicolegal claims, where there is a collusion between some lawyers and some patients. To some extent, a patient steals a file, which then compels the department to produce the file, even though they know it has been stolen. When the department is unable to produce that file, it becomes legally liable.

We are, therefore, calling upon you, MEC, to ensure that we move swiftly towards implementing the electronic healthcare system and reduce these medicolegal cases. We cannot tolerate instances of a high vacancy rate, especially within the District Health Services programme, whose subprogrammes include Primary Healthcare Services, HIV and Aids, STI, mother-to-child transmission, women’s health and nutrition, and disease prevention and control. All these programmes are at the core of our healthcare system and should be given the requisite support to ensure that we improve and deliver quality healthcare for all.

In conclusion, honourable MEC, we are making a final call to ensure that the vacancy rate within the department is addressed and reduced, as we are providing an essential service.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mabotja. I shall now call upon Hon Andre Moss for his debate.

MR MOSS

Hon Speaker, Hon Premier, esteemed Members of the Executive Council, leaders of opposition parties, Members of this honourable House and guests, good morning.

The department utilised 99,6% of its Budget for the 2022/23 fiscal year, resulting in an unspent balance of R103 million. The underexpenditure can be attributed to several factors, including delays in the delivery of infant warmers and incubators by the service providers. It is imperative that the department imposes penalties on these service providers when they fail to adhere to their contractual obligations.

There cannot be delays when we have babies waiting for incubators that they desperately need. A delay was also experienced in the delivery of MRI machines, which are urgently required by our province. Delays were also experienced in the delivery of ultrasound machines, anaesthetic machines, electrical surgical drills, ventilators, and theatre ceiling lamps, as well as the completion of fence installations at various healthcare facilities around the province.

The department reported an underspending of the conditional grant by R32,376 million. On the National Health Insurance Grant, I had the understanding that the NHI held significant importance for the department. However, their actions suggest a lack of seriousness regarding this matter. Insufficient and inadequate measures were implemented to avert irregular expenditure totalling R2,238 billion. The primary factors contributing to this figure included a security tender valued at R176 million, a maintenance contract amounting to R595 million, and a grocery contract worth R45 million. The AG indicated that the department violated the five fundamental principles of procurement: equity, fairness, cost-effectiveness, transparency, and competitiveness. The department needs to organise its operations and adhere to the relevant laws and regulations.

The overall performance for the 2022/23 financial year showed that 60 targets were set and only 30 were achieved. This department is not operating in a manner that meets the expectations of the residents of Limpopo province.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Andre Moss. I shall now call on Hon Evelyn Wilson to furnish the House with her debate.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Deputy Speaker. If ever there was a disaster looming with regard to the wellbeing of our citizens, it is definitely in the Department of Health. The Department of Health is in ICU, with the entire focus being on managing one crisis after the other. Simply put, it is on life support with little chance of recovery.

With a damning report from the AG and a very clear lack of correlation between the departmental reports and those that the AG is investigating, it would also appear that there is either a total lack of honesty in the departmental reports, or some sections are no longer on life support, but are already brain dead.

The most crucial management areas, i.e., Revenue and Asset Management, as well as Strategic Planning and Performance, have been deemed noncompliant by the AG. Why is this the case? Once again, we are jeopardising the lives of the men, women and children in Limpopo, and the department cannot even get the most basics right. It is no surprise that this department is burdened with R9,9 billion in medicolegal claims, which does not even account for the astronomical costs of the legal gurus who are supposed to contest these claims.

Seshego Hospital has lost cases amounting to R34,5 million, an expense that was not budgeted for, but which must still be paid. There is no doubt that this has created a shortage of funds to keep the operations of this hospital running smoothly.

Without the necessary funds, there will be no money for equipment or tools of trade, and the facility will struggle to staff adequately. This is just one of the seven facilities facing the same predicament due to medicolegal claims. It is nothing short of a miracle that we are not confronted with even more medicolegal claims.

Thirty-nine percent of dentist vacancies are not filled. There is a 73% vacancy rate for specialists, a 50% vacancy rate in health professionals, and a 70,7% vacancy rate for support personnel. Six hundred and eighty-four staff members in managerial positions in the Department of Health are acting. It is one circus, with too many actors and no one being held accountable.

Some acting managers have been in their positions for five years or more, and hospital CEOs have been acting far beyond the prescribed period according to the Labour Act.

Let's be clear: when you do not operate within the boundaries of an Act, you are likely to face criminal charges. Perhaps the time is now. The Department of Health accumulated a staggering R1,3 billion in irregular expenditure. Why? Tender processes were not followed for grocery, security, and maintenance tenders. When tender processes are not followed properly, red lights and alarms should go off. Heads should be rolling already. Someone must be held accountable, surely. There are 6,579 assets worth R250,2 million under investigation. The department says its asset registers are almost up to date. The AG, however, disagrees.

We know that 72 critical radiology machines alone do not meet compliance standards. The AG has highlighted huge internal control deficiencies within the department, stating that there is no system in place to identify or prevent duplicate or overpayments to suppliers. Really?

There is a request to write off R108 million in outstanding patient fees. With no internal controls, who can say whether these moneys are actually accounted for or not? Clearly, the department would not know.

In conclusion, the Department of Health's primary focus should be to deliver quality health services to the people of Limpopo. However, a recent oversight tour by the department's portfolio committee shows that we are failing. If the primary focus is health and delivering quality services to our people, how could R1 billion, or R1 million per day, be spent on Digital Veritas to scan and copy files? Not one cent of that expenditure contributed to the upliftment of health. Not one. Not one medicine, not one piece of valuable equipment, not one nurse, dentist or porter. Not one cent of that R1 million went towards desperately needed maintenance projects or equipment. It is painfully clear that the Department of Health has forgotten its mandate and priorities, doing so at the expense of lives, good health and the wellbeing of the people it is supposed to protect.

Let's be this clear: all lives matter and putting people's health and lives at risk in this fashion is simply not acceptable.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ro livhuwa, Hon Wilson. Our next speaker is Hon Baloyi. You may proceed.

MR BALOYI

Hon Speaker, Hon Premier, all Members and our guests. I see Mr Madadzhe, dzi vona ndhavezitha Madadzhe a mi rhumisangi mi te ndzi ya hi n'wexe ndzi ya swi vona kahle ku a va endli xihoxo eka mpimanyeto this Budget Speech.

Hon Speaker, the department spent about 99,6% of its 2022/23 overall Budget Adjustment Appropriation compared to 97,5% spent in the 2021/22 financial year. The EFF is disappointed in the underexpenditure in programmes 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8, which continues to define the leadership and governance character of the department.

Furthermore, we are concerned that despite having spent 99,6% of the Budget, R103 million remained unspent. Underexpenditure is the direct cause of the lack of service delivery and unemployment, and therefore, it must be nipped in the bud. Officials who did not spend money when they were supposed to must be held accountable and dismissed immediately.

The Auditor-General reported that the department obtained an unqualified audit opinion due to its inability to obtain sufficient, appropriate audit evidence regarding contingencies and reliability. Liabilities of R99,228 billion were raised against the department, as disclosed in the financial statement. The department does not have a clear and coherent plan to reduce contingent liabilities, which include, among others, botched operations undertaken by incompetent doctors. Without proper consequence management, this amount will continue to soar each financial year.

Underspensing on the conditional grant of R32,376 million of the National Health Insurance Grant, as disclosed in the financial statement, is profoundly worrying. As indicated earlier, underspending in this government is a cancer that needs chemotherapy, radiation and surgery to be completely eradicated. When money is allocated to the Social Upliftment Programme and is not spent, someone must be held accountable for negligence.

Furthermore, during the period under review, financial statements were not prepared in accordance with the prescribed financial frameworks and supported by full and proper records, as required by section 4(1)(b) of the PFMA.

This happened even though the department has a financial division which should be assisting in preparing the financial statements to the satisfaction of the auditors. It seems that when it rains, it pours in the department. It is interesting to note that revenue management processes were not implemented for the identification,

collection and recording of revenue. There was no evidence that appropriate steps were taken to collect all moneys owed.

Officials in the department are sleeping on the job while continuing to earn salaries without accountability. No one is cracking the whip to ensure that instances of incompetence are minimised and completely eradicated.

It is deeply disappointing that effective and appropriate steps were not taken to prevent irregular expenditure of R2 billion. The main contributors to this irregular expenditure included a security tender amounting to R176 million, maintenance contracts totalling R595 million, and grocery contracts worth R45 million.

There is a general culture of noncompliance with the Treasury Regulations and the PFMA on procurement and contract management when awarding tenders in this department. This appears to be a deliberate move to open opportunities for corruption and large-scale looting of state resources.

The other challenge is that the department takes an inordinate amount of time to investigate cases. As of the time of reporting, there were cases dating as far back as 2012 that were still not finalised. Is there any sound reason for failing to investigate and finalise cases that have been pending for so long? Who is being protected, and at what cost?

Surely, this is unacceptable. What plans does the department have to recover money from officials who have resigned or retired?

With regard to the District Health Service, the department achieved 15 targets but failed to achieve the remaining 15 of the 30 targets set for the year under review. It should be made clear to this House that the department lacks the capacity to achieve its goals.

Furthermore, it is regrettable that only 109, or 23%, of the 482 primary healthcare facilities attained and maintained their Ideal Clinic status as of 31 March 2023.

This means that the majority of our clinics are unable to provide primary healthcare to our people. The department reported that it had failed to meet its targets for response times in both urban and rural areas due to the unavailability and operational challenges of EMS vehicles.

For urban response, there was a drop in the achieved response time of 4,8% against the target of 4,6%, compared to 52,5% achieved in the 2021/22 financial year. Similarly, the rural response target was set at 70%, but only 5,9% was achieved in the financial year under review.

The vacancy rate for paramedics stood at 37,9%. While 27 posts were filled out of the 122 approved positions, ambulances continue to be purchased annually. This does not make business or service delivery sense.

Lastly, the department reportedly faced medicolegal claims amounting to R7 billion. These claims are staggering, particularly when one considers that money could have been redirected towards service delivery.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Baloyi. We shall now call Dr Malebana, who is closing the debate on this report.

DR MALEBANA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. I would like to acknowledge the Hon Speaker of this House; the esteemed Premier; honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature; Members of the Executive Council and our distinguished guests, including the Provincial Secretary of the African National Congress; ladies and gentlemen.

I rise today to present the Portfolio Committee on Health report regarding the 2022/23 Annual Report of the Department of Health.

Our ANC healthcare policy is anchored on the concept of primary healthcare, which is a patient-centric approach delivered through clinics. These institutions are vital to our 2024 national and general election manifesto, in which we committed to expand the Ideal Clinic programme to improve healthcare quality.

An Ideal Clinic embodies elements such as good infrastructure, adequate staff, available medicine, and effective administrative processes. These elements are crucial and serve as a prerequisite for the National Health Insurance, which we aim to implement swiftly.

A large number of healthcare facilities face challenges in meeting health standards, including their readiness to implement the National Health Insurance. These challenges include issues identified in some hospitals, as measured by the Office of Health Standards Compliance during regular assessments. However, we commend the department's collaboration with the private sector in expanding access to quality healthcare. Partnerships with private hospitals, medical specialists and healthcare workers have yielded positive results.

The Portfolio Committee on Health conducted an unannounced visit to a number of health facilities in the province. The situation observed paints a picture of patriots deeply committed to their work. Despite the challenges briefly mentioned, the reality is that, thanks to the dedication of health practitioners in the field, we are not near an ICU situation, as described by my colleague.

The following challenges were highlighted by the Auditor-General, which we confirmed during our visits to several facilities:

- A shortage of staff, both professional and support personnel; and

- A significant number of employees acting in positions, rather than being permanently appointed.

The Auditor-General also raised issues related to asset management: revenue collection, particular concerning one state agency owing a substantial amount to the department; performance information; contract management; and infrastructure maintenance.

For all these issues, the department has plans to address them and is actively working on solutions. However, the area requiring the intervention of other stakeholders is human resources, which demands particular attention. The department remains committed to addressing these challenges and improving healthcare services.

Despite these challenges, there are success stories highlighted in this Annual Report. These include improved patient satisfaction with medicine availability, increased life expectancy for both females and males, reduced HIV and Aids-related deaths, and decreased child mortality rates. The 90-90-90 strategy, sponsored by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and Aids, has been instrumental in achieving these milestones. We must continue to educate the youth about HIV and Aids prevention and contraceptive methods. Additionally, efforts must be strengthened to trace patients who have interrupted their treatment to save lives.

With regard to allegations of mistreatment at Seshego Hospital, we welcome the department's prompt response to the matter and urge against exploiting the plight of our people and their human rights for political gain.

In conclusion, while acknowledging the existing challenges, we have made significant progress. The portfolio committee endorses the 2023 Annual Report, recognising the department's efforts and commitment to improvement. Based on our interactions with the department, we are optimistic that it is possible to overcome the current challenges.

The department must also be aware that the allocations provided for all programmes, particularly for the NHI, must be spent effectively to secure additional funding. We also acknowledge the unqualified report obtained by the department, and I must reiterate that the employees at various service points, despite staff shortages, are certainly not sleeping on duty. Anyone can visit these facilities and recognise the transparency regarding operations. This transparency allows us to identify and articulate the existing problems, which we can resolve with commitment from all stakeholders as we go forward.

We also commend the EMS, which is performing admirably, although there are certain challenges regarding infrastructure. In exceptional cases, response times may not always meet targets, but this should not be viewed as a consistent issue. These patriots and employees are doing an excellent job, and we want to dedicate this debate and report to all Department of Health employees. We urge them to continue their excellent work and represent us well. We also call on the MEC to address these challenges so that they can be resolved.

Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Malebana. Honourable MEC, you will respond after the debates on the next item.

7.3 Consideration and Adoption of the Reports of the Portfolio Committee on Health

Dr Malebana, you may proceed. You shall remain seated until we have considered all three reports.

DR MALEBANA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I rise to table the following report for consideration by the House: the 2023/24 First Quarter Report for the Department of Health.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thanks, chair. Do we have a seconder? Hon Che Selane, you are recognised.

DR SELANE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I wish to address a concerning tendency of undermining my profession. It is important to note that the only individuals with doctoral qualifications here in the ANC are those holding a PhD. Therefore, when addressing me, you must address me professionally as Dr Che Selane. Unlike Hon Mabotja, who holds a master's degree, I hold a PhD. It is crucial that I be addressed as Dr Che Selane going forward so that this oversight does not recur.

I rise to second Dr Malebana's motion. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Dr Selane, for seconding Dr Malebana. We shall now proceed to the Second Quarter Report. Over to you, Dr Malebana.

DR MALEBANA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I rise once again to table for consideration and adoption, the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report for the Department of Health. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Malebana. Do we have any seconder? Hon Nkonyana, you are recognised.

MR NKONYANA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I second the tabling of the Second Quarter Report as presented by the chairperson of the committee. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Hon Malebana, over to you once more. We are all honourable Members in this House.

DR MALEBANA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I rise again to table for consideration and adoption, the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report for the Department of Health. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Malebana. Do we have any seconder? Hon Netshifhefhe, you are recognised.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. I rise the second the tabling of the report as presented by the chairperson of the portfolio committee. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Netshifhefhe. I shall now call upon Hon Abednigo Nkonyana to open the debate.

MR NKONYANA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker of the House; Whippers led by the Deputy Chief Whip; Members of the Provincial Legislature; Leader of Government Business; Members of the Executive Council; Provincial Secretary of the ANC, Mr Madadzhe; distinguished guests in the gallery; ladies and gentlemen. Dumelang.

It is with great pleasure that I participate in this debate on the performance of the Department of Health during the first three quarters of the 2023/24 financial year. This is indeed a rare opportunity for me to contribute my energy towards the realisation of the goal of universal primary healthcare for all in our lifetime, a goal I do not take for granted. We applaud the leadership of the Department of Health in our province for their perseverance and determination to deliver on this noble cause to our people.

A person who refuses to listen to others, who consistently undermines those around him, cannot never lead a revolution by the people. We have observed how those once considered novices have continued to lead, and our beloved novices have risen to the occasion. I commend the Portfolio Committee on Health, led by Dr Malebana, for their commitment to improving the healthcare system in the province. I also extend my commendations to the MEC for Health, Ms Dieketseng Mashego, for her steadfast commitment to the work of the portfolio committee. The MEC and the entire team consistently avail themselves whenever required by the portfolio committee, and this

dedication deserves to be acknowledged, as it makes our work much easier. Hon Mashego, ba re ke Mofokeng wa Podungwane; re a reta Phaahla.

The ANC-led Seventh Administration is moving mountains to ensure that the people who gave us a 74% mandate are reaping the fruits of their confidence in us. The people of Limpopo knew that on my left there would be loneliness, less attendance of all Legislature programmes, including in committees, especially by the red ones led by a fellow who suffers from an inferiority complex, who climbs on bakkies to insult women. Another one in blue comes once during our last oversight visit, and as usual, she quickly rushed to Wikipedia for some statistics and constructed a debate against a well-researched report.

It now shows that the ANC is alone here. You check the benches, you check capacity, you check contribution, and you realise that you can't be beaten by people who have a caucus without a doctor.

A closer look into the reports points to the department poised to deliver on the 2024 election manifesto's promise of quality healthcare for all, by implementing the NHI to reduce the cost of medical care and to ensure that healthcare is available to all, especially the poor.

The NHI is a health financing system that is aimed at achieving equity between the rich, interestingly, and the poor. The health financing system is just one of the six building blocks of the pillars of their system. There seems to be a consensus in society on the five pillars, which are leadership and governance, access to essential medicine and other commodities, health workforce, health information systems, and health service delivery.

The health financing system has sparked rigorous and often infuriating debates within society, especially among the well-to-do and the rich. In their view, sharing meagre resources with the most vulnerable in society is taboo. Advantageously for the poor, the ANC has always taken sides with them. Some still believe that private hospitals must remain for the rich, whereas dilapidated and old buildings, perceived to be surgeries in villages, belong to the poor. Even under this fierce resistance and significant pushback from the rich and privileged, predominantly found in one organisation represented here, we will always side with the poor.

It is our intention and resolve to reverse the skewed distribution of resources within the healthcare financing system. This system punishes the poor. In implementing this health financing system that the NHI represents, we will seek, build, and strengthen relations, and collaborate with various stakeholders within the health sector to leverage their technology and expertise. We recognise that there are challenges that the department is facing in its quest to deliver adequate healthcare for all, with the inadequate health workforce or human resources being a key issue.

As of the end of the first quarter, the vacancy rate was exceedingly higher than the acceptable 10% norm. No strides were made by the department to employ people with disability within the senior management services level. The ANC's 2024 election manifesto advocates for the representation of people with disability in the upper echelons of both the public and private sectors.

We applaud the department, however, for achieving 46% gender parity within the SMS. Out of a total of 63 SMS positions, 29 are occupied by females. Malibongwe! This is in line with the ANC's policy of continuously ensuring that Black people, women, and other vulnerable groups are represented in both public and private sectors, in the professional and artisanal sectors, towards the growth of a vibrant nonracial and nonsexist middle strata. Critical to national development, we must, as a matter of urgency, fill all the vacant and funded posts within the health sector, with special attention being paid to those professional nurses and operational posts. This category of employees is critical for the success of the full implementation of the NHI.

Our recruitment strategy should always seek to build an advanced and capable professional developmental state, bound by the echoed ethos and principles of Batho Pele that are at the centre of the public service. The government has introduced the national anti-fraud and corruption strategy, which is anchored on five key priorities. These are the promotion of whistleblowing, professionalisation of employees, enhancing good governance, oversight and accountability, improving integrity, transparency and credibility for the procurement system, as well as strengthening the resources of the anti-corruption unit.

It is encouraging that the department is doing well in this area: by having established the Financial Misconduct Board and Ethics Committee. These are anti-fraud and corruption bodies that must be supported and strengthened in line with the key priorities of the strategy. Worthy of praise is the fact that all SMS members in the department have presented their disclosures in terms of the public service revolution. All these small steps cumulatively and collectively advance the ANC's resolve to tackle corruption, encourage public accountability, and implement severe consequence management for corrupt activities in the public and private sectors.

I wish to remind honourable Members that the ANC's 2024 election manifesto calls upon all of us to prioritise job creation, invest in infrastructure development, tackle the high cost of living, invest in people, defend democracy, and advance freedom. The health sector is not immune from implementing all these priorities.

Our programmes are in many ways geared towards the attainment of this goal. We must find more ways and more creative means to ensure the realisation of this dream.

As I conclude, regarding the issue of quoting and unquoting people, I will leave it for today.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Nkonyana. The quoting is interesting. We shall now call upon Hon Andre Moss to share his debate with the House.

MR MOSS

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hon Premier, esteemed Members of the Executive Council, leaders of opposition parties, Members of the House, and guests, good morning once more.

Kgoro e swanetše go etiša pele bophelo bjo bobotse bja badudi ba profense ya rena, ka ge ga bjale ba hlaelelwa ke ditireleo tša motheo. Sepetlele sa Tshilidzini ga bjale se hloka metšhene ya go hlatswa diaparo yeo e šomago, e le go seemo se se tšwelago pele go tloga mola protšeke ya go hlatswa diaparo e thoma ka 2018. Kgoro e thwetše batho bao ba be go ba se na maswanedi a a lekanego go phethagatša... [INTERJECTION]

MR NKONYANA

Deputy Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

What is the order, Hon Nkonyana?

MR NKONYANA

Can our language not be ambushed like this. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. You may proceed, Hon Moss; we can hear you.

MR MOSS

Thank you, Madam Speaker... mošomo wo ka bokgoni.

Boonop vereis die loodgieters- en dreineringsstelsels volledige rekonstruksie as gevolg van die onbehoorlike belyning van die pype, wat verdere kostes vir die belastingbetaler sal meebring en verhoed kan word. Die departement het nie sy teiken met betrekking tot die pasiëntervaring in terme van die sorg-tevredenheidskoers gedurende die tweede kwartaal bereik nie. Daar is opgemerk dat die primêre fokusareas die beskikbaarheid van medikasie, toegang tot gesondheidsdienste, netheid en die duur van die wagtye ingesluit het... [INTERJECTION]

DR SELANE

Order, Hon Speaker!

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

You are recognised, Dr Selane.

DR SELANE

Hon Speaker, we can't continue allowing the honourable Member to talk to himself without us understanding what he's saying. Can we have an interpreter. We can't understand what he is saying. Can we please be assisted with an interpreter.

MR MATHE

On a point of order, Hon Speaker!

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

You are recognised, Hon Mathe.

MR MATHE

There is no logical and normal human being who would want to defend what Hon Wilson just said. If she wants to play that game, we are much more advanced. We will play her, and we will defeat her. She must know that if she is not going to withdraw, then it will become the norm in how we relate with her. She will speak there, and we will show her nonsense also. And I withdraw that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mathe. Thank you for withdrawing what you said. Hon Wilson, may you please withdraw. Hon Smalle, I don't think there are any other issues, so Hon Moss can continue. Hon Wilson, thank you.

MS WILSON

Deputy Speaker, no I will not withdraw, I come from the National Assembly. We may even use that word in that spectrum. It is quite parliamentary, and I will not withdraw. Thank you.

DR SELANE

Hon Speaker! Hon Speaker!

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

You are recognised, honourable Member.

MR MABOTJA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. We are quite taken aback by Hon Wilson's refusal to withdraw the word "nonsense". She is making an allegation that this word is parliamentary. Therefore, we request, Hon Deputy Speaker, that you please refer this matter to the Rules Committee. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Hon Wilson, Rule 95 speaks about unparliamentary language.

Your bodily gesture and the way you have said “nonsense”, are unparliamentary.

MS WILSON

I will withdraw the word “nonsense”, Deputy Speaker, however...[INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

No, there is no “however”. You must say “I withdraw” and that's it. Thank you very much, Hon Wilson. She has withdrawn. Thank you very much. You may finish your debate, Hon Moss. Please, can we have the earphones on for the interpreters.

Secretary, can we ensure that the interpreters are interpreting while Hon Moss is debating. Thank you. Honourable Members, she has withdrawn. Now we will proceed with the House.

Yes, she has withdrawn. I have rejected her “however”. We will proceed. Thank you very much, Hon Moss, please continue.

MR MOSS

Hon Speaker, tertiary hospitals typically possess sophisticated medical technology aimed at improving the delivery of prompt, thorough and specialised healthcare services. Nevertheless, the department indicated significant underutilisation of funds amounting to 30,5%, or R29,420 million, for machinery and equipment during the second quarter. A similar trend was observed in the first quarter, where 6,9% of the Budget was underspent.

The residents of our province are entitled to receive the highest quality of healthcare services, and it is imperative that actions be taken against those responsible for the lack of essential machines and equipment in our hospitals, which are crucial for patient care.

The Thohoyandou Nursing College faces numerous challenges, one of which is the absence of a driver to facilitate the transportation of students to clinical sites for their practical training. The computer lab was inadequately furnished, lacking both computers and laptops, as well as access to the internet and necessary data, which was promised seven years ago but is yet to materialise.

At the Giyani Nursing College, there is a shortage of lecturers, administrative personnel, cleaning staff, groundkeepers, finance managers, skilled artisans, library assistants, receptionists, housekeepers and drivers responsible for transporting students to healthcare facilities. It is evident that the funds contributed by taxpayers are being misallocated.

Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Moss. Let me now proceed to Hon Evelyn Wilson.

MS WILSON

There will be no greater day in this House when people will eat their words...
[INTERJECTION]

MR MABOTJA

Order! Order! Order! Hon Speaker, order!

Hon Speaker, the House has requested that Hon Wilson withdraws her unparliamentary words against Dr Selane and against this majestic House.

MS WILSON

I did.

MR MABOTJA

Before she speaks, she must publicly apologise so that she can proceed with her speech. Thank you.

MR MATHE

We are going to be like the EFF today. You are going to see miracles.

MR SMALLE

Hon Speaker, first and foremost, when you acknowledged the explanation by Hon Wilson, it was accepted in that rule, and I would hope that it stays that way. I would also urge you that you address the gallery, as they should not participate in the volume of the House. It is not allowed, and I believe they should just be reminded of this.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Smalle. I didn't see anyone from the gallery participating; only Members were involved. Honourable Members and Hon Selane, she has apologised and withdrawn her remarks. I have also stated that I will not entertain anything further that she had to say.

She then withdrew again, Hon Mabotja. She has withdrawn. Let's have this House in order. I refused her "however", and then she withdrew twice. She has withdrawn twice, honourable Members. I was listening, and I am chairing this Sitting. Can we have order, Hon Mabotja. She has withdrawn twice.

Hon Wilson, you may proceed.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I want to refer to an earlier speech. There is a difference between the left and the right. We don't wait for the portfolio committee's oversight to do our jobs. We are visiting clinics and hospitals.

MR MATHE

On a point of order! On a point of order!

MS WILSON

I've got all day. Let's go for it.

MR MATHE

It's a point of order. It's a procedural point, Madam Speaker. No, no. Relax. Relax. I want to check if the honourable Member would take a question?

MS WILSON

No, I have a speech to finish, thank you.

MR MATHE

She can't take a question because in her speech, she's going to speak nonsense, and I withdraw.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon Wilson, may you please proceed.

MS WILSON

I thought I was sitting in one of the Parliamentary Houses of the state that was supposed to have qualified adults. Sometimes it gets reduced to a nursery school. We are visiting clinics and hospitals... [INTERJECTION]

MR MATHE

Order! Order! We cannot be told that we are in a nursery school here. The fact that this one is from the National Assembly and was relegated here due to her actions there, proves she was doing nonsense. I withdraw.

MR SMALLE

On a point of order, Hon Speaker. In this House, we refer to each other as honourable Members and not as "this one". I ask that we refer to each other as honourable Members, just as we refer to doctors and to each other's professions. We should always refer to each other as honourable Members, and not as "this one".

DR SELANE

Order, Hon Speaker. Hon Mathe was raising an order. He can't raise an order while there is already an order in place. The first order must be ruled on before any new order can be raised. Can you please rule on the order of Hon Mathe. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Dr Selane. There was no order on what Hon Mathe said. [INTERJECTION] I am saying this, Hon Selane. May we proceed. I understand what Hon Mathe wanted to address. He wanted to address the issue of "nonsense" and withdraw it at the same time. That was the content of what he wanted to raise. Can we now proceed with our business, Dr Selane.

DR SELANE

[Inaudible]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon Speaker, you are recognised.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Deputy Speaker, I want to agree with the honourable Member who suggested that what Hon Wilson said, although she ultimately withdrew it, must be referred to the Rules Committee. I suggest that we close this matter on that note. We must review the recording and ensure that we are able to present the matter in the next Sitting.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. The matter will be referred to the Rules Committee. Hon Wilson, please proceed. She still has one minute. Thank you very much.

MS WILSON

There is much talk about the NHI and the pending rollout thereof. It's a pipe dream, particularly in Limpopo. The AG was clear. Clearly, I'm not going to be able to finish the speech, Deputy Speaker, I have just heard them say, "You will not finish your speech."

MR MATHE

Order! Hon Speaker, order!

MR NKONYANA

Hon Deputy Speaker, there is an order. This honourable Member must not tell you how to run this meeting.

MS WILSON

I'll see you in the Ethics Committee too. Thank you.

MR NKONYANA

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Wilson. We shall now call upon Hon Lebogo. I assume Hon Baloyi is stepping in for Hon Lebogo. You are welcome, Hon Baloyi.

MR BALOYI

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

Hon Speaker, what progress has been made, if any, with regard to the audit action plans, and if there is a plan, is it fully implemented? If not, why is it not fully implemented? Poor quality assurance management and lack of capacity are among the issues reported by the department that have contributed to poor internal controls.

However, the department failed to fill the position at district level, which continues to affect the audit outcome of the department. Furthermore, it is reported that over the past five years, the number of clinics providing services for 24 hours has been constantly declining. This reflects poor leadership and poor governance combined with a lack of capacity of the worst kind. Instead of making sure that all clinics operate 24 hours, the number has declined. In 2020, the department stopped increasing the number of clinics operating for 24 hours due to a lack of human resources and security concerns for the nurses working at night. All these are lousy excuses because the budget was planned, but it is not being implemented to provide services for our people.

The inception of Veritas Digital has always been characterised by controversy. Who are the implementing agents or company, and what amount of work has been done since its inception and where? We smell a rat in this project. Can we get a full report on this project regarding the work it does and its mandate.

A report submitted on 13 April 2023 indicated that the contract started in May 2022, and the department had spent R249 million as of 31 March 2023. How was this money spent? A breakdown of the expenditure will assist in this regard. The department should provide the status report on the implementation stage of the Limpopo Academic Hospital.

What is the progress status of this project? Are you making progress, or are you just forever digging without actual development, claiming that we are working? Can we get a detailed report indicating the number of children under five years who have been affected by malnutrition and the plan to resolve this matter. What plans do you have in place to address the cleanliness issues at health facilities?

The majority of these facilities are dirty and worsen the health situation of our people and, in some instances, result in death. The report indicates that the patient certification experience of care in regional and tertiary hospitals showed that the department didn't perform well in four priority areas: availability of medicine, access to care, cleanliness, and waiting time.

Can we get a progress report regarding the provision and functioning of laundry services in clinics and hospitals. Why does the department want to utilise a private law firm to deal with medical litigation, and does this mean that you lack the necessary internal capacity?

What is the role of the officials hired to ensure that such litigation is reduced? What is the plan to address ART treatment interruption for both adults and children? Can we get a report on the state of nursing colleges, including their maintenance, human resources, availability of equipment and machinery, and the progress on the absorption of unemployed nurses. What causes the delay in the employment of 2 000 EPWP workers as cleaners in healthcare facilities?

Lastly, we demand that the department permanently fills these posts to sustain the livelihood of our people.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Hon Baloyi. I shall now call upon Hon Malebana to close the debate.

DR MALEBANA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. Greetings to the Hon Speaker, Hon Premier (in absentia), Whippers, esteemed Members of the Legislature, and Members of the Executive Council. Earlier today, we were joined by the ANC Provincial Secretary, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I rose earlier today to present the 2023/24 quarterly reports for the Department of Health, as they were considered earlier. The ANC 2024 national and provincial manifesto prioritises job creation, economic inclusion, addressing high living costs, investing in people, defending democracy, and enhancing global cooperation.

Our Department of Health plays a vital role in achieving these goals, particularly through its Health Facilities Management programme, which we normally do not mention.

We acknowledge the department's efforts in paying over 90% of invoices within 30 days, amounting to a total of 19 470 invoices. This is commendable, and we should applaud them.

This aligns with our commitment to support small enterprises, entrepreneurs, and cooperatives, particularly women, youth, persons with disability, and military veterans.

This is apart that I have not heard anyone pay attention to with regard to this department. Going forward, we expect the department to account for matters like these, because that's what they're doing in relation to the programme I mentioned earlier, namely the Health Facility programme.

It has a potential for job creation through capital infrastructure completion and the filling of vacant posts, as was said by honourable Members earlier, as they were on stage. We will encourage the department to absorb new students with diplomas from nursing colleges, increasing capacity and reducing unemployment in the province in particular.

However, challenges persist regarding the medicolegal claims that arise from patient safety incidents, highlighting the need for improved care and security. We urge the department to address these concerns as they escalate, particularly at Tshilidzini and Seshego Hospitals.

It is important that the department considers investigating them. It should take a good look in the mirror regarding this matter and gather facts that will assist the department in getting to the root of the problem, as several vulnerable members are speaking with passion about this issue. We may need to find a way to address the root cause and resolve it for the future so that it does not continue on this industrial scale.

To sustain services, revenue generation is crucial. We commend the department's efforts in collecting revenue without the use of debt collectors and encourage engagement with debtor entities, with the Road Accident Fund being the most prominent.

Increased revenue will enable the department to implement the Ward-Based Primary Healthcare Outreach Teams, as we have experienced firsthand how important their interventions are to our people, as well as their role in attaining Ideal Clinic status. This is of great importance. If we can get the clinics right, several of the problems we are facing will be resolved.

We say this because, after visiting a few of them, we are confident that there is an opportunity cost we are losing. More resources are needed for specialist services, as well as for training and research. This insight was gained from the department. We want to encourage them to do more in these areas. By doing so, they can make the necessary interventions to address several matters. These matters are not necessarily problematic, but they are symptoms of the underlying issues I'm referring to. Once we deal with this matter thoroughly, we will resolve the problem, as we have observed during our visits.

Of course, we are convinced and need not doubt the department's leadership when they make commitments. We will continue to do our work to ensure we play our oversight role until we reach the stage that other Members of the Legislature believe we are at. However, I am not yet convinced that the department is incapable of success.

We applaud the dedication and courage of health sector workers once again and reaffirm our commitment to supporting the department. We call for decisive action to

address the prevailing challenges and to report on tangible impacts, particularly in job creation.

I want to briefly mention our visit to Hayani Psychiatric Hospital and draw the department's attention to several matters. Of course, all the facilities we visited need attention, but Hayani requires immediate and focused intervention.

It is important for the department to look into management of that facility, particularly in one of the security units. Addressing issues in that unit could resolve up to 50% of the problems, such as patient escapes and so on. This matter requires urgent attention, and with a targeted approach, the department can gather more information to address it effectively.

We fully endorse this report, acknowledging the department's efforts and its commitment to resolving numerous challenges, including those highlighted by the Auditor-General, with three of them still ongoing. We believe that these issues must be addressed without delay, despite the current constraints that the department has explained.

Going forward, I am confident that we can strive for improved healthcare services in the province. There is significant potential for improvement, and we must seize it. Healthcare is internationally recognised as a fundamental human right, and we dare not fail our people. Thus far, there remains faith that we can do better, except among those with a criminal mind.

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Malebana. We shall now call upon the MEC for Health, Hon Dieketseng Mashego, to respond to the debates.

THE MEC FOR HEALTH

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker; Hon Speaker; Deputy Chief Whip; all Members present; honourable chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health, Dr Malebana; Members of the House; guests, ladies and gentlemen. Re a dumedisa.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I would like to reaffirm the mission of the Limpopo Department of Health, which is to provide quality, accessible and equitable healthcare services to the people, guided by the principles of Batho Pele and the values of the South African Public Service. One of the most important strategic objectives is to improve access to healthcare services, especially for vulnerable and marginalised populations. This is why we are working tirelessly, day and night, to strengthen our primary healthcare facilities, ensuring that the quality healthcare services that we speak of are visible, realised, and that our people begin to benefit from using our facilities.

I want to speak on the issue of the shortage of staff, which is a thorn in our department. We acknowledge that, and we have noted it, but we are working to ensure that all the attritions in the department are being filled. If you check on all our platforms, such as

our website, our social media pages, you'll see that we are constantly releasing circulars where we are advertising posts for people to apply so that we can appoint individuals to assist in the strategic positions left vacant due to resignations or retirements.

We are doing this to ensure that when we say we are strengthening our facilities, we are not just talking but are actually assisting our staff members in all facilities to have the human resources they need to provide the quality services that we want our people to enjoy in our facilities.

The issue of AG findings was addressed, and 90% of the findings in the Audit Action Plan have been implemented. This is why, in the subsequent year, the department received an unqualified audit opinion. This will be maintained going forward until a clean audit outcome is realised. We are very committed to ensuring that, indeed, when it comes to di tšhelete tša rena, everything is clear, and our people are confident in what is happening in the Limpopo Department of Health.

On the issue of an Ideal Clinic status, if you can check our reports, we are improving because our facilities are constantly improving, ensuring that all our clinics are user-friendly and that the required medicine in our facilities is available. I am here to assure the Members of the House, and even the people of Limpopo, that here in Limpopo, we do not face a challenge of medicine shortages. We have medicine, and we are also grateful for the Budget, as mentioned in the recent Budget Adjustments. We will continue to ensure that we do not experience a shortage of medicine within our facilities in Limpopo. Hon Andre Moss, aowa ke le kwele morena ge le bolela. Ke lekile ka maatla gore ke le kwešiše gore le reng. Eupša, le nna ke a tshephiša gore ka nnete bjalo ka Molekgotlaphethiši wa Kgoro ya Maphelo mo Limpopo re tla dira ka maatla gore re tšwele pele go thuša maokelo a rena ka moka gore a kgone go thuša batho ba rena gore ba hwetše ditirelo tše ba di hlokago, ka lerato le ka tlhompho.

I also want to say to honourable Members in red that, indeed, as the department, we are working very well with the portfolio committee, which is assisting us with the oversight work they are doing. We ensure that we submit all the required reports to them, enabling them to continue their oversight work, which in turn, supports our efforts as the department.

We want to take this opportunity to assure the House that we will continue ensuring that all our facilities are certified with the Office of the Health Standards Compliance, while we also prepare ourselves for the NHI. I have said it before, and I am saying it now: the NHI will be implemented, and Limpopo will be one of the first provinces ready for its implementation. We are committed to providing quality healthcare services to our people. Re tla tšwela pele re dira bjalo.

As the department, we want to thank our portfolio committee for their assistance, as well as the honourable Members in this House. We understand that when we talk about health, it requires all of us to work together to improve the state of our facilities. Together, we will surely achieve more.

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC Mashego. We shall now proceed to the next item on the Order Paper.

7.3 Consideration and Adoption of the Reports of the Portfolio Committee on Education

I shall now call upon the committee chairperson, Hon Nkakareng Rakgoale, to table the reports.

MS RAKGOALE

Thank you so much, Hon Deputy Speaker. Let me reserve my formal greetings for the later presentation. I hereby present to the House, for consideration and adoption, the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report of the Department of Education. I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Rakgoale. I shall now call for a seconder. Hon Mokoele, you are recognised.

MS MOKOELE

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I, Esther Mokoele, hereby second the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report as presented by the chairperson of the portfolio committee. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mokoele. Over to you, Hon Rakgoale.

MS RAKGOALE

I hereby present the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report of the Department of Education. Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Rakgoale. I shall now call for a seconder. Hon Manthata-Mahasela, you are recognised.

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I, Mahlodi Caroline Manthata-Mahasela, rise to second the motion as presented by Hon Rakgoale. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Manthata-Mahasela. Over to you once more, Hon Rakgoale.

MS RAKGOALE

Lastly, Hon Deputy Speaker, let me present to the House the 2023/24 Fourth Quarter Report of the Department of Education. I so you move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Rakgoale. Is there any seconder? Hon Mmetle, you are recognised.

MS MMETLE-RAMOHLOLA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker, I, Hon Mmetle, do hereby support the motion by Hon Nkakareng Rakgoale.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mmetle. We shall now move to the Speakers' List, and I call on Hon Mnisi Gloria Dzunisani to open the debate.

MS MNISI

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. I'm smiling, Hon Ngobeni. Allow me to greet the Speaker, Hon Makoma Grace Makhurupetje; the Deputy Chief Whip of the Legislature; the Deputy Chairperson of Committees; honourable Members of the Executive present; honourable Members of the Legislature; and our special guests. Avuxeni.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity afforded to me and your valuable time. Ku ndzi ta ndzi ta pfula xitikisi ka njhekanjhekisano wa namuntlha ehenhla ka timhaka ta dyondzo ta la Xifundzeni xa Limpopo province, and as such I feel I am at work. Mfumo lowu wu rhangeriweke hi vandla ra African National Congress wa tshemba na ku pfumela leswaku mfumo a hi wona woxe wu fanele ku endla vuphakeri bya dyondzo ka swiyimo swo hambanahambana. Dyondzo i mhaka ya vaaki hinkwavo naswona va fanele ku nghenelela hinkwalaho

Aristotle a vurile a kuthe primary education takes place at home, which means parents have a very critical role to play. Miganga leyi hi humaka eka yona hinkwayo na minhlango yo hambanahambana va fane va hlayisa tisisitimi ta dyondzo, swi nga leswi swi na nkoka swinene leswaku hi swi tiva leswaku dyondzo i xitlhangu xa vutomi, leswi hi swona swi nga endla leswaku John Daw a ku: "Education is not preparation for life. Education is life itself."

If you deprive children of their opportunity to learn, whether by underspending the budget, poor security in the learning environment, or the absence of teaching and learning in a classroom, you have deprived the children of their meaningful life.

The Portfolio Committee on Education, in its endeavour to carry out the constitutional mandate, has successfully met and engaged with the department. The following were the observations and considerations by the portfolio committee for the quarters under review. The department has been allocated a total Budget of R38,188 billion in the 2023/24 financial year. During the Adjustments Budget, it increased to R39,136 billion. It consists of equitable share, conditional grant, and own revenue. This constitutes an increase of 4,8% from the Main Appropriation Budget of R38,445 billion in the 2022/23 financial year.

The department has, in the first quarter, reported that all 3 655 public schools used the South African Schools Administration System (SASAMS). This system electronically provides data or makes use of any alternative. In the quarters under review, the target was to have 3 669 schools using SASAMS. This target, however, was not achieved. It fell short by 14 schools. This was caused by the department's decision to provisionally close 14 schools as part of the schools' rationalisation programme.

The department had allocated just above R2 billion, or 5,3% of the total Budget to this programme and has since spent R1 billion, which is 50,5%, and R1 billion, which is 49,5%, remains unspent.

The Department of Education will continually need male and female patriots in all its ranks. It has to achieve its fundamental goals and objectives, which, among others, are quality education and sustainable development. All our children and all our educators in the schooling system equally matter. Therefore, radical educational transformation will be the most outstanding characteristic of our programmes in this administrative term, starting in the centrepiece of education, the classroom, where teachers not only deliver the content but also interpret policy.

When we look at independent schools, the department has reported that 100% of the registered independent schools have qualified to receive subsidies, and the department has spent R35 million of the allocated Budget for the year under review. It will be disheartening if the amount was spent, but there was no monitoring. The department was able to monitor and exceed the targets in the first quarter. The committee welcomed the steady work done by the department in some quarters in achieving the set target of the number of schools visited, and it is worth an applause. As we all know, the ultimate goal of monitoring is not to spy, but to perfect the task of teaching and learning, as well as proper financial management.

However, the committee has noted that the department was failing to monitor the qualifications of teachers in independent schools, which is a serious concern to the portfolio committee. Furthermore, the Third Quarter Report shows that the department was not able to visit all schools as planned, the reason being the restrictions that came with austerity measures. The only schools that were monitored amounted to eight, which constitute 6,7%. This is underperformance. Underperformance is hard to justify and will remain undesirable. As a remedial plan, the department needs to ensure that a programme of action is designed and implemented to ensure the restoration of quality education and also ensure other necessary interventions through investigation in relation to unqualified teachers in the independent schools.

As I have highlighted when I started, we all have a role to play in education as communities, stakeholders, interest groups, young people, and so on. Examples include graduates assisting dysfunctional schools, corporate social investment, supporting food gardens, and encouraging the young generation to choose teaching as their profession. When we look at Early Childhood Development, a programme close to my heart, ECD, as we shorten it, it has been moved from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Education. The shift does not mean anything in terms of the targets. The targets for the NDP remain the same, and the NDP has made it clear that ECD should be made a top priority in all measures to improve the quality of education and the long-term prospects of future generations.

Additionally, to make two years of quality pre-school enrolment for 4–5-year-olds compulsory before Grade 1, the NDP targets that by 2030 South Africa should achieve high-quality, universal early childhood education and quality school education with globally competitive literacy and numeracy standards. The National Development Plan and, indeed, the ANC manifesto guide our strategic and operational trajectory in how we plan, articulate, and execute our programmes within the limits of our financial package. We believe resources, by their nature, are limited, but proper planning and prioritisation can take us to desired levels of performance. Most importantly, we can only effectively achieve the targets set by the NDP if we first establish the exact population of children between zero and five, and study and understand the growth trends of this population. I'm not quoting myself; I'm just stating the facts.

MS MNISI

Regarding safety in schools, our children and teachers continually suffer trauma because of the unsafe environment in which they find themselves on a daily basis. We have seen or witnessed cases of bullying and gangsterism in schools, which the department must pay special attention to by making sure it assesses and knows which schools need support. The infrastructure is also a very critical area where we need improvement so that the environment in which our children and teachers find themselves motivates them to bring about better outcomes for the learners. That is what the facts say: a good environment can change everything.

In conclusion, the committee supports all these reports, and we want to implore the MEC for Education to ensure that the department implements all the recommendations made by the portfolio committee.

I thank you, Deputy Speaker. Inkomu.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ndza khensa, Hon Mnisi. I shall now call upon our next speaker, Hon Andre Moss.

MR MOSS

Thank you, Hon Speaker; esteemed Members of the Executive Council; leaders of the opposition parties; Members of this House; and guests. Good morning once more.

The department's insufficient oversight of the qualifications of educators in independent schools has been noted, leading to serious concerns about the quality of education offered to students. This lack of adequate supervision suggests that some educators may lack essential credentials, training, or experience required to teach these subjects effectively. Consequently, the situation could result in inconsistencies in educational standards, potentially depriving students of the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for their academic success and future opportunities.

A solid education foundation is essential not only for excelling in higher education but also for equipping students with critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills needed in the workforce. Without proper guidance and instruction from qualified educators, students may find themselves ill-prepared for future academic challenges or career opportunities.

Limpopo is home to two of the lowest-performing schools in the country, i.e., Mokgoma Matlala Secondary in the Sekhukhune South District and Madithame Senior Secondary School in the Sekhukhune East District. It is imperative for the department to evaluate the underlying issues contributing to their underperformance. Addressing these challenges faced by the two schools is crucial not only for the students attending these schools but also for the overall development of the Limpopo province and the nation as a whole.

By focusing on improving the educational quality in these institutions, there is potential for positive change that can uplift entire communities and contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty. The report indicates that the department was unable to conduct visits to all the schools as initially intended, attributing the shortfall to travel restrictions imposed by austerity measures and the assignment of district officials to oversee examinations. During the third quarter, monitoring was conducted in only eight schools, representing 6,7% of the targeted 25%. This shortfall raises concerns about the effectiveness of oversight and support for schools during a critical period, as the lack of visits may hinder the department's ability to identify and address issues within the educational system. This could ultimately lead to the decline in the quality of education provided to students, as well as a lack of necessary interventions that could help schools improve their performance and outcomes.

I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Moss. I shall now call upon Hon Jacobus Smalle to present his debate.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker, colleagues, Members of the Executive, members of various departments that are seated, and officials. Good afternoon.

As we end the year, our attention is once again brought back to our 94 214 learners and 30,416 part-time candidates writing their matric final year-end exams, or, for most of our learners hoping to be promoted because of their dedication, hard work and the

support from our schools. It is at these junctures where we need to ask ourselves: Did this government do enough to assist our learners and educators? Did this government produce a conducive environment for our learners to flourish?

Before I express myself on the department's performance, I want to thank every parent, guardian, teacher, invigilator, and principal for their efforts to support our learners during this period of exams. As we measure the department's performance, I cannot help but wonder why this province set out such low benchmarks to achieve, and in doing so, we are continuously highlighted for the high dropout rate of our learners every year. Allow me to highlight a few of these low benchmarks. Only 60% of our learners in Grade 1–3 must be able to write and read with meaning in at least one official language. Only 60% of our Grade 6 learners should be able to pass Maths Literacy. Only 40% of our Grade 9 learners should be able to pass Maths Literacy, expecting that 20% of those learners would already fall out of the system.

Fifty-five percent of our Grade 6 English learners and 45% of our Grade 9 learners are already anticipating a 10% dropout rate. One of the great barriers to not being able to read is the access to libraries. From the 3 649 schools in our province, only 314 have libraries, and only 108 of these schools are stocked with books. Life has moved into the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where artificial intelligence (AI) is integral in availing opportunities. This should be the case and lead to AI playing a bigger role within our education system.

Therefore, the DA will not, and cannot, accept that only 147 schools have internet connectivity for teaching and learning. Technology is available. STEM education has assisted many African countries in gaining access to coding, robotics, problem-solving and critical thinking, empowering the generation for a better future and a better tomorrow. All we need is the political will, and we can connect our schools through satellite internet systems within a short period of time. In doing so, we will be providing a better tomorrow for our learners.

Our educator-learner ratio should be one teacher for every 33 pupils. Why is it that we still have schools, such as Kwapungu Secondary School, where Grade 8 and 10 learners are being taught under trees? Why do we still have schools like Sango Combined School at Laersdrift in the Elias Motsoaledi District with over 90 learners in a classroom? Vandalism has caused millions of rands of damages in government infrastructure, especially when unused. For years, the Democratic Alliance has advocated for urgent actions that should be taken when schools are left abandoned due to amalgamations. We call on the department to enter into an agreement with the Department of Public Works to transfer these schools to NPOs, NGOs, and ECD centres. Those buildings are infrastructure assets. We cannot waste them and leave them to dilapidate.

The Democratic Alliance welcomes the efforts to increase the total number of children having access to ECD programmes, with 148 928 children having access. With the recent bilharzia outbreak around Tzaneen that affected how schools store and receive water, we call on the department, together with local authorities to institute regular inspections to improve the quality of drinking water at our schools. Although the department received additional funding during the year... [INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Please conclude your debate, Hon Smalle.

MR SMALLE

Thank you. An integral part to improved academic performance is the National School Nutrition Programme. With this in mind, it is therefore very tragic that it has been grossly mismanaged in this province. Cases of suspected food poisoning are received frequently. Besides cases of suspected food poisoning, there have also been other issues around the department's poor management of this programme, such as the delivery of substandard food products, poor storage conditions of the food, theft of food items by criminals, and the late or nondelivery of food by service providers. The department needs to ensure that all kitchen facilities meet health standards and work closely with local authorities to conduct regular inspections to assess compliance and the quality of our provided to our learners.

I thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Smalle. Can I now call upon Hon Molapo Samuel. He is not here, and none of their church members are here. I shall now call upon Hon Rakgoale Christian Nkakareng to close the debate.

MS RAKGOALE

Hon Moss, as you walk out, let me remind you, as we welcomed you, that I am certain you have not actively participated in the Portfolio Committee on Education, as far as I am aware. Honourable MEC, it will be your prerogative to decide to respond to him or not, given that his remarks seem to rely heavily on the report rather than his own contributions.

Hon Deputy Speaker, Ms Tebogo Mamorobela; Hon Speaker, Ms Makoma Makhurupetje; MECs present; Hon Deputy Chief Whip of the majority party; fellow members of the Portfolio Committee on Education; honourable Members of the Legislature, and invited guests, thobela.

Allow me to state that as a result of the ANC-led government, the hard work from the education family, including educators, departmental officials, the business community, philanthropists, and many other stakeholders, teaching and learning are now fully functional in all the schools in Limpopo. Malcolm X said: "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to who prepared for it today."

The committee found that the department is very much alive, hence its focus on the implementation of the targeted plan, particularly on improving pass percentage rates in most schools. With regard to Administration, the department has allocated R2,27 billion, or 5,3% of the total annual Budget of this programme, and has since spent R1,5 billion, which amounts to 73,9%. Thus, R9,4 million, which is 26,1%, remains as the balance. On Public, Ordinary Schools, it is an open secret that public education is

important because it provides a fair platform for all to learn, irrespective of class or financial status. It is also an avenue through which people acquire the basic skills they will use to work for the rest of their lives.

This programme received the highest share of the total departmental Budget at R31,4 billion, or 83, 8%. At the end of the quarter under review, the department spent R24,4 billion, or 75,9%, with R7,7 billion, which is 24,1%, remaining as the balance. It should be noted, however, that the total number of seven SOIs are due for reporting in the fourth quarter of the 2023/24 financial year. The committee found that the two worst performing schools in the country are from our province, under Sekhukhune: Madithame Senior Secondary School and Mokgoma Matlala Secondary. The committee inquired about the kind of support the department is providing to these schools to improve their performance.

Regarding Examination and Education-Related Services, the department has spent 64% of the allocated budget by the end of the second quarter. The department is commended for its commitment to improving the spending of their budget at every public school in this programme.

The APP of the 2023/24 financial year indicates that all the standardised output indicators under this programme will be reported on in the last quarter of the financial year. However, the committee recommends that the department reports on the infrastructure projects quarterly. Given that education is fundamental to the aspirations of the province in relation to growth and development, the department is encouraged to remain determined to give every child an equal opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to make a positive contribution to society.

It is prudent to acknowledge the Chief Whip of the ANC for his sterling work by organising lunch with Mošate wa ga Matamanyane, under Chief Moloto, together with Koloti and Bahlaloga Circuit principals and HODs, with the goal of motivating them as they enter the examination period. I must indicate, honourable MEC, that I was part of that programme, and indeed, our teachers felt greatly encouraged. If we were to adopt the work done by the Chief Whip, particularly MEC Dieketseng Mashego and the MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, it could inspire improvement. As indicated, the two worst performing schools in the country are in your district.

It is important to state that these kinds of events carry a heavy responsibility of driving the aspirations of the citizens of this province. It is in line with the portfolio committee's recommendation to strengthen the District Management Model for supporting schools in curriculum delivery. I have made this statement positively, so Hon Mathe should not make me fight with both of you. Furthermore, it helps to improve stakeholder relationships between the department, unions, and other stakeholders, as outlined in the NDP 2030.

On Early Childhood Development, the department will continue to increase access to Early Childhood Development for poor children. The committee encouraged special attention to monitoring the registration of Early Childhood Development centres and ensuring compliance with norms and standards. Regarding infrastructure, education stands at the core of a nation's progress, and the quality of education is intricately linked to the infrastructure of educational institutions. As the country strives for

excellence in education, it is imperative to recognise the pivotal role that school infrastructure plays in shaping the future of its children. Research consistently indicates a strong correlation between well-developed school infrastructure and academic achievement. Apart from accelerating the construction, maintenance, upgrading and rehabilitation of new and existing infrastructure, the portfolio committee welcomes the department's plan to provide schools with water and sanitation and to replace schools constructed with inappropriate materials, such as mud.

Honourable MEC, one of our staff members informed me earlier today that your department did a wonderful job by completing one of the historic schools in Botlokwa, named Kgarahara Secondary School.

My colleagues and I need to visit the site to witness the progress firsthand. For now, I might have to reserve our congratulatory message until we have seen it, after which we will return to the House to deliver a proper message of congratulations.

It has been indicated that the disbursement schedule for all payment runs has been adhered to, ensuring employees are paid on time. Failure to pay promptly or worse, delays in payment, diminishes the value of the money in real terms. This is particularly detrimental if the intention is to maintain a long-term relationship with a contractor. By consistently paying on time, the department demonstrates its commitment to fostering mutual trust and maintaining productive partnerships.

As I move towards conclusion, I must emphasise that, as public representatives, we are responsible for ensuring that our people remain connected to the process that facilitates the speedy delivery of basic services. The needs of our society have changed immensely since the dawn of democracy, requiring us to continuously improve our roles as elected representatives and adapt to these changes.

Lastly, I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the members of the Portfolio Committee on Education in this Seventh Administration. Their commitment to undertaking and carrying the baton of good governance and robust oversight is highly commendable. Referring to Hon Smalle's remarks, I trust that his caucus will also contribute to addressing the infrastructure challenges he highlighted, particularly the high learner-to-teacher ratio in classrooms. If their support ensures the successful implementation of the BELA Bill in its entirety, we will undoubtedly make significant progress in resolving these issues.

Hon Speaker, on behalf of the Portfolio Committee on Education, I move that this report be adopted as the report of this august House. Ndza khensa. Ro livhuwa.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Christian Rakgoale. I shall now call upon the MEC for Education, Hon Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya, to respond to the debates.

THE MEC FOR EDUCATION

Ndi khou livhuwa. Ndi masiari. Hon Deputy Speaker; Hon Speaker in our House; chairperson of the portfolio committee, Hon Rakgoale; honourable Members of the

committee in the House; Hon Premier; Leader of Government Business and my colleagues; honourable MECs; provincial secretary; Whippersnapper of our House and Members of the august House; acting HODs of both the Provincial Treasury and the Department of Education; I also greet the HOD of Treasury who just went up. Thank you so much to the committee for the feedback. I am happy that the debates were very scientific, and indeed it shows that the Department of Education and Team Education in Limpopo are going to run and be on their toes in this Seventh Administration.

The influence of the doctor as a member of the committee can be felt in this debate. We all live in Limpopo and as the issues are being scientifically presented, you will see that there are other members of the committee who want to present an aeroplane view or a drone view, and other things that they allude to do not exist, but also they assume it from the aeroplane view you can assume to say whatever you want it to be can be seen as is, and it might not be what is existing in Limpopo.

I want to take this time and appreciate you, Hon Mnisi, as you debated. Indeed during our discussion for the Budget when we were discussing both as all departments and committees; and with Treasury, we were requested to bring in new plans to show how we are going to spend the remaining R49,5 million budget that you spoke about. We have indeed submitted and indicated that in the fourth quarter we should be able to cover some of the items that were left behind. I fully agree with you, as we work let's not leave anyone behind.

Hon Moss, we acknowledged as the members of the portfolio committee were indicating that we need to note and work on monitoring private schools. We want to assure you that we are aware that it is our responsibility to protect the learners and the parents from being scammed. We see that there are private schools that the honourable members of the portfolio committee were referring to, that we have not sufficiently monitored, and we might have teachers that are not qualified. Hon Smalle, we also want to say, our Grade 12 exams are going on very well and we will continue to make sure that we protect the interests of the learners. The programme for making sure that we intensify and address nonliteracy in our communities will continue. The programme of making sure that our Grades 1–5 learners are reading for meaning will continue, but the emphasis has been put on using the mother tongue as part of the language that should be used to address nonliteracy.

We want to welcome and thank the President for the Bela Act, because the Bela Act is critical in terms of protecting the mother tongue. It is also critical in terms of opening the doors of all our schools in our province so that we can be able to deal with the learner-teacher ratio that we are talking about. The Bela Act is here, and it is going to empower the Department of Education to work beyond the SGB leadership that says, this is my school because when we open the doors it means the learners will not be in one school but will be spread evenly among all the schools. Chairperson of the committee, Hon Rakgoale, we want to assure you that we are going to give what we call the whole school support to the nonperforming schools. I just want to say to my honourable MECs that we should not take it lightly because the chairperson comes from the best-performing district. So, when she says let's coopt the schools, it is because her district is the best-performing district. When my colleagues, the MECs, adopt these schools, the Seventh Administration will shine. We are saying the whole school approach speaks about giving support to both the educators and the learners.

With that we take into consideration the programmes of wellness which need to be given to the teachers to make sure that in curriculum performance, they are able to be taken and to be given support. We also have a programme where we have got curriculum specialists that go and assist teachers in planning and executing their own subjects that they are teaching and will do that approach in the schools that are not performing. We want to assure you chair that the analysis of the status of the infrastructure in our province keeps on being updated. We can report that the new schools that we will be visiting should have proper kitchens. The new boards that we are installing in our schools are going to be interactive to enhance our e-learning – the minute we have a new school. We are also going to embark on our programme of making sure that our schools have got new boards that are interactive to enhance learning. We believe as Team Education in Limpopo that prevention is better than cure. We want to call upon all the honourable Members, the communities and the parents to play their part on the safety of our learners.

Honourable chair and Hon Deputy Speaker, allow me to also indicate that the Department of Education has just passed a phase where other Members of the House did speak about poisoning of learners. With regard to that, as a department, we did “prevention is better than cure” by issuing out a circular on 25 October 2024 for cautioning all the schools following the widespread reports of food poisoning. Learner-safety and continuous learning and teaching remains a key priority to the department. We temporarily banned the sale of food in all schools in the wake of spiking of food poisoning incidents. We are excited as Limpopo being led by our Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, that even Gauteng, Free State, Mpumalanga and North West followed suit on what we did before we could have our learners dying in our hands. Even the Western Cape followed suit on how we prevented deaths in our schools. Yesterday in the MINMAC we were discussing about it.

Schools and vendors have been given time to ensure that they fully comply with all the health policies and regulations. All vendors operating within our school premises must have a formal service level agreement (SLA) with the school governing bodies. We will ensure that all food vendors selling in our schools meet the requirements. In response to food poisoning in our schools, we have worked with LEDET and the Department of Health to engage with community structures, education stakeholders, and small business association to prevent further incidents. I am sure you have seen the police have started to raid all the spaza shops in the provinces. With the SGBs, we have ensured that our vendors within our yards have got certificates and have signed the SLA. We have since taken a decision that school gates will be locked, and only accredited vendors will be allowed to sell in the school yards. On 14 November 2024, I went to Ditsepu Senior Secondary School to monitor the return of the vendors. As we speak, we have opened for the vendors to come back to our school yards. With that, we are making sure that the economy continues after we have safeguarded the safety of our own children.

There was false alarm created. I am happy because the advocate himself as he debated the report of the Department of Health, cleared the issue of Dzumeri Primary School to say even the 11 learners that were there have since been discharged from hospital. Hon Deputy Speaker, we will remain vigilant and continue to urge all our stakeholders, parents and guardians to take keen interest in what their children

consume. As Team Education Limpopo, we are about to wrap up our 2024 National Senior Certificate examination. We can confirm that it is all going on well. Honourable chair of the portfolio committee, we have noted that there were other frequently asked questions that came. They were on the issue of eradication and demolition of pit latrines; we can say now that eight schools are still under construction.

On school safety, we have ensured that as we start our year in January, our schools should be ready on safety issues. We have also dealt with the issues of learner placement in 2025, where we have advised all the parents who did not get positive letters to go the circuits. The circuits have started with the placement of learners. We also want to confirm, honourable chair of the portfolio committee and the Deputy Speaker, that as we rose, there were other parents and other schools that had matric camps, and they have all gone on well. We had a storm not so long ago. We have got schools that were damaged. We have since submitted our reports to the Department of CoGHSTA disaster unit. The categorisation of the province has already been signed off by the Premier. As we speak, we are working closely with the Department of CoGHSTA under their disaster unit.

We want to say, in all the issues that you have raised, we take counsel on the leadership that is being provided by the committee, and we want to thank this august House for the support. Thank you so much, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you so much, MEC, Hon Maureen Lerule-Ramakhanya. Can I now call upon Muhulisei Thovhele Tshivhase for consideration and adoption of the reports of the Oversight Mechanism Committee. Chairperson, Muhulisei Vho Thovhele Midiavhathu Kennedy Tshivhase, the stage is yours.

MR TSHIVHASE

Ndau ya nduna, iwe une wa ri ifai nda fa. Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to table the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Muhulisei Thovhele Tshivhase. Is there any seconder? Hon Mmetle, you are recognised.

MS MMETLE

I, Hon Mmetle, do hereby rise to second the report as presented by the chairperson. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mmetle. Muhulisei Vho Thovhela Tshivhase, the stage is yours.

MR TSHIVHASE

Thank you, Hon Deputy Speaker. I rise to table the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Is there any seconder?

MR SHAI

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. I, Hon Shai, rise to second the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report as presented by the chairperson for Oversight Mechanism Committee. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Shai. I shall now call upon Hon Seanego Tumelo Sebopela. [APPLAUSE]

MS SEBOPELA

Hon Speaker; Hon Deputy Speaker; Deputy Chief Whip and members of the Whippers; Deputy Chair of Chairs; Member of the Executive Council; honourable Members of the House and colleagues, it is indeed an honour and privilege for me to be afforded this opportune moment to address this esteemed House as we deliberate and consider the adoption of the Second and Third quarter Reports of the Oversight Mechanism Committee. This debate is not only a reflection of our commitment to accountability and transparency but also a demonstration of the trust that is bestowed upon this Legislature to act in the best interest of the people of Limpopo. Allow me to take this moment to greet the House and say, as Amilcar Cabral says, we shall tell no lies. We must present an honest and objective account of the performance of the Limpopo Legislature, providing a comprehensive view of its achievements as well as the areas where we have fallen short. In doing so, we shall claim no easy victories for the task of governance is both challenging and deeply significant, requiring continuous effort and dedication.

Hon Deputy Speaker, it is the Oversight Mechanism Committee that has been endowed with the responsibility to hold the Legislature accountable. An effective oversight ensures good governance. The governing party in Limpopo, the African National Congress, had promised the people of this province the six priorities, of which must not only be delivered but must be seen to be delivering these priorities. The Limpopo Legislature must provide robust support to Members of the Executive Council who are also Members of this Legislature in the different departments to successfully deliver on these six priorities. Like President Ramaphosa has emphasised, "We will focus on the six priorities that are critical to speeding up transformation and improving the lives of the people: our jobs plan; building our industries to ensure an inclusive economy; tackling the high cost of living; investing in people; defending democracy and advancing freedom; and building a better Africa and the world."

These priorities are crucial, not only for the transformation of our society but also for sustainable development and improving the quality of life for the people of Limpopo. The Limpopo Legislature operates under three clear programmes. The first programme is Administration, the second one is Facilities for Members and Political Parties, and the third one is Parliamentary Services. In the second quarter, the Legislature had set targets for 53 indicators, achieving 40 of them, resulting in 75% achievement. In the third quarter, they had set out targets for 46 indicators, meeting 36 of them, which equals to 78% achievement rate.

With regard to Administration, this programme has got six subprogrammes, which include the Office of the Speaker, the Office of the Secretary, the Financial Management, Corporate Services, Internal Audit and Members Safety. In the second quarter, there were 28 targets and 23 of them were achieved. This translates to 82% achievement. In the third quarter, there were 8 targets and 4 of them were achieved, leading to 50% achievement. The average of the 2 quarters will then be 66%, which is tolerable. The Legislature should put a lot more focus and effort on Administration as it has been identified to have underspent some of the budget, specifically in Corporate Services, which contributes immensely to underperformance. Sixty-one per cent of the allocated Budget was utilised in the second quarter whereas up to 74% was spent in the third quarter. Therefore, to address this issue of underexpenditure, the Legislature is encouraged to develop a turnaround strategy to enhance performance and to improve overall efficiency. It is also important to note that the Office of the Speaker, the Office of the Secretary, the Financial Management and Members Safety have all achieved their targets as they had planned.

Furthermore, mo go tša Taolo, e le go yona Administration, there is a good story to tell. The Legislature has 30 members in the senior management services and 15 of them are women. Ruth Bader Ginsburg famously stated, "Women belong in all [spaces and] places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are an exception." The Legislature is indeed leading by example. As we normally say in this House, it's the "Malibongwe era".

On programme 02, which is Facilities for Members and Political Parties, in the second quarter, three out of four targets were achieved, resulting in 75% achievement. In the third quarter, there was a target of one and it was overachieved as three were attained. Although this achievement is commendable, the Legislature must be cautious not to set low targets in order to overachieve as this could undermine strategic planning and goal setting.

With regard to Parliamentary Services, it has eight subprogrammes, and I will not mention all of them. In the second quarter, out of 21 targets 14 of them were achieved and in the third quarter, 10 out of 16 of them were achieved, leading to 67% and 63% achievement in both quarters, respectively. The ideal situation is that when targets are set, the intention is to deliver quality services that meet the needs and expectations of the people. These targets should be realistic and measurable. Achieving these targets consistently with the aim of reaching 100% each and every quarter reflects a commitment to excellence and accountability and efficient use of resources.

When a budget is allocated, it must be spent as it serves as a tool to enable the implementation of the planned programmes and initiatives. The Legislature is then

implored to strive towards the achievement of the above set goals so that the six priorities can be realised and that the systemic challenges are addressed, improving the overall wellbeing of the people of this province. In conclusion, we welcome the 2023/24 Second and Third quarter Reports as an account of the performance of Limpopo Legislature and the commitment to continue serving the people of Limpopo province and therefore creating a better life for all. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Tumelo Sebopela. We will now call upon Hon Hermanus Frans Marx. He is going to make a maiden speech.

MR MARX

Hon Deputy Speaker; honourable Members and honourable doctors; ke ithuta Sepedi. Ke bolela Sepedi ga nnyane. Honourable Speaker, I do not intend to butcher the language, but I do however commit that by the end of this term, I will probably try and fluently debate in an African language.

Honourable Speaker, it's an absolute privilege to be able to deliver my maiden speech in this august House. Hon Speaker, whilst the opposition benches' main focus must be an execution of a robust and transparent oversight over the Executive, we need to remind ourselves why are we here. We are here for the public, and our main purpose is to serve, protect and uphold our democracy with integrity.

Hon Speaker, you have noted that the year 2024 is notable for a large number of elections being held worldwide, with no less than 100 elections being held. Therefore, 2024 was not just an election year, it was perhaps the election year. It is no secret that all over the world democracy is under attack by radicalism, populism and nationalism. This evil fear was also instilled in the minds of South African citizens prior to our own 2024 general elections. As the 2024 elections have shown, the political landscape in South Africa is changing at an enormous pace and we now have, for the first time in the history of our small democracy, a Government of National Unity, which ensures a broader representation and a solid manner to govern the country, contributing to higher levels of transparency and accountability.

Hon Speaker, it is against this background that I was saddened when I perused the Second Quarter Report, and it struck me that the performance report paints a concerning picture of underachievement and missed opportunities by this House. The report shows that this Legislature underspent its Budget by a significant margin, realising only 61%.

This underspending represents a failure to effectively utilise public funds for the betterment of Limpopo. Matters turned for the worse when you consider that the core functions of the Legislature are oversight, lawmaking, and public participation. It is, therefore, incomprehensible that only 50% of the projected spending was on these core functions of our Legislature. Yes, Hon Speaker, when one considers the Third Quarter Report, we do see some areas of improvement, but concerns remain around Budget spending and achieving key targets.

It is, therefore, crucial for the Legislature to listen to the recommendations of the committee, when they advise that the Legislature must, in the following financial year, prioritise all the targets that were not achieved in the previous financial year. However, as articulated at the onset, all is not bad, and it is pleasing to note that there were many targets across different programmes that were achieved and even exceeded in the third quarter. For instance, no less than 25 Bills were brought forward and analysed, thereby exceeding the target of four Bills by far. Perhaps, considering the fact that the Legislature has now proven that it is possible to analyse 25 Bills, maybe this target must be reconsidered for the benefit of our people.

Hon Speaker, in conclusion, Gordon Hinkley once said: “You can’t build a great building on a weak foundation.” It is the duty of each and every member of this House to ensure that we boost the foundation of the Limpopo province by empowering this Legislature with the necessary tools and resources. In conclusion, Honourable Speaker, the Democratic Alliance applauds everyone involved in ensuring the achievement and over achievements of some of the targets but would implore on them to ensure that we not only meet our other outstanding targets but to ensure that we are all succeeding. Thank you.

Hon Speaker, before I leave the podium, there is something that the Whip should have raised, when a maiden speech is made, you can look at Rule 562 *[sic]*, the Members on the right hand should rise and give me a round of applause. Thank you. [LAUGHTER]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Don’t worry, they will rise next time. Can I now call on Hon Molapo Walter Samuel. He is not in. I will call upon Hon Thovhele Tshivhase. [APPLAUSE]

MR TSHIVHASE

Hon Speaker; Hon Deputy Chief Whip; members of the Whippers; Members of the Executive Council; all Members of this august House; ladies and gentlemen; comrades and friends; greetings to you once more. I indeed feel honoured and privileged to be afforded this opportunity to address this august House when we are considering and adopting the Second and Third Quarter Reports of the Oversight Mechanism Committee. I want to take this opportunity to greet this august House and indicate that through the manifesto of the ruling party in Limpopo province, the African National Congress, we entered into a contract with the people of this province that we will deliver on the six priorities as contracted with them. Through the Legislature, the people of Limpopo province are entitled to all the promises made by President Ramaphosa, when said: “We will focus on six priorities that are critical to speeding up transformation and improving the lives of the people. Our jobs plan is building industries for an inclusive economy, tackling the high cost of living, investing in people, defending democracy and advancing freedom and building a better Africa and the world.” Hon Speaker, there is a saying in Tshivenda which goes, shango ḽa shaya thovhele ndi muḽano. It is precisely because of this ancient and rich saying that the Oversight Mechanism Committee has been endowed with a responsibility to hold the Legislature accountable. Maybe Members understand what I have said. Shango ḽa shaya thovhele ndi muḽano.

Let me indicate that the Oversight Mechanism Committee has been assigned the responsibility to oversee the provincial Legislature, and the committee has had a meeting with the provincial Legislature, and engagements on both the Second and Third Quarter Reports were successfully completed. The Oversight Mechanism Committee has received and welcomed the briefing on the two quarterly reports of the provincial Legislature. It should be noted that the Legislature had been allocated over R492 million, and by the end of the second quarter it had spent over R300 million of the total Budget allocated for the 2023/24 financial year. However, the Legislature got a Budget adjustment of R437,95 million, which is around 8%, which increased its Budget to over R536 million, and by the end of the third quarter, the Legislature had spent over R394 million, which is equivalent to 74% of the total adjusted Budget of the 2023/24 financial year. This serves as an indication that the Legislature will effectively spend the Budget by the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

The committee raised a concern on a number of issues and resolved that the committee be furnished with an update on disciplinary committee cases and an update on national key point infrastructure both at Parliamentary Village and Lebowakgomo offices, that the committee support staff be capacitated, that network connectivity as well as the quality of content on all digital platforms be improved, and that fair recruitment practices be implemented. The committee is pleased to report that the Legislature is committed to ensuring that all concerns as raised by the committee will be attended to and a presentation on the status quo be made available to the committee – and that was done. The committee further noted that during the quarter under review, the Legislature received more NCOP Section 76 Bills that were planned, and more Commonwealth parliamentary events took place than planned. Despite the increase in CPA events, the performance achievement of the Legislature was still within the annual planned targets.

As I conclude, the committee has noted that for the successful achievement of priorities as planned in the provincial Legislature Annual Performance Plan for the 2023/24 financial year, there is a need for the Oversight Mechanism Committee to play its oversight function in a way incomparable and different to the approach followed when exercising oversight function over the state departments. Hence the committee has made recommendations to the Legislature for performance improvements, both for financial and nonfinancial performance. The committee emphasised improvement on the capacity of risk management, performance on Internal Audit, the outputs of Research Services and on procurement processes and other functions as well as maintaining the relationship between the budget spent and the actual output linked to impact in the lives of our people.

Hon Speaker, it is the committee's responsibility to ensure that the provincial Legislature continues to improve its performance to retain a clean audit. The AG's audit findings over the previous financial year have shown that the Legislature has a great potential of retaining a clean audit and thereby set a very good example as an oversight body to the departments. The Oversight Mechanism Committee is hopeful that with the support rendered to the Legislature, it is highly possible to maintain a clean audit and prove to the public that we live by the gospel that we preach.

Honourable Speaker, khosi ya tšudza na vhalanda vha a tšudza. We will not do that as the Portfolio Committee on Oversight Mechanism. Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Ndi ngoho shango la shaya thovhele ndi mulano. I shall now call upon the Speaker, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje, to respond to the debate made by honourable Members.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much for the opportunity, Deputy Speaker. Let me greet the Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; she has not left the Sitting. She was logging in; she is just here in the office. She had to log in where Parliament needed her to log into the meeting. She has not left the Sitting. Let me greet all the Members of the Executive Council. Today I must just greet Hon Mahoi for selfish reasons. Let me greet all the honourable Members but specifically Vhothovhela na komiti yavho. Ri khou vha lumelisa masiari a duvha la namusi. Thank you very much. I want to greet the “Malibongwe era”. Malibongwe! Wathint’ abafazi, wathint’ imbokodo.

Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. I am just given here an opportunity to respond to the observations of honourable Members. Allow me to appreciate the comments, inputs and suggestions put forward by the chairperson and members of the Oversight Mechanism Committee. Your oversight work contributes significantly to the improvement of the way resources are managed at the Limpopo Legislature. It further enables the Speakership to account before this House for the decisions or actions taken when committing the Legislature’s resources.

As we debate these reports, i.e., the Second Quarter and the Third Quarter Reports of the 2023/24 financial year, it is very exciting to report to this House that indeed we think you have given the correct reflection, especially when Hon Sebopela deliberately talked to each of the targets. She has told us nicely that some targets were achieved while others were not achieved. Indeed, we strive for equity in the Legislature; 50% is something that we will never fail the people of the province to ensure that we achieve. We would like to follow up on the areas where, in terms of the programmes, we have not performed well. I will not justify why certain programmes have not performed well. I know that we have a responsibility to ensure that we take your advice: that indeed, there must be equity amongst what you budget, what you target what you expend as well as what you achieve. Our achievements there must be equity in between so that your achievements as well as the spent Budget must be on the same page, because our budgeting process can’t be thumbsucked. We must use the experience and the resources we have to make sure that we are able to deliver to the people of the province.

I am very excited that the people who were debating here were able to remind us, especially the chairperson and Hon Sebopela, that we, as and when we do oversight, have six priorities that this provincial government is supposed to deliver on. Therefore, we must monitor and support the work of the Oversight Committee and other committees and make sure that the six priorities that have been identified for the people of the province are met, because if we do work as the Legislature and get a

clean audit but our people still don't have water, it will not serve the purpose. If we get a clean audit but the people of the province are able to get the services that we promised them, obviously indeed we would have done justice in terms of that.

It is important to indicate that whilst we have said so many times that we are starting to irritate you because of the number of increments and other things, we must just take this opportunity today to thank MEC, Hon Mahoai, for listening to us because when we presented the Budget adjustment today, you can hear that he has heard us, that in every meeting where we met with Treasury, we were able to emphasise why we need more money. Even when we underspent in other areas, he was able to advise us to redirect the money to the right place so that we are able to achieve the targets. For that, we want to thank you, MEC, Hon Mahoai and Provincial Treasury. Indeed, your presentation on the Budget adjustments can be able to assist us to ensure that in the next term of five years, because we are still engaging on the baseline that needs to be addressed, the MTF Budget is attended to accordingly.

Sustaining a clean audit is something that we cannot compromise on. We must sustain it and, therefore, we will ensure that the AG's recommendations are adequately monitored on a daily basis, that our Internal Audit is improved, and that the Risk Management Unit advises us on a regular basis to ensure that we don't regress on the clean audit.

The issue of salaries of honourable Members has been attended to. On the issue of accommodation, I want to appreciate honourable Members for the meeting that we held last week, where Treasury, Public Works and ourselves sat in this House, trying to look at challenges that we experience at Parliamentary Village, challenges that we experience here, including matters relating to our offices and maintenance thereof, and dealing with issues of national key point. This will go a long way in assisting us to urgently start putting together what can be fixed in the short-term, medium-term as well as in the long-term.

Indeed, we agree with you in that the issue of ensuring that our staff compliment is that all the positions that have been advertised are filled to ensure that all committees are assisted and given the necessary resources. With the appointment of both the Secretary and the COO, we will ensure that the first responsibility is to make sure that the issue of recruitment process for the remaining posts happens as soon as it can so that by the next financial year, we don't have those challenges still.

There is a matter that has arisen and has not arisen here but has arisen in the committee meeting where committee members raised the issue of international study tours. We assure the committee that we are willing to support you to do the study tours, whether domestically, going to learn from other provinces, going to learn in Africa, but as for going to learn internationally, where necessary, we will try. I can see that Hon Mahoai is not happy that you want to go and study internationally. However, it is something that we will continue to motivate so that our committees become very educative and learn from others so that our departments in Limpopo can be able to improve. [APPLAUSE]

Let me take this opportunity to say there has been a misunderstanding between ourselves and the Leader of the Opposition on the appointment of the Secretary. The

misunderstanding was created by the fact that before we presented the Secretary of the Legislature in this august House, we convened a meeting with all the leaders of the opposition parties. It is only the Leader of the Official Opposition who was not part of the meeting. We have since rescheduled the meeting for today after the Sitting, but due to unforeseen circumstances, the meeting has been rescheduled again.

We will continue to appeal to them because some of the matters they talk to in the public space are things that we can't respond to. That is because internally, there are more issues that within a short space of time, we will be reporting on to the Oversight Mechanism Committee. There are more things that we can't deliberate on in public, but we will be able to inform the House through the Oversight Mechanism Committee. The majority of the things they were saying were misguided. They were misled. It was not true. We can confirm that the reality will be presented in the Oversight Mechanism Committee meeting. I felt I needed to indicate this in this formal gathering.

As I conclude, I would like to thank the chairperson of the Oversight Mechanism Committee, Muhulisei Vho Tshivhase Midiavhathu Prince Kennedy, for ensuring that the Legislature accounts before this august House. I also appreciate the dedication and the commitment of the members of the Oversight Mechanism Committee for ensuring that the Legislature resources are effectively, efficiently and economically managed. Ndza khensa. Ndi a livhuwa. Re a leboga. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Re a leboga, Mospikara wa Lekgotlatheramelao la Limpopo. Hon Speaker, I must say that you have injected an excitement after you have spoken about the study tours. Thank you very much. We shall now proceed to the consideration and adoption of reports of the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture. I will now call upon the committee chairperson, Hon Falaza Mdaka.

MR MDAKA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Falaza Philemon Mdaka, rise to present the 2022/23 Annual Report for the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture for consideration and adoption by this honourable House. I so move, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mdaka. Is there any seconder? Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. I stand to second the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much. I shall now call upon Hon Nenguda Dowelani Alton to open the debate.

MR NENGUDA

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Greetings to the Speakership, the Hon Speaker and the Hon Deputy Speaker; the Deputy Chief Whip; members of the Whippers; our Provincial Secretary who was here with us Mavu Vhamusanda Vho Madadzhe; our Hon Premier, Vho Dokotela Phophi Ramathuba; chairpersons of the portfolio committees; honourable Members of the Legislature; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Hon Deputy Speaker, before you switch on your stop watch, allow me to congratulate Bafana Bafana on their recent performance, our national team which is going to represent us in Morocco. I think we are all happy. I am sitting next to the Deputy President of SAFA Vhembe, Vho Nempumbuluni. We were talking about it, that perhaps the MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, Hon Maseko, is going to make some arrangements so that we accompany Bafana Bafana to Morocco next year.

Honourable Members, let me start by appreciating the sterling work being done by our MEC, Hon Jerry Maseko. We have noted that you have just visited Schoemansdal I Museum, and you officially opened that museum. I think all of us seated here know the history and the background of Schoemansdal Museum. It came about after wars of resistance against imperialism. After the wars of resistance against colonialism, we all know that what is left there are graves. Ri a livhuwa mahosi ashu Vho Makhado Tshilwavhusiku tsha ha Ramabulana who resisted and who fought against imperialism. They fought against the aggrandisement of land by the imperialists. We also noted, honourable MEC, that you are doing a lot in making sure that you make follow-ups with regard to liberation roots. We know that there are plans for the erection of monuments in remembrance of our struggle for liberation. I will mention the Battle of Mutale in particular. We know what you are doing together with your collective. Thank you so much.

The Annual Report indicates that sport, arts and culture is playing a cardinal role in socioeconomic development within our province. The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is also guided by the National Development Plan, which aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. The Limpopo Development Plan emphasises the critical role that sport, arts and culture plays in promoting wellness and social cohesion together with the major benefits accrued to both education and health sectors. Today we are proud to announce that after multiple years of unqualified audit outcomes, the department received a clean audit outcome. We would like to take this opportunity to appreciate and thank the former MEC for the department, Hon Nakedi Grace Sibanda-Kekana, all oversight structures and the hardworking administration team led by the Head of Department, Ms Mapula Daphney Ramokgopa. Indeed, working together we can do more, honourable MEC and honourable Members of this House.

As guided by the manifesto of the African National Congress on job creation and skills development, there are programmes developed to support the growth of sport, arts and culture, providing opportunities for artists, performers and athletes to thrive and contribute to the province's economic vitality. The department is planning to accelerate procurement plans on black-owned companies, women-owned companies, youth-

owned companies and persons with disability as well as military veterans in contributing to sustainable job creation for continuous economic growth. The department has employed 195 librarians and library assistants permanently to manage and spearhead programmes in the 160 libraries in the province. The department is working tirelessly to reduce the number of contract workers and to increase the number of permanent staff in the sector.

Madam Speaker, allow me to report to this august House that we are at an advanced stage to close the gender parity gap as far as senior management posts are concerned. We are currently sitting at 45% of senior managers being women, and we are striving to ensure that we close the gap with the recent employment processes that are underway. Out of the total workforce of the department, 64% are women. The department continues to commemorate and celebrate significant days that bring together people of different histories, beliefs, cultures and languages. This year in the month of April, through the Freedom Day celebrations, activities both at district and provincial level were held in collaboration with the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism together with the Department of Social Development as well as the Department of Health. The department managed to reach out to 5 600 people of diverse ethnicities, cultures and heritages. The Freedom Day celebration further contributed immensely to the growth of the economy through the creative and cultural industry in order to strength social cohesion and nation-building programmes. The department successfully held the provincial Heritage Month celebration at Ramokgopa Stadium in Molemole Municipality in the Capricorn District, where a total of 5 000 people attended.

The celebration was marked by the “heritage walk”, cultural parade and performances to showcase the diverse cultures and heritages of the province. Madam Speaker, allow me to report to the august House on the much-anticipated provincial theatre project that has commenced. The theatre is envisaged to reach 40% completion at the end of this financial year. The completion of the project is intended to grow the artists and theatrical sector on the progress that is contributing to the economic growth of the creative industry in order to assist local authorities in rendering public library services and providing archive services in the province. The department is hard at work in constructing new libraries; maintaining and repairing the existing libraries; buying library books; providing ICT infrastructure and free internet access to libraries; and appointing librarians, security services for all libraries and library general workers. The department was able to spend R231 million or 94% of the allocated Budget of R245 million in the 2023/24 financial year as compared to 83% spent on the allocated Budget of the 2022/23 financial year.

This proves that the department is indeed hard at work in rendering public library services and archive services in the province. We heartily appreciate the contribution from the mining sector of the Fetakgomo/Tubatse Municipality for constructing Tokkinhan Library and the Masia Traditional Authority for the construction of GaMasia Library.

The department continues to pride itself on the partnership it has with the Department of Basic Education, particularly around the renewal and revival of sport, arts and culture. On 18 July 2024, the department celebrated Mandela Day through the provincial Junior Dipapadi Games, with more than 5 000 children of under five years

from Early Childhood Development centres in Fetakgomo/Tubatse in Sekhukhune District. In the quest to strengthen the relationship with professional football clubs in the province, the department met with three Premier Soccer League representatives to discuss our collaboration with the teams. We appreciate our PSL teams, i.e., Magesi football club, Polokwane City and the Sekhukhune United.

I just want to remind the honourable Members present here today that this coming Saturday, our own team, Magesi Football Club will be playing Mamelodi Sundowns. We are very much optimistic that through our support, the trophy will be coming to Limpopo province. The MEC, Hon Basikopo Makamu, ndi khou vha vhona uri vho tshuwa ngamaanda uri i do vhuya na khaphu na Magezi. We are very much hopeful and optimistic. A ri tikedze thimu heyi ndi yashu. I khou disa zwivhuya kha vundu lashu. Ndi khou tama u livhuwa Muhulisei Mulangadzulo, Muhulisei Muthusa Mulangadzulo, Miraḁo vhothe vhane vha vha hone fhano. Ndza khensa. Rea leboga. Kha i ponde i sie marambo. Tsha u fuka na tsha u adza. Ndau ya nduna.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ro livhuwa, Muhulisei Vho Nenguda. Ndi do vhidza Muhulisei Vho Jack Velile. A vhaho. Ndi do vhidza Muhulisei Vho Hermas Fransman. A vhaho. Ndi do vhidza Muhulisei Vho Letsoalo. A vhaho. I shall now move to Hon Falaza Mdaka. Hon Marx, are here? I have called your name already. I thought you were not here, please go ahead.

MR MARX

I will excuse you, Hon Deputy Speaker. My apologies as well.

Hon Speaker, I rise today to express my deep concern regarding the performance of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture as reflected in their 2022/23 Annual Report. While the report attempts to paint a picture of progress, a closer examination reveals a worrying trend of mismanagement, underspending, and a failure to deliver on key mandates. The Auditor-General's report highlighted these issues and included the following: material misstatements in the financial statements, understatement of moveable assets, a significant underspend of R54,4 million on library and archive services and ineffective controls that allowed for overrides and noncompliance with legislation.

The material misstatements in the financial statements raise serious questions about the department's financial management practices and their commitment to transparency and accountability. This is reiterated by the ineffective controls that allowed for overrides and noncompliance with legislation, which open the door for corruption and maladministration of public funds. On a similar note, the understatements further illustrate the department's inability to accurately manage its resources. It does not take much to appreciate that the underspending on libraries has a direct impact on service delivery, delayed the construction of libraries and hindered access to vital resources for the people of Limpopo.

This all points to a systemic problem within the department, where regulations are ignored and financial misconduct is allowed to occur. I respectfully submit, Hon

Speaker, that the department's response to these findings is inadequate. While it is commendable that the department acknowledges its shortcomings and outlines improvement plans, these plans lack detail and fail to inspire confidence in its ability to address the root causes of these issues.

Hon Speaker, things are different in DA-run municipalities. You would recall that in the DA-run uMngeni Municipality, the municipality has recently opened the new Mpophomeni Stadium. When the DA took over, this project there was short of R3,5 million, the construction site had been vandalised and there were serious challenges in getting it open. The DA team has worked hard to allocate resources and complete the stadium, creating a public space for all to enjoy. In contrast hereto, our department tries its best to shift the blame to the Department of Public Works and the appointed contractors.

The department concedes that there was slow performance by these contractors but failed to address the concerns of the portfolio committee, by failing to advise as to the legal steps taken by the department to enforce compliance by these contractors. The nonchalant attitude of the department in holding its appointed contractors to account for slow performance has had a dire effect on the residents of Botshabelo, Tshaulu, Sekhukhune and Vleifontein. The recurring issue of the provincial theatre project is another example of the department's inability to effectively manage and deliver on key projects.

Sport, arts and culture, from the smallest rural town in this province, all the way to the city of stars, with its big stadiums, from one person to a team effort, sport, arts and culture contributes significantly, directly and indirectly to the economy and job creation of this province.

In conclusion, this Annual Report presents a concerning picture of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. It is a story of mismanagement, underspending, and a failure to meet the needs of the people of Limpopo. I urge the department to take immediate and decisive action to address these issues, implement the recommendations of the Auditor-General, implement the recommendations of the portfolio committee, and ensure that allocated funds are used effectively to deliver services and improve the lives of our citizens. Hon Speaker, the people of Limpopo deserve better. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ro livhuwa Vho Marx. Can I now call upon Hon Philemon Mdaka.

MR MDAKA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, allow me to pass my greetings once more to the Provincial Secretary of the ANC who was with us this morning, Vhamusanda Vho Madadzhe; the Hon Premier who is around but busy with other matters; the chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders who was also with us this morning, Hosi Ngobe; the Chief Whip and members of the Whippery; Members of the Executive Council present here; honourable Members of this august House; invited guests; colleagues and friends in the gallery; ladies and gentlemen. I greet you all in the name of the African National Congress.

Madam Speaker, our work, or the work of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is guided by the Freedom Charter that says: "The doors of learning and culture shall be opened. The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life. The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished." Today one can say without any fear of contradiction that indeed the doors of learning and culture were opened since the defeat of the apartheid regime, with the ANC taking the lead in guiding our people's bitter struggle for the establishment of a nonracial, nonsexist, united and prosperous South Africa.

It is against this background that the mandate of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is to increase participation and excellence in sport, arts and cultural activities; increase access to information through the provision of library services; promote nation-building through sport, arts and culture; increase social cohesion and national identity; and promote governance and quality of social services through the same sport, arts and culture. Through our democratic breakthrough and subsequent legislation, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture has been assigned the powers and functions to develop and implement provincial policies and programmes regarding cultural activities for sport and recreation in Limpopo province.

As the portfolio committee, we are happy with what the department has achieved up to so far. Madam Speaker, I am standing before you to conclude the debate. As you can see, like what my predecessor said, the game is played in the middle and upfront. I am the sweeper; I am just sweeping as I do now. [LAUGHTER] Hon Nenguda debated very well and represented us very well in this House. I don't think there is anything to say much more. Of course, in the middle there will be some opponents who are trying to do something, but they are not necessarily coming to the sweeper. We will just be watching. I have realised that since we started this game of this debate, it went very well, and it is still continuously going very well as we are about to conclude. The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is doing very well. It is hard at work, as Hon Nenguda has said.

Madam Speaker, this proves that the department is in line with what has been set in the goals by our ancestors in Kliptown 59 years ago in the Freedom Charter as alluded to before. We are aware that the Annual Report made reference to unfinished infrastructure projects, but no one must make sweeping statements around that. We are aware that libraries in Maphalle, Tshaulu, Vleifontein and Botshabelo are, as others have indicated from my left, not on target. Indeed, as the committee and as a collective, we recommend that these projects must be completed in the new financial year as soon as possible. Interestingly, other planned targets by the department were achieved, and the department deserves an applause for the good work done.

Whether it is about its commitment to strengthening its human resource capacity through the filling of positions at senior management level, the department is at an advanced stage, thus maximising service delivery systems. The posts will assist, as Hon Nenguda said, to close the gender parity gap where the department is currently sitting at 45% of senior managers being women. We understand this gap will close with the recent employment processes that are underway. On the other hand, the committee recommended that the department should employ people living with

disability and reach the 7% indicated on the APP as well the employment of the military veterans whose contribution to our freedom cannot be ignored or forgotten.

Concerning people living with disability, we were made to understand that they are mostly disadvantaged because of their failure to acquire medical certificates to prove their disability on time. Therefore, it is imperative that the department should come up with ways and means to assist the disabled community to get their medical certificates faster as these services are provided by our sister department.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I don't want to go on and on indicating what the department has done, including the filing of posts where in the 2000/01 financial year there were only 172 filled posts in the department. As of now, as we speak, the department is having a workforce constituted by 442 employees who are permanently appointed. What a great achievement, that their goal is. The department is indeed going and responding well to the issue of unemployment in our province so is the impact on services provided.

Furthermore, in transforming and uniting our communities, the department hosted 26 community dialogues. These dialogues focus on promotion of nonracism, nontribalism and cultural tolerance. Seated here as we are, some of us were there in 1976. We don't want to be reminded of the past and how we responded to the issues then in this House. So whatever we do, we must make sure that we are guided by what this department is trying to do: to unite us from the divide that we used to experience in the past because of apartheid and colonialism.

The hosting of the Mapungubwe Arts and Cultural Festival and the rolling out of Ku luma Vukanyi programmes in the five districts to promote and preserve culture and heritage enabled our communities to share good memories and experiences across ethnic divides, and that contributes to nation-building and peaceful coexistence. Madam Speaker, as I move towards conclusion, just to mention but a few highlights, from what my friends on my left are saying, it's like the department is doing nothing. Yet about 900 schools, hubs and clubs benefited with provision of equipment and attire. Over 50 000 people have actively participated in organised sport and active recreational events in the year under review, with 120 learners attending youth camps and 220 indigenous game clubs supported.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if you may allow me to continue, as I conclude, 25 889 learners have participated in the district school sport tournaments and have exceeded the set target of 25 000 by the department. Similarly, over 30 000 learners participated in school sport tournaments at provincial level. More learners participated in indigenous sports championships and more schools were supported.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I can talk and go on and on about what the department is doing. I just want to conclude by emphasising, and I have realised that others were laughing, that as a province we always have at least three teams in the national league. Whenever they go somewhere else and do whatever, three teams are there. Other areas have got dololo – nothing. That is why some are even moving to other provinces from this province. I want to also join Hon Nenguda that we used to meet Magesi FC in national championships of Vodacom and so on. By the way I am also a

chairman of a football team, Ma-Indies. Now as we speak, they are going to face the giants, Mamelodi Sundowns, but they are also giants in their own right.

I want to emphasise, we are going to bring the cup back to Limpopo. Mamelodi Sundowns once beat us as Ma-Indies 7–0 in Johannesburg. When they came to Giyani they were saved by the Almighty God because, in actual fact, technically we won that game. So, we are going to win even this one. There is no such a thing that we are going to be defeated. We are going to defeat them. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Falaza Mdaka. We are going back to the debate again. The MEC will answer at once. We shall now call upon the chairperson again, Hon Falaza Mdaka, for presentation for consideration and adoption of the report of the Portfolio Committee of Sport, Arts and Culture.

MR MDAKA

I thought that the game is over. Thank you once more, Hon Deputy Speaker. I, Falaza Mdaka, rise to present the 2023/24 First Quarter Report for the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture for consideration and adoption by the honourable House. I so move, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, chairperson of the portfolio committee, Hon Mdaka Falaza. May I have a seconder. Hon Matjomane, you are recognised.

MS MATJOMANE

Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I rise to second the adoption of the report as presented by the chairperson for Sport, Arts and Culture. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Matjomane. Hon Falaza Mdaka, you may proceed.

MR MDAKA

Thank you very much. I'm on item 7.7.2. Hon Deputy Speaker, I, Falaza Mdaka, hereby rise to present the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report for the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture for consideration and adoption by the honourable House. I so move, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, chairperson of the portfolio committee. May I have a seconder. Hon Mapula Mokaba, you are recognised.

MS MOKABA

Thank you so much, Hon Speaker. I, Mapula Mokaba from Mankweng cluster, rise to support Hon Mdaka. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Mapula Mokaba. I shall now call upon Hon Falaza Mdaka.

MR MDAKA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. I'm on item 7.7.3. I, Falaza Philemon Mdaka, hereby rise to present the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report for the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture for consideration and adoption by the honourable House. I so move, Hon Deputy Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you, chairperson of the portfolio committee. May I have a seconder. Hon Nempumbuluni, you are recognised.

MR NEMPUMBULUNI

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to second the adoption of the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Nempumbuluni. I shall now call on Hon Mathe Matsobane Simon to open the debate. Malibongwe!

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker; Hon Premier in absentia; Hon Deputy Speaker; Deputy Chief Whip of the majority party; Members of the Executive Council; Members of this august House – both progressive and nonsensical.

Let me start by saying that when you wear a white shirt, it means that you are not going to war. When you wear a white shirt, it means that you are not going to war. However, when you are pushed to a war while wearing a white shirt, you have to respond. We are going to respond because wearing a white shirt means that we mean business. When we mean business today, we mean serious business. There is a difference between business and serious business. We mean serious business. All participants in these debates today were smiling because their departments received a booster from the honourable MEC for Treasury. It is only our department that did not receive a booster. However, because we mean serious business, due to financial constraints as the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, we will have very limited complimentary tickets from Mapungubwe Festival, and the causality in this regard will be the one who would decrease our money. They will watch Zonke on TikTok.
[LAUGHTER]

Let me take this opportunity and thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to address this august House. We are gathered in this august House some few days after the President of the Republic of South Africa addressed South Africans about the deaths of children due to foodborne illnesses. It was much deserving from the Head of State to address us about this matter of great concern. Measures and restrictions were put in place for all the spaza shop owners. We believe that they will adhere to the call and the law enforcement agencies shall respond to the call.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is one of the critical departments that work to unite the people – but those that are prepared to be united and reconciliatory, the activities of different sporting codes as well as arts and culture where many diverse cultural groups from different races and ethnic groups converge together in unison to achieve a particularly national or provincial result. On 24 July 2024, the African National Congress in their statement, amongst other things, cited that the ANC takes immense pride in the rich tapestry of sport, arts and culture that forms part of the heart and soul of South Africa. As we reflect on our journey, we recognise the invaluable contributions that these sectors have made to our National Democratic Revolution, evolution and global presence. The assertion by the statement recognises entire participants in the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture at large who continue to work hard and contribute positively even in today's South Africa and not the old South Africa, where, when Black kids are shot to death, they are referred to as or compared to monkeys; where, when African academics make presentations, they are referred to as nonsense. That is the mentality and thinking of the old South Africa. We are touching the nerve. When we are in the minority, you can collapse us when we debate. When we are in the majority, we will collapse you.

The three quarterly reports that I am going to highlight are not far from each other. There are some similarities but not a lot. The execution of the plans was quite flowing and linking to each and every quarter very well. The African National Congress is pleased with the outcomes of the quarterly reports and therefore encourages the department to consistently work on achieving the clean audit. We commend the work done by the political leadership and administration of the department in making sure that they steer the ship in the right direction. The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture managed to achieve targets in most of the different programmes and subprogrammes. The ANC commends the department for that, as alluded above.

In the quarters under review, the department managed to achieve the following targets: to successfully plan for the three campaigns for gender-based violence and femicide per quarter. All of them were executed. The achievement of running these kinds of campaigns will assist and change perceptions and stereotypes in our province. The ANC is advocating for the fight against gender-based violence and femicide. That is why in 2020 the ANC-led government launched the National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide to mainly and broadly navigate into tackling all forms of violence and abuse against women and children, looking at legal reforms, support for survivors, psychological and social services, to mention a few. During the launch, the President of the country described the GBVF as a second pandemic.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on statutory and nonstatutory bodies, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture managed to achieve a target of assisting two organisations. The bodies that were supported were the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture Movement and Moral Regeneration Movement. They were supported during the development and adoption of their business plans, and a memorandum of understanding was entered into with the structure and allocation structures. The allocation was R500 000, which was transferred for the implementation of their programmes and activities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on creation of jobs especially of arts and culture and heritage programmes, 126 Expanded Public Works Programme job opportunities were created as follows:

- Schoemansdal Museum 17;
- Muti wa Vatsonga 17;
- Dzata Museum 17;
- Head Office 5; and
- Libraries in 5 districts 70

The ANC commends the department for the implementation of these job opportunities and further calls the political leadership to look into other ways where permanent work opportunities can also be created. That will be responsive to one of the ANC's six priorities which is job creation. The payment of contractors in quarters one and two achievement was 99%, but in quarter three at 100%. The ANC is pleased with the department this matter. Businesses appointed to provide services should be paid as stipulated in the legislation. Failure to postpone the payments the government will run a risk of destroying them. We also call upon the MEC of Sport, Arts and Culture to encourage and motivate the team to continue to pay the contractors on time.

In conclusion, the work of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, particularly the political leadership which is led by Hon Funani Jerry Maseko and the administration team, is good. The targets that are set out in the plans most of them were managed to be achieved. The ANC applauds them and encourages them to continue to do the good work. Where there are areas of setbacks, where improvements are needed, please consider them so that in the next financial year we should be able to be in a position to achieve another clean audit.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we also want to take the opportunity to further commend the MEC for taking his time and host the Northern Academy School to win the Kay Motsepe National Championship. We want to extend our gratitude to the MEC and the team for hosting these kids for breakfast. It was a right move that encouraged them to further take their talents seriously. We have observed that a number of talent scouts have already visited the school and some of the kids were identified.

Hon Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, we also want to put it very clear. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Matsobane Simon Mathe. I shall now call on Hon Hermanus Frans Marx because Hon Jack Velile is not in the House.

MR MARX

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Having debated the 2022/23 Annual Report earlier, one needs to acknowledge the positive trend in Budget expenditure during the first three quarters during the 2023/24 financial year. While I acknowledge the positive trend in Budget expenditure moving from a concerning 90% in the first quarter to a more acceptable 70% in the third quarter, serious questions remain about the effectiveness and impact of this spending. The programme on Cultural Affairs is a mix bag of successes and missed opportunities while the report highlights achievements and hosting significant national days and exceeding targets for community conversations, the inconsistent reports for our museums, monuments and other heritage resources in the province is distressing. The absence of heritage sites like Bakone Malapa Museum, Eersteling, Modjadji and Makapan caves just to mention a few, is disappointing. Oversight visits at our heritage sites and local museums reveal dilapidated buildings and general lack of maintenance. This begs the question to our MEC and Head of Department: Is this how we protect and honour the heritage left by our forefathers?

It is evident that the committee is serious about obtaining information regarding our museums and heritage sites, and therefore, the committee requested from the department a report detailing the upgrades, renovations and constructions done to all these museums. One can only wait in anticipation to receive such a report. It is also worth noting that information on the department's statutory bodies like the Limpopo Heritage and Resource Authority has been limited and small amounts allocated to them indicating that this body tasked with very important roles and responsibility with regard to Limpopo's heritage, has been severely under-resourced.

Be that as it may, the Third Quarter Report boasted about exceeding the target of promoting artists, but at what cost? The significant jump in numbers from the planned target raises questions about budget overruns and whether genuine development is taking place, or we are simply chasing headline figures. The department's consistent success in delivering on the Archives programme is commendable. However, the same can unfortunately not be said of the library and information service. The ongoing saga of the Mulamula Library failing to meet the completion targets underscores a chronic problem with project management and contractor oversight. The dismal 8% completion rate of Tshaulu Library is simply inexcusable. The department is quick to shift the blame to their contractors and subcontractors, which only reaffirms a lack of proper management and contract oversight. Turning to sport and recreation begs the question: Is the department overachieving on paper but underperforming in reality?

The consistent support for sports academies is a positive sign. However, we must question the accuracy of target setting when the department consistently overachieved and seen with the provision of equipment and attire for indigenous games. This suggests either poor planning or a deliberate attempt to present a rosy picture of performance than reality. Furthermore, the department's failure to consistently support local leagues, a crucial component of grassroots development, is deeply concerning.

The department's failure to invest in traditional smaller sports such as blok pool, darts and evening swimming is equally disappointing.

Hon Speaker, these reports paint a picture of the department struggling to effectively deliver on its mandate. We need to see commitment, systematic change, improved training, enhanced oversight to prevent the recurrence of these issues. We further need to see timeous and effective legal enforcement on nonperforming contractors. We need to see a shift from simply spending the Budget to meet targets. This should not impact outcomes but genuinely benefit the people of Limpopo. We urge the MEC to address these concerns urgently and to provide clear actionable plans to improve performance. We, the opposition, stand ready to work constructively with the department to achieve these goals. However, we will not shy away from holding them accountable for their shortcomings and demanding better for the people of this province. I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Marx. We will now go to Hon Falaza Mdaka.

MR MDAKA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. Once more, I am trying to time myself.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Do not worry, we will assist you.

MR MDAKA

Thank you very much, Hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker and honourable Members; our MECs present, allow me to pass greetings once more.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I am delighted to be afforded this opportunity to address this august House on behalf of the African National Congress. There are a lot of sporting activities which are happening around our country, including in the creative industry. I also want to join Hon Nenguda who earlier on talked about one of the biggest highlights where Bafana Bafana, our national South African team, managed to qualify for the AFCON tournament that is scheduled for next year, 2025, in Morocco. Now that the Deputy Speaker has already indicated that now that we will be allowed to go and learn and also participate in other countries, I believe that indeed the money will be available for honourable Members to go and join Bafana Bafana there, because we normally only see Mama Joy alone. Mama Joy needs support. Honourable Members must go and give courage to Bafana Bafana. They qualified without losing even a single game. We want to make sure that they come back with the cup. We need to do something, now that it was indicated earlier on that something has happened with regard to our Budget. I believe that the Speakership also received something. You need to look into that. Thank you very much in advance. Our Bafana Bafana soccer team used to be called a bunch of losers; what they have done is really commendable. We congratulate them – the coach Hugo Broos, the technical team and the rest of the team – for a job well done.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture in our province prioritises school sports by supporting academies that pursue different sporting codes such as boxing, netball, baseball and volleyball. Six academies were supported as per quarterly plans with payment of salaries to staff members such as provincial managers, sport scientists, five districts academy coordinators and stipend for GYM instructors. The African National Congress pleaded with the department in this area, and we also wish that the departmental administration assisted by the political leadership can roll out a programme for school sports and recreation that will cover all the schools, including those that are in rural areas. About school sports and recreation, the ANC's 52nd National General Council resolved, amongst others, as follows: "94. All schools must offer minimum bouquet of extramural, mass participation in sport activities." The resolution speaks of an inclusive approach at school level, not a particular class or strata in our communities.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture managed to achieve a target by hosting one campaign on multilingualism promotion; the promotion of multilingualism targets in the province languages in the main. The campaign will also assist in the language barriers in our province and to do away with tribalism and racism. It also forges unity and a peaceful province. The department also managed to achieve a target for our historic events. In this case I am referring to the Freedom Day and Africa Day commemorations, as Hon Nenguda indicated earlier on. The events were organised by the department. The attendance was convincing in all the events. The ANC is pleased with the department for organising and achieving targets on these kinds of events, where the ordinary masses of our people will be able to attend and grasp the true meaning of these events and true fruits for the fight for liberation.

Hon Speaker, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is embarking on the construction of the theatre in order to afford the creative industry an opportunity to showcase their talent here in our province. Accordingly, the theatre is at phase 4, where it awaits a tender to be awarded to the chosen contractor so that the job can commence. However, the ANC is a bit concerned about the pace at which the process is unfolding. We call upon the MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, Hon Funani Jerry Maseko, who reminds me of Andries Maseko of Moroka Swallows Limited. I can still see him, the dribbling wizard playing in the middlefield. Yes, I hope that you are a legend to that giant. The wait has been long, Hon Maseko, on the delivery of the theatre. Our people cannot wait any longer.

Madam Speaker, on the libraries in the first quarter, it is reported that the target was the construction of one library, but in this instance the target was not achieved. It was reported that the Mulamula Library would be completed, but unfortunately, it was not as it was stagnant at 87% for a long time. The second and third quarters are not clear in terms of targets of libraries. The ANC further calls on the political and senior management team to address this matter with the urgency it deserves.

In conclusion, Hon Deputy Speaker, I want to say that the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture is hard at work, as Hon Nenguda said. Yes, sometimes it is very difficult to spend 100% on the last day. If you did not spend a few percentages, it can't be that you were not doing any work. The department is hard at work and that is commendable. On the issue of the theatre, it is not moving with the intended speed,

and on renovations and construction of libraries in the second and third quarters, it is not clear on the targets and also on the execution. We believe that the department will look into these shortfalls and will be able to come to the party, because all this that we are doing, the main beneficiary thereof is the masses of our people. We are looking forward to the clean audit once more. We are looking for the clean audit and not just these other audits. My friends say you have financial issues, but you are getting an unqualified audit report. There is just one small issue that stops you as a department from getting a clean audit. Definitely, we want you to get a clean audit this time around. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Falaza Mdaka. I shall now call upon the honourable MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture to respond to the debates made by the Members.

THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

Let me take this opportunity to thank you, Deputy Speaker, and acknowledge the presence of the Speaker; the Premier of the province; the Deputy Chief Whip; the Deputy Chair of Chairs; the PS in absentia; Members of the Legislature; members of the portfolio committee, in particular the chairperson; my HOD and CFO – I know they are somewhere here. Dumelang. Ninjani?

Before I go into my response, let me pass a message of congratulations to Magesi FC, our local PSL team, Hon Mabotja, that is going to play in the final Carling Black Label Cup on 23 November 2024 at the Free State Stadium against Mamelodi Sundowns. I am a loyal supporter of Kaizer Chiefs, but when Kaizer Chiefs plays against Magesi, I become patriotic. It is not about loyalty here but about patriotism. So, we are wishing them well and to bring the cup home.

We have also collaborated with them by ensuring that we organise transport to ferry supporters there as the department. [APPLAUSE] We hope they'll go there and represent us well, and we also congratulate Bafana Bafana for completing their project of qualifying to go to Morocco. We also believe they will do likewise in their World Cup Qualification game, because South Africa is a country of talent. We will have a half marathon the day after tomorrow go Bahlaloga. You are invited. Nna ke tla tšea dikilomitara tše tlhano because I don't have the capacity to proceed further, but there's 10 and 21 km kua Moletjie. You are all invited. Bao basatswafeng ku kidima, because it's part of our healthy lifestyle here in Limpopo, let's go there.

You are also invited to Mapungubwe Festival on 14 December 2024^{14th}. This invite excludes the MEC for Treasury; this is the instruction from my portfolio committee. Gape ke ngwana wa go laolega. Ke kwa ka batswadi, Hon Deputy Speaker.

On a serious note, let me respond to some of the critical issues that have been raised by the august House. Allow me to emphasise that compulsory attending of portfolio meetings is very much fundamental to be updated with regard to progress made thus far, because if you don't attend those meetings, you come here and raise an issue that was dealt with in the portfolio meeting.

When you debate, you end up seeing the same people belonging to the same committee saying different things, either someone didn't attend or doesn't have the necessary updates, or something has happened, which I don't know. My friends on the left will clarify themselves around these issues.

During the year under review, on the Annual Report for the 2022/23 financial year, the department planned to implement 42 performance targets, i.e., Administration, Cultural Affairs, Library and Archive Services, Sport and Recreation programmes for that financial year. The report we are considering here is a report of 2 years ago, as of then there is a lot of development that has been done. The expenditure then was at 93%, which was also an improvement as compared to the year 2021/22 because at that time it was 74%, and this was achieved on the basis of the capacity and commitment of our staff, the political head and different stakeholders that participated in that process.

With regard to the First, Second and Third Quarter Reports, allow me to emphasise the infrastructure projects because that is where we didn't perform very well, and that is an area where we need assistance. We urge the portfolio committee to assist in that regard. We are saying the major challenge experienced here during the first, second and third quarter of the 2023/24 financial year were delays in the infrastructure projects. A re gane. That is the main situation that characterises our operation in the department.

With regard to the libraries and the commencement of the construction of the theatre, the department together with the implementing agent, which is Public Works, worked very hard to make sure that contracts are appointed by the third quarter of 2023/24 to start with projects, and the progress to date is as follows:

- With regard to Botshabelo Library, as planned to achieve 100%, now we are at 97%. A lot of work has been done; there are specific detailed performances with regard to the project itself on my report, which I'll not go into because of time constraints.
- With regard to Mampane Library, progress is at 73% against the 92%. Sisalele emuva kancane because of some challenges amongst the stakeholders in that project, which is something you might not deal with there and then, and it delays the project.
- With regard to Tshaulu Library somewhere in Vhembe, here we've got a disaster. Let me indicate that two contractor's companies were appointed. The first one was appointed and then terminated, the same happened to the second one. Now the third contractor will be appointed by the end of this month, which is 30 November. It clearly tells you that there are financial implications and other factors that have to be considered. Obviously, in that regard, we are inviting the Auditor-General. We are talking to the Department of Public Works as the implementing agent; we are engaging politically and administratively so that we make sure that we push that project until it gets finished, that is Tshaulu which is the one with serious challenges.

- With regard to Vleifontein Library, which is currently at 95%; work has been running smoothly. We don't have any challenges.
- With regard to provincial state theatre, ye e dirilego gore, Molekgotlaphethiši wa Matlotlo re mo swariše R73 million. In fact, we discussed and agreed; portfolio committee Members are aware, those who are attending, that we reported the matter of construction mafias. Together with the MEC for Public Works, we visited the area and engaged until the project was up and running again; so that's the reason we agreed with Treasury to hold that R73 million. We don't want it to go to national, while in the hand of the Treasury in the next financial year, it'll be given back so that we continue with the project. However, it is a fact that we had a delay, and it got some implications. As the Members of EXCO, we have raised this issue, we are aware of the challenges in Public Works in terms of capacity, and there are ways and means led obviously by the MEC for Public Works to deal with this capacity problem regarding infrastructure projects. As long as that capacity problem is still there, obviously we'll encounter a number of challenges. It is unfortunate, but it is a reality.

The Department of Sports, Arts and Culture acknowledges the matter of stagnation in finalising the implementation of the Scopa resolutions and the House resolutions, which started from 2014/15 until 2021/22. We had a lot of resolutions that we were supposed to consider from Scopa and the House. We focus on them, and I can proudly say that we have eliminated several of them from 63 resolutions, we were able to deal with 56 resolutions and only 7 resolutions are currently outstanding.

So, this shows the commitment of the department that resolutions of the House and Scopa are able to be implemented, and when you go through that report it tells you that out of seven, we have five resolutions that are stuck in the State Attorney, and we don't have jurisdiction over it. The issue of the State Attorney becomes questionable, and we have raised it with the authority that be, to unlock that because there's a slow pace of attending cases that require the State Attorney, and that is unfortunately the only door that we should knock on and ensure that they address that with legal implications.

The other one which is left out of those five, ke a material underspending of the Budget, which is under consideration by Provincial Treasury. We are engaging them around it. The last special resolution was about lifestyle audits, and we have discussed it with the HOD to find a way of making sure that this resolution gets implemented. Our objective is to ensure that all the resolutions tja Scopa and the House get implemented and re tšwe mo go tšona and at least attend to the new ones so that there's progress with the work that we are doing.

In conclusion, let me talk about Mulamula Library. That library is finished, Hon Makamu. Hon Makamu, I'm going to invite you to the meeting together with the veteran of the movement, Ntate Mashamba, because he's from that area. We had a meeting with him to assist us to unlock some of these things. The challenge there ke taba yela ya community and the chieftainship.

Unfortunately, I can't get into that space; that's why I'm going to invite him and the veteran, Mashamba so that we separate the issues of chieftainship and the provision

of the library services to the people, because we have bought the furniture, the books are there, you can't go and put the furniture there. Staff is available, security is there, but you can't run because of those conflicts.

In closing, the MEC wa CoGHSTA together with the veteran and I will deal with the issue, and as and when there is a positive outcome, honourable chair of the committee, we will come back to you with a progressive report. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC. Is there any announcement, Speaker?

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to make the following announcements:

- Firstly, the office is hereby sadly informing honourable Members and the staff of the Legislature on the sad news of the passing away of Ms Wendy Khosa. Ms Wendy Khosa was one of the protocol officials who was dedicated and committed to serve the Limpopo Legislature. We have already contacted the family through the Office of the Secretary, and the details of the funeral arrangements will be duly communicated. We send our heartfelt condolences to the family and their loved ones. May her soul rest in peace!
- Secondly, we also announce to the honourable Members who are residing at the Parliamentary Village that there is an assessment form based on the meeting we had previously for us to be able to assist you together with Public Works. Please complete the form, some of the forms today were collected by the Deputy Chair of Chairs, here seated next to me. We will request him to collect all the forms today and tomorrow, then tomorrow immediately after the Sitting, they will be handed over where they are going to be attended to. So, failure to complete the form, don't come back to complain and say my house is still not yet fixed. Complete the form and tell us the things that need to be fixed so that Public Works may be told what needs to be done as soon as we can.
- Thirdly, we are reminding the honourable Members that tomorrow's Sitting is proceeding, 22 Friday. Lastly, lunch is served at the Committees Boardroom. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. The House is adjourned to tomorrow, 22 November 2024 at the Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber at 10:00.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
FRIDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

We shall now have the opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

Thank you so much. We may all be seated. Good morning, honourable Members. Today is a very good morning that we are proceeding with the business of the Legislature. Honourable Members, before we proceed, you will remember that yesterday, we had some issues that needed to be attended to.

Therefore, before we start with the House proceedings, I will now refer you, honourable Members, to Rule 103, which talks about the right of an honourable Member to speak. It indicates that an honourable Member may speak in any official language of the province to a question before the House; to an amendment proposed to a question; or an amendment proposed by himself or herself; and lastly, to a point of order or a matter of privilege.

While in South Africa we have 11 official languages, here in Limpopo we recognise only 6 official languages. Those languages are Sepedi, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, English and Afrikaans. On that note, we have introduced the system so that you have an interpreting service in those 6 languages.

You can utilise the earphones provided. You can connect to the system as and when somebody utilises a language for which you think you need an interpretation. You need to put on the earphones so that you can listen to the interpretation, because the interpretation is provided. The only thing is that people were not able to hear it.

We are raising that matter to ensure that we don't have difficulties when Members want to express themselves in a language that they prefer. On that note, we are pleading that we should not leave with those earphones.

When we leave the Sitting, we should please just leave them where they are. This is because the intention is to mount them so that they are not movable and for that system to operate well.

We shall now move to the next item. The Programming Committee has agreed to suspend items 2–6 so that we can be able to proceed with the debates.

[ITEMS 2–6 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

7.1 Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury

Over to you, committee chairperson.

MR PHEEDI

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker; Deputy Speaker in absentia; our Premier, Dr Ramathuba; Members of the Executive Council of the Limpopo Legislature; chairpersons of all various portfolio committees; Members of the Legislature as well as members of the public, greetings to you all. Kgotso a e be le lena.

Hon Speaker, I rise before this House to present the 2022/23 Annual Report of the Provincial Treasury that is tabled before you for consideration and adoption. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Pheedi. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Mokaba, you are recognised.

MS MOKABA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Ke le Mohlomphegi Mokaba, ke ema mo go thekga se se boletšwego ke modulasetulo wa Komiti ya Matlotlo.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Mokaba. We can allow the chairperson to go back to his seat and come back later because we are now going to refer to the Speakers' List. The person who is opening the debate on our Speakers' List is Hon Matjomane Germinor Delly. Honourable Member, you have got 10 minutes, and it is starting now.

MS MATJOMANE

Speaker, Hon Makoma Makhurupetje; Deputy Speaker in absentia, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela; Hon Premier in absentia, Dr Phophi Ramathuba; Chief Whip and the Deputy Chief Whip; Members of the Executive Council; chairpersons of the

committees and all honourable Members present in this House from different political parties, receive my revolutionary greetings.

Madam Speaker, let me remind the august House that we, as the Legislature, are an expression of the will of the people of Limpopo. The Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury is at the core of driving prioritisation of financial management and oversight of the Limpopo public purse.

I also want to remind the chairperson of Sport, Arts and Culture, Hon Mdaka, that the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury is the backbone of all the committees. You are obliged to make sure that the MEC, Hon Mahoai, receives his ticket to the festival.

The Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury has a constitutional obligation to oversee performance of the Provincial Treasury in the province. Guided by this obligation, the committee interacted with the Department of Provincial Treasury to consider the Second Quarter Performance Report of the 2022/23 financial year on 08 September 2024.

Hon Speaker, we are gathered in this august House a few weeks after the tabling of the 2024 Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement by the Minister for Finance, Enoch Godongwana, on 30 October 2024.

The purpose of the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) is to allow government departments to apply for their Budget adjustments, allow them to apply for rollovers and request for additional funding for unforeseen circumstances as well as to avoid unnecessary expenditures.

The 2022/23 Annual Report reflects the extent to which the department kept its commitment of maintaining good governance and financial cleanliness in the province as a whole.

Though the department's audit opinion has regressed from unqualified to qualified with matters of emphasis, the department sustained clean audit for five years before regressing. We hope that it will multiply its efforts to go back to obtaining a clean audit opinion.

Hon Speaker, the department generated a revenue of R448,849 in the 2022/23 financial year as compared to R526 064 000 revenue generated for the 2021/22 financial year.

Throughout the entire 2022/23 financial year, we have strived to serve as an example to other departments by maintaining sound financial discipline and to encourage other provincial departments to contribute to the overall improvement in our provincial fiscus practices.

On aligning ourselves with the ANC's initiative to fight corruption at all costs, the department has put some mechanisms in place to counter fraud, corruption and conflict of interest amongst officials as well as compulsory declaration directives of financial interest for employees who are doing business with the state, by prescreening of employment candidates before appointment.

On improving audit outcomes, consequence management and performance management in general, the department has appointed an independent audit committee that oversees the performance of risk management committees which were set to ensure proactive risk solutions through continuous monitoring, assessment and identification of emerging risks as well as curbing them.

One of the key responsibilities of the Provincial Treasury is to enhance financial governance across all departments and public entities. Therefore, for the 2022/23 financial year, the Financial Governance Unit was allocated enough budget to build trust among stakeholders by enhancing accountability and compliance with the attainable and sustainable financial norms and standards.

This unit plays a pivotal role in supporting provincial financial management information systems and providing guidance on risk management practices. Its focus on the implementation of the 2025 audit improvement strategy is particularly crucial as we work towards eliminating qualified audit opinions and increasing the number of clean audits across the province.

Madam Speaker, to strengthen governance structures, the allocation within this programme will be used to support shared audit committees, oversight bodies and departments with financial accounting and audit matters.

Additionally, it will enable the Provincial Treasury to undertake forensic investigations and monitor the implementation of effective risk management practices in all departments and public entities.

In this regard, the ANC welcomes the strategic move to centralise the appointment and remuneration of independent risk management committee chairpersons within the Provincial Treasury. This initiative will ensure uniform and standard risk reporting frameworks, thereby enhancing overall oversight on enterprise risk management.

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, yesterday on 21 November 2024, the MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Mahoai, presented the Adjustments Budget for our consideration. Our role as Members of the Legislature is to consider whether the Budget has been adjusted to cater for the current realities, taking into consideration the status of our provincial purse.

It is, therefore, imperative that our main objective in our considerations is to take note that this is the people's Budget and not our budget.

Ke a leboga, Madam Speaker. Ngiyathokoza. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Nathi siyathokoza, mama. Thank you so much. We shall now call upon Hon Jacobus Frederik Smalle to come and present.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. On behalf of the GNU, I will lead the discussions for today.

Hon Speaker, as we discussed the 2022/23 Annual Report of the Provincial Treasury, which is the end of the Sixth Administration, it is important that we also take stock of where we ended and where we are going.

Hon Speaker, taking stock of the Sixth Administration, it is evident that while the Department of the Provincial Treasury has shown commitment in allocating and monitoring Budgets despite their limited human resources capacities, other departments and state-owned entities such as Health, CoGHSTA, Education, GAAL and RAL have significantly fallen short during this period.

Despite repeated calls for stronger internal controls compliance with regulations on supply chain management processes, banking and cash flow management remained unachieved. This is reflected in irregular expenditure, which rose by R2,7 billion to a staggering R18,6 billion.

The departments collectively spent a total expenditure of R66,55 billion in operating expenditures and R273 billion on capital expenditures. The inefficiencies caused a substantial harm to this province. Reasons for some of the Sixth Administration failures under these departments were the following:

- Instability at HOD level;
- Significant delays on completion of projects, which hampers service delivery, leading to contractors claiming millions of rands in standing cost;
- Deteriorating infrastructure due to the delayed maintenance;
- Delays in developing and implementing financial recovery plans;
- Inadequate skills and capacity to plan, monitor and complete infrastructure projects; and
- Slow progress in investigating irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

Additionally, 26% of the KPIs in the provincial planning documents were unreliable for auditing purposes.

Some of the departments which underperformed during the financial year were the District Health Services, which only achieved 49% of its KPI targets; CoGHSTA, which achieved 55,6% of its targets; and the Department of Education, which achieved 57% of its targets despite spending 98% on its allocated Budget. Furthermore, some of these departments incorrectly applied the consumer price index, inflating prices by up to 47%, causing a significant loss.

This breach of the PFMA guidelines resulted in more fruitless and wasteful expenditure. Failure to hold all these officials and bidders accountable for misrepresentation has further entrenched noncompliance. The AG has confirmed these issues, highlighting that poor project planning and monitoring was pervasive across these departments.

Examples of failed and weak internal control measures due to incompetent oversight from the heads of departments are the following:

- The road contract for RAL/T634/2016: This project of upgrading the gravel roads to bituminous roads was abandoned due to its R2 billion over commitments linked to a pyramid scheme. It resulted in communities using paving bricks for the construction of their houses.
- The Maphutha Malatjie Hospital's weak internal control measures resulted in an additional R131 million in cost with a further R15 million worth of X-ray equipment left unused.
- Lemana College has been budgeted an amount of R36,5 million. Poor oversight resulted in a second contractor being appointment to an additional cost of R30,1 million, leading to R21,8 million fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

These are only some examples of the billions being squandered by the province with no punitive measures taken against those irresponsible officials.

Our healthcare system in the province looks like it's in ICU.

An ideal hospital is a hospital with good infrastructure not only the physical condition and spaces but also the health technology, information and communication technology, adequate bulk supplies and an appropriately managed and maintained motor vehicle fleet. Yet the province's healthcare system is in critical condition with only 2 out of 30 district hospitals meeting the 7% of the requirements for ideal hospital status.

As we go into the Seventh Administration, the pressing question is whether the provincial administration will succeed in shifting from a culture of impunity to one of accountability, fostering unethical incapable governance framework.

Without decisive actions, Limpopo faces a risk of once again being placed under section 100. The people of Limpopo deserve a government which is committed to responsible, accountable governance and to promote growth and effectively address poverty and unemployment rate.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. I am just asking that all Members should look at their time so that they don't exceed their time allocated. I am not seeing anyone from the EFF party. I will now proceed to the chairperson of the committee to close the debate. Hon Pheedi Maseko Solomon, the floor is yours.

MR PHEEDI

Thank you once more, Hon Speaker. All protocol is observed.

Hon Speaker, we are meeting in this honourable House a day after the tabling of the 2024 Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill by the MEC, Hon Kgabo Elias Mahoai,

which, we believe, will bring a sense of renewal, commitment and an improvement on the expenditure patterns of our departments.

What is encouraging in his presentation was a positive upward move in Budget adjustments to almost all the departments. Hon Speaker, this positive move is not happening by accident, in Latin we say *abor omnia vincit*, which in simple English means labour conquers everything. To make it simpler, it means hard work pays.

It means our department has done so well to make sure that we get more income into the fiscus of our government.

Hon Speaker, the 2022/23 financial year's Annual Report reflects an extent to which the Limpopo Provincial Treasury has performed in the entire year. The department has resiliently kept its commitment of maintaining good governance and giving unwavering financial support to other departments.

Once more, to respond to Hon Smalle, we are all guided by the Public Finance Management Act of 1999 and its related policies, which serve as a GPS. It is so pleasing to find out that this department is not using common sense in doing its mandated work.

I stand with pride before this august House to express our unwavering support for the Provincial Treasury's efforts to uphold the principles of sound financial management and good governance.

The ANC-led provincial government remains committed to working hand in hand with the Provincial Treasury and all other stakeholders to ensure that our province continues to move forward on the path of sustainable development, social justice, and economic empowerment for all, which will ultimately or finally lead to a capable state.

However, Hon Speaker, for this 2022/23 financial year, the department has regressed from unqualified audit opinion to qualified opinion with matters of emphasis. The qualified audit opinion came as a result of internal control deficiencies, omission of some financial statements, failure to fill critical vacant positions within the departments and incurred expenditure from the previous years which could not be resolved and was not captured in the financial statements.

Hon Speaker, once more, one of the critical roles played by the department is through the programme of Municipal Support guided by the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, whereby the department is mandated to ensure that the support to municipalities through the municipal finance component must be applauded, because the department has committed itself to strengthen its capacity and performance on municipal support by increasing personnel.

This will ensure that municipalities implement internal controls recommendations from both internal audit committee as well as the Auditor-General's office. This will enhance effective delivery of services to our communities, as well as improving on their audit outcomes.

Hon Speaker, as we speak on this one, very soon the portfolio committee will submit a proposal on which the portfolio committee be at its term as a Standing Committee so that it can have more extended mandate to even to go to the level of municipalities to track the finance that we also give to the municipalities and other spheres of government, including the departments.

Hon Speaker, in terms of the 30 days payment compliance to service providers, the department has achieved 100% compliance rate for all verified invoices and the departmental rate for the year stood at 99,4%, meaning that the suppliers were paid on time.

Hon Speaker, it makes a huge difference to our emerging SMEs who might struggle to survive even for a month without getting any payment. That is why I am saying, it deserves a big round of applause. [APPLAUSE]

Hon Speaker, during the year under review, the department successfully allocated and monitored the provincial Budget across all the departments with 98% of the Budget spent by the year end.

Through its working relationship with the Office of the Premier, the Provincial Treasury managed to reduce the compensation of employees from provincial expenditure of 66,8% to 66,1 %.

Once more, Hon Speaker, the province is still challenged with a recurring expenditure across various departments in the province with issues from as far as during the section 100(b). I wish my fellow leaders were here. I hope we all know what happened in the section 100(b) in the Limpopo province. People who collapsed the Limpopo province are not here today.

As the portfolio committee, we learnt with dismay that the expenditures incurred during that period are without supporting documents. These will remain unresolved for years and years to come. However, the province must find a legal way of having this expenditure cleared from the books of the province.

If we are to simplify this one, during section 100(b), the administration that was deployed in Limpopo province left the province without any trace of whatever services rendered with supporting documents, and as such these will take years and years before it can be resolved.

Therefore, as the portfolio committee, we are calling on the department to find a way of clearing the books of the province, so that we can move forward on a positive note.

Hon Speaker, as the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury, allow me to move for the consideration and adoption of the 2022/23 Annual Report as the report of this honourable House.

I so move, Hon Speaker. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable chairperson. In future, when you address, you must address the Speaker, not Members of the House. It is unparliamentary to address Members of the House. I think, you don't need to go back to your chair because you will be needed to proceed with the debate, and then the MEC will respond later.

Today, it looks like it is not going to be much hectic. I am not going to be very strict on time, but please manage your own time by yourself so that we will not stop you. I will now allow the chairperson of the committee to proceed with the next item.

7.2. Consideration and Adoption of the Reports of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury

Over to you, committee chairperson.

MR PHEEDI

Thanks very much once more, Hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, I rise again before this august House to move for the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 first quarter report for the Department of Provincial Treasury. I so submit.

THE SPEAKER

Thanks very much, chairperson. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Nempumbuluni, you are recognised.

MR NEMPUMBULUNI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. My name is Hon Nempumbuluni. I stand here to second the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 First Quarter Report for the Department of Provincial Treasury as presented by the chairperson of the committee. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Committee chairperson, you may proceed with the next report.

MR PHEEDI

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. I stand before this House again for the submission of the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration and adoption by this august House.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Mmetle-Ramohlola, you are recognised.

MS MMETLE-RAMOHLOLA

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. I, Hon Mmetle, hereby second the Second Quarter Report as presented by the chairperson of the committee. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Mmetle. You may proceed with the next report chairperson.

MR PHEEDI

Once more, Hon Speaker, I submit to this House the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury for consideration and adoption.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, chairperson. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Shai, you are recognised.

MR SHAI

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report of the Department of Provincial Treasury as presented by the chairperson of the committee.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, chairperson of the committee, Hon Pheedi. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. Our first speaker on the list is Hon Mokaba Mapula Anna.

MS MOKABA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I would like to start with a quote by Barrack Obama, "A budget is more than just a series of numbers on a page; it is an embodiment of our values and priorities."

This quote sets the tone for discussion of the Limpopo Provincial Treasury's quarterly report, emphasising the importance of aligning financial planning with the needs and aspirations of the people. It reminds your audience that budgets are not just technical documents, but a reflection of commitments to service delivery and economic growth.

Hon Speaker, all MECs present here, Deputy Chief Whip, honourable Members from all political parties and guests in our gallery, good morning. Kgotsong.

Hon Speaker, the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury has a constitutional mandate and obligation to oversee the general performance of the Provincial Treasury in the province. Guided by this constitutional mandate, the committee will from time to time have an interaction with the department to discuss and consider quarterly performance reports.

The purpose of quarterly performance reports is to give information regarding progress made on implementing the key targets and goals as set out in the Annual Performance Plan on a quarterly basis.

Hon Speaker, for the 2023/24 first quarter, the department's performance data was analysed by the strategic management directorate, which focused on alignments of targets against the APP, analysing the performance reports by comparing the actual achievements against the department's planned outputs and also to provide feedback to branches within the department for clarity on nonalignment of targets and noncompliance or incomplete reporting.

For the first quarter, the department had 19 targets aligned to its programmes, and all of them were achieved as planned.

The committee received a detailed report on compliance with supply chain management processes on quotations management, bids management, contract management, reporting and administration of supply chain management processes in general for all departments and entities as resolved in the second and third quarter.

However, the management of contingent liabilities and the status quo of the second quarter remained. It was found that the amount of contingent liabilities was standing at R9 billion, whereby there were 142 new claims estimated to the value of R661,6 million received.

Five claims to the value of R2,089 million were already settled while other five claims to the value of R393,000 were cancelled or withdrawn.

The closing balance as at the end of the reports under review was 2 376 cases estimated at R10,159 billion. Legal costs incurred from the first quarter to the third quarter were recorded at R5,28 million, which is not a true reflection as some departments like Health did not submit the required figures despite numerous follow-ups.

It was reported to the committee that assessments on strategic procurement targets, asset management, cash and supply chain management were conducted in 16 provincial public institutions in the province. The department must from time to time update the committee on contingent liabilities and plans on how to curb them.

Hon Speaker, the purpose of the SCM and systems, which is programme 3 of the department, is to oversee the management of assets, liabilities and supply chain management to provincial departments and public entities. The programme was allocated R54,077 million, and the expenditure in the quarter amounted to R10,552 million or 20% of the allocation.

During the engagements with the department, the committee found that there were still challenges on SCM compliance by the departments and entities, compliance to PFMA regarding banking processes and cash flow management.

The committee, therefore, recommended that the following:

- Internal control should be strengthened to ensure that officials in departments comply with regulations thereof.
- The Provincial Treasury should regularly monitor compliance and provide feedback to the committee.

A report detailing compliance assessment levels in departments and entities was duly submitted to the committee in the quarter under review. The department tried its best to monitor the compliance levels on banking, cash and liabilities management by other departments and entities.

There were positive strides made amidst some minor noticeable challenges. Cash flow management of departments for the committee found that requests to process invoices were made on run dates, which is something that was prohibited, but it was largely attributed to the prescheduled systems, downtimes and late submission of invoices on rates and taxes.

On banking management of public entities, it was found that all public entities were not in formal contractual arrangements with their bankers in terms of the Provincial Treasury Regulations on procurement processes.

Provincial Treasury, therefore, advised that entities should join the current provincial banking contract for provision of commercial banking to Limpopo provincial government, but they did not heed the advice.

Cash flow management of entities mandates all schedule 3C public entities, i.e., Limpopo Gambling Board (LGB), Limpopo Tourism Agency (LTA) and Road Agency Limpopo (RAL), to have corporation for public deposits (CPD) accounts with the South African Reserve Bank for investment purposes.

They are required to invest their surpluses on a daily basis, unless exempted by National Treasury. Out of the three aforementioned entities, RAL had recently opened the CPD account but has not started with daily surplus investments.

On debt management, no findings were made in all three public entities during the quarter under review.

The committee received a detailed report on compliance to SCM processes on quotations management, bids management, contract management, SCM reporting and administration of SCM processes in general for all departments and entities as resolved in the previous quarter.

It was reported that assessments on strategic procurement targets, asset management, cash and supply chain management were conducted in 16 provincial public institutions in the province.

There should be a concerted effort by departments and entities to ensure that implementation of mitigation plans is given due consideration to avoid recurrence of noncompliance with supply chain management processes and reduce the rate at which contingent liabilities are recurring.

The department has to this point performed better on its vision and mandate, which is to have sustainable financial stability and accountability in the province.

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, let us never forget that good governance is not measured by the number of years we spend but by the lives we change. This encapsulates the essence of the Limpopo Provincial Treasury efforts, reminding everyone that the ultimate goals of fiscal management are improving the quality of life for the people of the province. It leaves a hopeful and purposeful driven message.

On this note, Hon Speaker, allow me to request this honourable House to consider and adopt the First, Second and Third Quarter Reports for the 2023/24 financial year as the reports of this House.

I so move. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Mokaba. We really appreciate you for managing your time well. We will now allow Hon Jacobus Frederik Smalle to take the podium.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker and honourable Members.

We meet at a time when 93% of our settlements in Limpopo face severe challenges with water supply. Mayors and Municipal Managers are unable to identify and prioritise Budget needs to monitor, manage, and improve water supply. In many instances, the government has failed to uphold our Constitution.

The local government has failed the people of Limpopo and so has this august House.

Two million people in Limpopo cannot find employment, and they know that as the economy worsens, so do their chances of ever securing a job. Limpopo recorded the highest differences between the expanded and official unemployment rates, at 15,1% points, largely due to uncertainty in government policy and implementation.

Comparing the fourth quarter of 2023 to the first quarter of 2024, Limpopo experienced the largest unemployment percentage increase of 2,4%, now standing at 32,7%. The profound sadness of our current situation is that there is absolutely no justifiable reason for us to be where we are today.

Our financial management concerns are that the revenue analysis at the end of December 2023 showed collected revenue amounting to R1,5 billion or 83,0%, reflecting an excess of R112,4 million or 5,8%. However, issues in banking and cash management at the end of the third quarter of the 2023/24 financial year are a cause for concern. These include:

- High levels of claims against the state and a slow turnaround in court cases;
- Weak debt management, including delayed debt creation, prescription of debts, and improper write-offs;

- Nonparticipation of schedule 3C, which are the public entities into intergovernmental cash coordination to optimise returns on cash surpluses at the South African Reserve Bank (SARB); and
- Public entities operating without formal banking relationships as required by the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and Treasury Regulations.

Overall, most departments' supply chain management systems are unable to effectively handle contract management to prevent officials from doing business with the government. The Provincial Treasury budget appropriation for programme 2 stands at R80,8 million or 17%, which is a 2% decrease from the total Budget of R478,1 million.

Section 114(2) of the Constitution, which mandates the Legislature to maintain oversight, can no longer afford to deprioritise programme 2 at the expense of monitoring and supporting all government departments and local government.

If this Legislature is serious about improving the welfare of this province, we must provide greater operational and financial support to the Department of Provincial Treasury.

On state-owned entities, this House resolved that state-owned entities must achieve financial self-sustainability by the end of the 2024/25 financial year. This aligns with the Government of National Unity (GNU) and National Treasury's stance of providing no further bailouts to SOEs.

Municipal reporting challenges and noncompliance with reporting requirements by municipalities remain a persistent issue that both the Provincial Treasury and CoGHSTA must urgently address.

Section 71 of the MFMA requires all municipalities to submit monthly budget statements to the Provincial Treasury, while section 71(7) mandates the Provincial Treasury to consolidate and report on the state of these municipalities.

The section 71 consolidated report submitted to the Limpopo Legislature in June 2024 revealed the following:

- Three municipalities, i.e., Vhembe, Mogalakwena, and Thabazimbi, did not submit their debtors' strings;
- Five municipalities (Molemole, Vhembe, Mogalakwena, Thabazimbi, and Waterberg) did not submit household debtor reports; and
- Five municipalities (Greater Giyani, Ephraim Mogale, Fetakgomo-Tubatse, Thabazimbi, and Waterberg) failed to report amounts owed to creditors.

Incorrect and incomplete information in municipal reports must be urgently addressed by the Provincial Treasury. Additionally, Provincial Treasury must investigate noncompliant reporting and address poor debtor and creditor management.

There is a call for change, because this crisis directly impacts the daily lives of our people. Life is becoming materially harder for everyone. Yet, our potential remains

vast. Our human capital is exceptional. Goodwill among South Africans is undiminished, and our natural endowments are enormous.

The DA has demonstrated that where we govern, we bring about real change. We instil hope, attract investment, and inspire officials to perform at their best. We remain optimistic about our economy and our province of Limpopo. We believe we can grow much faster than we are now and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable Member, for really managing your time nicely. We shall now call upon the chairperson of the committee to close the debate. Our friends who are the EFF, are not here. That is why we are jumping them and calling the chairperson of the committee. The EFF are my friends. You don't know. They are my very good friends.

MR PHEEDI

Thank you once again, Hon Speaker. Greetings to everyone in the House and those who might be watching the House proceedings on the social media platforms.

I am going to present the reports of the first, second and third quarters for the 2023/24 financial year. Hon Speaker, the quarterly reports require institutions to review their performance and progress made over a three-month period so as to substantiate and communicate their achievements and to take alongside its vision of establishing a competent, ethical and progressive state.

The department has diligently worked towards significantly contributing to the growth and prosperity of the province by promoting consistency on intergovernmental planning, managing financial responsibilities and by providing the necessary support to all departmental institutions.

Once more, Hon Speaker, throughout all the quarters of the 2023/24 financial year, the department committed itself to enhancing its support to other departments, state-owned entities and municipalities, with emphasis on a tailored approach to meet their set targets.

The department has also reiterated its commitment to come up with a tangible measure to reduce unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditures while strengthening the framework of consequence management and intense accountability.

Hon Speaker, again, the Provincial Treasury drafted a clean audit plan and aligned it to the provincial audit plan strategy, which will be reviewed on an annual basis to align itself with the plans of the department.

Since its inception, many institutions have improved their set targets and audit outcomes. Regular monthly and quarterly meetings are held with the underperforming

institutions to check on their progress, Budget monitoring and their expenditure patterns.

An analysis of the Fourth Quarter Report, as it is the report that captures what transpired in the previous quarters, reflects the following audit outcomes:

- Four departments obtained clean audit, and they are the Legislature, Provincial Treasury, and Sports, Arts and Culture;
- Five departments obtained unqualified audit outcome, and they are the Department of Agriculture, LEDET, Health, Transport and CoGHSTA;
- Two departments obtained qualified audit outcome, and they are the Social Development and Public Works;
- Five departments have improved, five of them maintained an unqualified audit outcome, while only two have regressed; and
- The parastatals have also improved, with one outstanding audit outcome, which is LEDA.

On budget management, the department reported that municipalities with unfunded budgets were assisted to develop and implement required budget funding plans. Review of municipal data uploaded on National Treasury website was done monthly to improve the accuracy of the data, which is useful when municipal finances are analysed.

Five municipalities in the province are sitting with the highest credit. Those municipalities are Thabazimbi, Modimolle-Mookgophong, BaPhalaborwa, Musina and Mogalakwena. The department intervened by assisting them to develop financial recovery plans, which will enable them to service their debts.

Provincial Treasury reported that it was in a process of monitoring the monthly debt relief compliance requirements. It was found that all municipalities, which were on debt relief, had areas of noncompliance, especially low debt collection rate as well as the inability to limit free supply to indigent households as prescribed.

On unwanted, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure as well, the sessions were held between Provincial Treasury and CoGHSTA, with top 10 municipalities that are higher on expenditures to determine challenges within government structures and operational processes.

The department will play its monitoring role over those municipalities as they were advised and given tools on how to reduce unwanted expenditures.

Provincial Treasury reported that revenue assessment was conducted as targeted in all the quarters under review. In-year monitoring reports were consolidated as regulated, and infrastructure assessment was conducted. Support to local government to optimise Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) performance and infrastructure reporting model assessments were conducted in infrastructure-delivery departments.

Once more, Hon Speaker, the committee noted the efforts recommended – that progress should be provided on infrastructure delivery in the province. In the recent progress report that was submitted to the committee, provincial infrastructure showed

improvements in the 2023/24 financial year at 84% from the 56% and 64% of the previous financial years, respectively.

It was reported that some provincial infrastructure projects were affected by cost containment measures; however, efforts to accelerate procurement through the use of panel of contractors assisted the process.

Hon Speaker, Provincial Treasury informed the committee about the guidelines and reporting format which had been developed to assist departments and entities to accelerate projects at preconstruction stages to construction stages in order to expedite expenditure.

On revenue management, municipal tariffs were reviewed for cost reflectiveness and general valuation roll of quarterly reconciliations. The committee recommended that officials administering conditional grants should be empowered to advance improvements on expenditure of grants. Such empowerment was deemed necessary as it would assist in detecting early warning signs on underexpenditure of grants.

According to the Provincial Treasury, bilateral meetings were held with all relevant departments to assess the spending trends and identify challenges that need escalation to national departments. In addition, workshops were also held with relevant officials to ensure that implementation is compliant with various grant frameworks.

Once more, Hon Speaker, the department is doing everything in line with the ANC-led Seventh Administration government slogan, which was introduced by the Hon Premier in her opening address, that says: Dilo di tshentshitse. Zwithu zwo shanduka.

Allow us to give a round of applause to the department for its continued support to make sure that there is financial stability and accountability in the province.

The Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury, after thorough engagements with the department on several occasions, hereby presents the First, Second, Third and the Fourth Quarter Reports for the 2023/24 financial year for consideration and adoption by this House.

I so submit.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, chairperson. I am worried that at some point you are referring to the fourth quarter, and I don't know if it is a slip of a tongue, because today we are considering the First, Second and the Third Quarter Reports. For record purposes, let us put it correctly.

MR PHEEDI

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Corrections are accepted. We are on the first, second and third quarter. Thank you very much for alerting me.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable chairperson. We are now moving forward to the next report. We will give an opportunity to the MEC to respond to the debates.

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Hon Speaker; Hon Premier; Members of the Executive Council; honourable Members of this august House of the Legislature; ladies and gentlemen, I greet you.

I was taking notes, and I will not repeat some of the things. There is one thing that I want to correct before we go on. It is that during the period under review, which is the 2022/23 financial year, the Provincial Treasury regressed from clean audit to unqualified.

I have checked the history; it has never happened before. It has changed the history. It has never happened before. I must indicate that when the current audit was done, I was already there. We were checking to see what the problem was.

I can assure you that the reason for that regression in that year was because Provincial Treasury bought IT equipment using the Gauteng registered SETA supplier instead of the Limpopo registered SETA supplier, and by doing that it was found to be anomalous. That was the reason it regressed.

I really appreciate and learnt from the honourable Members' comments and issues raised, which we have comfortably taken note of. Indeed, in the subsequent year, which is the 2023/24 financial year, the Provincial Treasury went back to its clean audits.

Let me appreciate all the Members' inputs, including the GNU as you say. I was trying to write as fast as I could just to make sure that I can get your point, but there is one point that I would like to pay attention to, which has to do with unwanted expenditure, as Hon Smalle has indicated.

This expenditure is always called the UIS and, in most cases, the "I" is not important, unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure. The bulk of what he said pertained to the irregular expenditure.

I would like to assure the House that the department established a committee to consider all applications for irregular expenditure condonement. In terms of the framework, there are steps to be followed before a condonement is approved. It is only the irregular expenditure that is condonable. It is under very strict circumstances.

It is one of the things that we tried to follow and make sure that we condone where condonation is appropriate, because it is not everything that is condonable. I must admit that the progress was very slow, and it is difficult because we have 10 departments.

I am happy that all small departments were observed. The Provincial Treasury is a very small department, even on warm bodies, and it is performing a transversal

function. Owned corporate work as treasury and transversals will fall under this department. Perhaps, I should concur with the chairperson on that.

I have seen this being adopted nationally, where even the oversight was elevated to a permanent committee, which in your language in Parliament is called a Standing Committee.

This is because it deals with transversal matters, including the other sphere. The MFMA has placed an additional responsibility because in overseeing both the PFMA and MFMA, it then calls upon us to be able to deal with that scope, which is a little bit bigger.

Given this reality, it is not easy to finalise issues on time because the PFMA compliance framework in itself deals with both the entities and the departments. Therefore, there is MFMA compliance framework, which the Provincial Treasury has to consider.

When condonations are made you must go across the board. Therefore, honourable Members, we assure you that we will try to expedite this process, but it comes with a very serious human effort.

Sometimes it is record management, sometimes lost documents; that is what you will get from departments. Sometimes they will say they can't find the documents. However, for you to adequately deal with a condonation, you need to have all the documents, so that you satisfy yourself about what needs to be condoned.

It is something that we assure honourable Members that we are overcoming, and as you will see when we come to the current reporting period of the 2023/24 financial year, we will have more progress than what it was.

Without just taking your time, I have, as I said, taken note of all the comments and matters that need our attention further. Arising from all these, especially the Annual Report of the 2022/23 financial year, I can assure you that if you look at what happened in 2023/24, we have overcome most of the matters that were applicable there, including payments within 30 days of the internal one of the Provincial Treasury as well as the transversal one of the whole province.

I must indicate that there is a challenge for us to do justice to oversee municipal finance in almost all 27 entities each with its own dynamics as municipalities both at a districts and local levels and the 11 entities for this province and the public or state-owned entities.

What Hon Mokaba has indicated about alignment, most of the times we report on performance and what we call a nonfinancial report, whether we have achieved targets or not, away from financial performance.

One of the Members did allude to the fact that the level of achievement when it comes to targets is very low, but the Budget or the expenditure is unproportionally very high. This is the disjuncture that we need to start attending to as government, because

initially the Auditor-General only expresses opinion on finances, but the time has come where opinions should be expressed on performance.

This is because once your performance management that is not in concurrence with your service delivery processes, then it is who is fooling whom here. I think we will work with the Office of the Premier, which is responsible for overall performance. That is what service delivery, and we work together to ensure that there is congruence between financial expenditure and service delivery. We have to ask a right question.

That is why the reporting format, including quarterly reports, should have both a nonfinancial as well as the financial part, so that we can have in-year modality of ensuring that something is not going to happen well there.

Hon Speaker and honourable Members, I take it that all that was said in the main was to guide us, as well as to ensure that we keep up with the mandate given to us by the PFMA, MFMA and the Constitution.

As we report in the subsequent reporting cycles, we will take note of the comments that have been made so that our full report gives a better picture. We dare not fail. I like the statement made by the Hon Premier that it can't be about us dishing money and having no service delivery.

I was looking at the Quarterly Labour Force Survey that has been released just last week, saying that we are the only province that has not done well. I was looking at it from an analytic point of view and realised that there are so many people who are employed in this province but who are unregistered.

It is because the nature of our economic activities is mostly on the farms and on the domestic workers. All those people who are employed in the hospitality environment are just employing people without registering them. The labour survey indicates that we should register people when we employ them. It is correct, but there are even more deeper issues.

Perhaps, we need to ask ourselves, what could account for this? Is it poor governance? No, it is not at all. It is also something that we need to say. The public purse should help us to achieve certain things on a regulatory basis.

Recently, there were initiatives from the government to have an investor conference. Let's make sure that those pledges become a reality and see how we can work together with the private sector to ensure that there is employment.

What I am saying is that it is true, and I agree with honourable Members, that at the end of the day we should be accounting financially while at the same time we are able to account for service delivery, which also helps us creating jobs and having employment.

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Moreki (Tona ya Matlotlo) re mo fa nako ye ka moka. A re mo emiše ka gore a ka tla a re tšeela tšhelete. We give you all the time so that we are not in trouble.

We will now allow the Office of the Premier to proceed as planned. I thought we will do it a bit later, but it looks like it is not possible. I apologise for that. We are now proceeding to the next item.

7.3 Consideration and Adoption of the Reports of the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration

We will request the chairperson of the committee, Hon Phokane Johanes, to take the podium.

MR PHOKANE

Greetings to the Hon Speaker; Hon Premier; Deputy Chief Whip; Members of the Executive Council present here; Deputy Chair of Chairs; honourable Members in this House as well as our guests in the gallery.

Hon Speaker, I rise to table the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report for the Office of the Premier for consideration and adoption as a report of this House. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Phokane. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Mabotja, you are recognised.

MR MABOTJA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the consideration and adoption of the Second Quarter Report of the Office of the Premier. Thanks.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Mabotja. Honourable chairperson, you may proceed.

MR PHOKANE

Hon Speaker, I once more rise to table the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report of the Office of the Premier for consideration and adoption as a report of this august House. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Phokane. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Manthata-Mahasela, you are recognised.

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Mahlodi Caroline Manthata-Mahasela, rise to second the motion as presented by the chairperson, Hon Phokane. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Manthata-Mahasela. Honourable chairperson, you may proceed.

MR PHOKANE

Hon Speaker, once again I rise to table the 2023/24 Fourth Quarter Report of the Office of the Premier for consideration and adoption by the House. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Selane, you are recognised.

DR SELANE

Ke a leboga Mhloomphegi Mospikara. Ke ema mo go tšea sebaka se go thekga Modulasetu ka tšhišinyo ye a e tlišitšego. Ke a leboga.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Dr Che Selane. We really appreciate, Dr Selane. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. The person who is opening the debate on our Speakers' List is Hon Netshifhefhe Khathutshelo John.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Hon Speaker, for the opportunity and greetings to you.

Hon Speaker; Hon Deputy Speaker; Hon Premier; Chief Whip of the Legislature and the entire Whippy Committee; Members of this august House from different political affiliations; our distinct guests in the gallery, please receive revolutionary greetings from the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration.

I thank the opportunity afforded to me to open the debate on behalf of the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration.

Hon Speaker, the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration has an obligatory and legislative mandate to discharge as an overseer of the Limpopo Office of the Premier. The committee is discharging its mandate as empowered by section 114 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, coupled with Rule 81 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislature.

The responsibility of the portfolio committee, amongst other things, is to hold the Office of the Premier accountable for its Annual Performance Plan, quarterly and annual reports to ensure that they are in line with the policies of government and to make sure

that they comply with government legislation. Quarterly reports provide committees with the necessary information needed to monitor effective implementation of the programmes.

Hon Speaker, please also note that the Office of the Premier is the overseer of all the departments in the province, responsible for providing strategic leadership and management for service excellence.

Upon intense and thorough discussion with the department on quarters under review, the committee was briefed about the vacancy rate on strategic positions in the province, both in the provincial and local spheres. The committee recommended that these vacancies be addressed as a matter of urgency to enable the smooth running and delivery of services to our people.

The committee also got a brief about the construction of road and stormwater infrastructure at Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone, which was at 18% of the work done. This was around April this year, and we believe that there is progress registered now.

The committee recommended that the Office of the Premier must from time to time report to the committee pertaining to the progress made on special economic zone projects, as they are the catalysts for economic growth and job creation in the province. These are the projects that have the potential to alleviate poverty amongst the communities and improve service delivery.

Hon Premier, in your inaugural State of the Province Address, you highlighted the importance of the SEZs, which are the Musina-Makhado and the Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZs, as your milestones and priorities for this seventh administration. What is left now is the implementation.

The same can be said about the revitalisation of agriculture and the mining industry as the backbone of the economy of this province. If as the government, we could stick to those priorities of revitalising and resuscitating all these projects the economy of the province can grow to an extent that it can be able to deal with the challenge of unemployment that we are experiencing now. In all our successive meetings with the Office of the Premier, we have been receiving progress reports; however, much still needs to be done.

In all the meetings, we have agreed with the Office of the Premier that the devil in the room in this province regarding service delivery is the water provision to our people, and it is a serious challenge.

We have agreed that it will be a standing item in all our engagements with the department in terms of getting a report as to how far they are. However, we should indicate that it is the competency of the municipalities under CoGHSTA. CoGHSTA is the custodian. The main cause of this water challenge is also the capacity of the level of our municipalities that are unable to provide water to our people.

Hon Speaker, there is an alarming rate of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) incidents happening in the province. The committee noted with concern that the

provincial scourge of gender-based violence is not decreasing, amidst the efforts by government's coordinated efforts in fighting this pandemic.

The Office of the Premier in collaboration with other departments conducted community feedback sessions, visited the GBVF and the crime accessed shelters in order to get a sense of what is actually happening and how to best intervene in that regard.

More than 23 000 cases of gender-based violence have been reported, which increased the crime rate by 5%, while 2 784 victims of crime and violence are supposed to receive the necessary support from the government.

Hon Speaker, on Institutional Development Support, as the programme of the Office of the Premier, there were 95 grievance cases and 135 cases of misconduct which were reported. These are cases from all the departments, which is a concern that was also captured in the Public Service Commission's report.

Though the Office of the Premier has performed well in terms of implementation of their key priorities as outlined in the Annual Performance Plan, there is a concern about irregular expenditure, and the committee recommended to the department to make a report detailing the cost of this and the plan to curb these anomalies.

The portfolio committee made emphasis on the issue of consequence management in relation to the irregular expenditure. We should also appreciate the comments by the MEC for Provincial Treasury, talking about the irregular expenditure vs condonation.

That is the matter that we have been discussing, engaging the Office of the Premier that there should be a definition of condonation – as to when irregular expenditure is condoned. There was an explanation that there should be a motivation, and it should not be easy for condonation to be done.

The committee made some recommendations to the Office of the Premier, which are the following:

- To address the issue of vacancy rates in all the government spheres by making sure that those vacancies are filled by capable and qualifying individuals;
- To assist municipalities that are in financial distress;
- To ensure that crime-related matters are addressed and cases of gender-based violence that are in court are also resolved with the urgency that they deserve; and
- To implement comprehensive action plans to address compliance and financial statement issues.

This emanated from the fact that the portfolio committee was concerned about the use of consultants by the municipalities as they deal with their annual financial statements.

We are now 30 years into democracy, and all the municipalities are supposed to already have internal inhouse systems that enable them to deal with their own annual

financial statements instead of outsourcing this service, because it is a misuse of funds. We need to do away with this practice.

As I conclude, Madam Speaker, the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration hereby requests the House to consider and adopt the reports presented by the chairperson of the committee as the reports of this House.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Netshifhefhe. We shall now proceed to the other speaker from the Democratic Alliance, Hon Evelyn Rayne Wilson.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

The promise of a better quality of life for all South Africans is at the heart of our constitutional democracy. [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

You may take your seat for a while, Hon Wilson. There is a point of order by Hon Mathe.

MR MATHE

Hon Speaker, I want to know if Hon Wilson can be able to take my question.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Wilson, are you able to take a question?

MS WILSON

No.

THE SPEAKER

She is saying, she can't take a question. Please allow the honourable Member to proceed, Hon Mathe. You may proceed with your speech, Hon Wilson.

MS WILSON

Yet, in Limpopo, our economy's ability to create jobs continues to decline, deepening poverty and inequality despite the province's vast natural wealth. Our potential for sustained growth and improved livelihoods remains untapped, leaving citizens increasingly disillusioned and dissatisfied with the province's direction.

Earlier this month, the President and the Executive of our Government of National Unity (GNU), of which the DA is a partner, met with you, Madam Premier, and the provincial Executive.

The President reaffirmed the GNU's priorities, which are driving economic growth and job creation, reducing poverty, and building a capable and ethical state. He posed the following critical question: "What actions must be taken, and what obstacles must be overcome, to enable Limpopo to leverage its natural endowments and ensure they are effectively used to drive economic growth?"

He emphasised the need to identify and resolve structural issues within Limpopo and its municipalities that are hindering investment and job creation. Hon Speaker, the answer to the President's question lies in the province's failing capacity from both provincially and municipally. This troubling reality is starkly illustrated in the two quarterly reports before us.

The Second Quarter Report reveals that 4 out of 11 provincial departments failed to pay suppliers within 30 days. Alarmingly, this issue was also highlighted in the 2022/23 financial year's report, demonstrating a persistent inability to address this critical matter.

We know that this cripples small business. Both the PFMA and the MFMA require suppliers to be paid within the 30-day period. The report further exposes the dysfunctional state of municipalities, which is as follows:

- 2 municipalities had no municipal manager;
- 10 municipalities lacked a chief financial officer (CFO); and
- 15 municipalities were in financial distress.

The committee resolved that the Premier must oversee the appointment of CFOs and assist struggling municipalities in improving their financial situations.

However, by the Third Quarter Report, this issue remained unresolved, with 11 CFO positions still vacant. For the 2022/23 fiscal year, the Auditor-General reported that no municipality in Limpopo had received a clean audit. Additionally:

- 19% of municipalities could not meet their financial obligations;
- 09 municipalities approved unfunded budgets, further exacerbating their financial instability; and
- The recent events in Makhado and the sheriff's removal of important equipment have shown the result of this.

Hon Speaker, municipalities are the drivers of service delivery. It is also where investments are made, and jobs are created; the President said as much when he met with our Hon Premier.

You have the authority to monitor, to assist, and to intervene. The question is, why aren't you? Thabazimbi aside, there are other municipalities in much the same state as Thabazimbi is or very close to it. We can't wait for the collapse; we need to be proactive, not reactive.

Hon Speaker, the Second Quarter Report notes that 4 out of 11 departments failed to pay suppliers within the stipulated time, regardless that this is stipulated in the PFMA. Again, this is not new as the 2022/23 financial year report notes persistent delays and a grow backlog of unpaid invoices and calls for your office to actively monitor departmental compliance.

Hon Speaker, the persistent failures in governance, accountability, and financial management are crippling our province's ability to unlock its full potential. To address these issues, we need decisive and sustained action to build a capable and ethical state that can effectively manage resources, attract investment, and create jobs. Without this, the province risks deepening its economic challenges and betraying its people.

The PSC report shows several failings and Public Administration investigations found many complaints with regard to irregular appointments and poor service delivery, and delays in implementing recommendations for substantiated cases.

The committee looks forward to seeing the Premier's action plan when it is submitted to the PSC at the end of December.

Hon Speaker, the continuing reports from department after department on massive irregular expenditures, mainly because of a lack of due diligence and proper management is simply not acceptable. Heads must now roll.

The time for talk has passed; accountability must now translate into firm and decisive action.

I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time management, Hon Wilson. We do not have Hon Mogaleadi Kgothatso Mogoane. We will now proceed to Hon Phokane Maudu Johannes to come and close the debate.

MR PHOKANE

Hon Speaker, greetings once more to your good self. Hon Premier; Hon Deputy Chief Whip of the Legislature; Members of the provincial Executive Council present here; Deputy Chair of Chairs; all honourable Members of the Legislature and our distinguished guests, greetings once more.

Hon Speaker, this Legislature Sitting coincides with a period of apprehension and distress that confronts our country. Our province, Limpopo, like other provinces, is affected by the unfortunate scourge of food poisoning that has befallen the South African population. The majority of those who felt the wrath of this are school kids.

Hon Speaker, it should be noted that our province is one of the few that did not experience many death cases resulting from this scourge. It was not necessarily a

coincidence that death rate in Limpopo is low compared to other provinces. It was because of the sterling and efficient leadership that was provided by the provincial Executive Council led by the Premier, Hon Phophi Ramathuba, in dealing with those challenges.

The initial incident that happened, galvanised the provincial government to take necessary decisions, which ultimately arrested the scourge from proliferating. We thank the Premier and the Executive Council for the sterling job they have done in ensuring that lives were saved.

Hon Speaker, portfolio committees of the Legislature are provisioned to monitor, enquire and provide the necessary support to the departments in relation to their Budgets, performance and implementation of their APPs. The Office of the Premier is also constitutionally bound to account to the Legislature through the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration.

It is crucial to indicate that the Office of the Premier constantly subjects itself to the imperative that mandates it to make a presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration. Our last encounter with the Office of the Premier was on 23 October 2024.

Hon Speaker, the Office of the Premier initially had an allocation of about R438 million, which later got adjusted to R460 million for the 2023/24 financial year. Out of the Budget given to the Office of the Premier, it was able to spend 9% of the allocation. The spending has been consistently good throughout the quarters for the financial year under review.

This financial performance of the Office of the Premier aligns fairly well with the achieved targets of the total targets that were set for each quarter. Hon Speaker, the targets are crafted from the following three programmes which constitute the Office of the Premier:

Firstly, Administration, which is a programme that is responsible for providing administrative support to the Premier, and the Director-General in fulfilling all legislative oversight function and in promoting good corporate governance in the province.

Secondly, Institutional Development Support, which ensures that policies, processes and systems are made available to capacitate the provincial administration to deliver services.

Lastly, Governance and Policy, which enables the Office of the Premier to deal with planning, monitoring and evaluation.

The Office of the Premier has met its targets and performed well in many of the output's indicators and in some instances, it even exceeded the targets in some of the subprogrammes. One of the tasks that the Office of the Premier has been doing extremely well is the payment of all legitimate supplier invoices received during the quarters under review, and they were paid within 30 days.

This act in itself is affordable because it ensures that the service providers that get an opportunity to perform some tasks can sustain their businesses. Many businesses, more especially small and medium enterprises, have been collapsed by government's reluctance or failure to pay timeously.

Hon Speaker, in as much as we appreciate these wonderful efforts done by the Office of the Premier, we still expect the self-same office to ensure that all departments as well as municipalities in the province do as it is legislatively expected in matters of invoice payments.

Hon Speaker, another aspect that one can write home about with regard to the Office of the Premier is that it has managed to implement the five pillars of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. This gives credibility to the government of Limpopo as it minimises incidents of corruption and helps in establishing a sense of trust in the leadership of the government of Limpopo.

The pillars alluded to above include, amongst others, promotion of whistleblowing, professionalisation of the employees, appointment of ethics and risk committees to enhance governance and oversight and others.

As the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration, we call upon the Premier to ensure that such an attitude against corruption becomes the hallmark of the entire provincial government she is leading.

Hon Speaker, it is worth noting that the Office of the Premier has managed to attain a clean audit outcome in the 2023/24 financial year. What has enabled the Office of the Premier to move from an unqualified audit opinion to the clean audit outcome, which I made reference to, is that it has religiously and fully implemented all the external audit recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor-General.

With the audit action plan that was crafted, there was a determination throughout all the quarters to resolve the audit queries. A clean audit outcome will go a long way in resurrecting the long-lost trust in our people and inspire a new spirit of confidence in government leadership.

The Office of the Premier cannot remain the only oasis of excellence in the midst of mediocrity. This office has a constitutional responsibility of monitoring and supporting the entire government in the province and ensuring that all and sundry perform their tasks to the best of their ability in serving the people of this province. That is what we expect from the Office of the Premier.

Besides the achievement I have made reference to, there are some instances in which the Office of the Premier did not do well. For instance, regarding matters of provincial procurement with women, youth, people living with disability and military veterans. Evidence of their spend could not be provided, which is attributed to Provincial Treasury not availing the report.

One of the areas of underachievement relating to the Office of the Premier is the implementation of the GIS made by the department and the municipalities. It has been established that since departments have with accurate consistency failed to implement

the GIS in all the quarters of the 2023/24 financial year, that is attributed to a lack of capacity in those departments. The portfolio committee calls upon the Office of the Premier to ensure that those departments are provided with the necessary capacity that they lack.

Hon Speaker, it must be noted that when all is said and done, the Office of the Premier, which is the executive department that is at the apex of the governing ladder in the province, cannot check responsibility of everything that happens in the government.

It is in this context that the portfolio committee would expect that the Office of the Premier should monitor and report on the performance of the province on issues of the priorities of government as contextualised by the ruling party, the ANC, in its manifesto.

Hon Speaker, before I go to the recommendations, I also need to deal with the issue raised by Hon Wilson, who mentioned the fact that the province is failing in terms of its ability to create jobs and went further to indicate that municipalities are failing to ensure that CFOs get appointed.

Hon Speaker, it should be noted that Limpopo is generally a rural province. It is so difficult for municipalities to attract people who are qualified with requisite skills to serve as CFOs. That cannot be attributed to a failure in governance because the rural nature of the province is by itself an impediment.

It should also be noted that in the province, the Premier has recently convened an investment conference meant to address these matters that relate to unemployment. It is also a clear indication of the foresight that the leadership of the province has in dealing with matters that affect the province.

Of critical importance again is the clear indication shown by the Office of the Premier in ensuring that they implement the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. It has consistently done that in all the quarters of the 2023/24 financial year. This is its endeavour to ensure that a capable and ethical state is built.

Hon Speaker, we then need to note that the leadership of government in the province of Limpopo is doing all within its power to ensure that it addresses all matters of concern that affect the population of Limpopo.

As the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration, we are recommending that:

- The Office of the Premier should continue to monitor and improve its debt collection;
- The Office of the Premier should ensure that departments and municipalities fill all the funded vacant positions that they have;
- The Office of the Premier should ensure that the consequence management framework is finalised and implemented to the latter;
- There should also be continued monitoring and interventions in matters of stagnant or recurring audits in the departments of our province as well as in the municipalities so that there should be an improvement in the audit outcomes;

- The Office of the Premier should monitor the Budget expenditure of all provincial departments for the next quarters to avoid overspending or underspending;
- The Office of the Premier should also monitor, on a quarterly basis, the preferential procurement expenditure for all targeted groups in all the departments;
- The Office of the Premier should forever have the department's vacancy rate under its radar as there are employees who are leaving the institution through retirement and resignation;
- The Office of the Premier needs to address the issues of staff members in the departments that hold directorship without declaring to the departments;
- The Office of the Premier should ensure that the posts of CFOs in municipalities are filled; and
- The Office of the Premier needs to accelerate the realisation of developing the economic zone projects, including Seshego and Nkowankowa Industrial Parks.

Hon Speaker, allow me to move that this report be adopted as the report of this august House.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable Members. Like I have indicated to you before that today I have relaxed the timing. I gave you the time, but unfortunately, chairperson, you have spent almost 20 minutes now. Let's make sure that we don't go beyond the allocated time.

I will now take this opportunity to call upon the Hon Premier of the province of Limpopo, Dr Phophi Constance Ramathuba, to take the podium to respond to the debates by the honourable Members.

THE PREMIER

Thank you, Hon Speaker; Deputy Chief Whip; Deputy Chair of Chairs; Members of the Executive Council and also Members of this august House.

On behalf of the Office of the Premier, let me appreciate you, chairperson of our committee, Hon Phokane, for the support that you have given us. Let me also appreciate you for your recommendations, and one believes that when we work together and implement all those recommendations our province will never be the same again. So, we really appreciate you. Hon Netshifhefhe, we agree fully with you that overseeing and monitoring our department is our responsibility.

We need to work hard to make sure that it cannot only be the Office of the Premier which gets clean audits, but all our ten departments should be able to follow suit.

We appreciate and understand the challenges that are faced by our province. Working together with you as a committee we will go forward. Gender-based violence is equally a pain for all of us. We are working very hard, and we have appointed even an interministerial committee led by the MEC for Social Development, supported by the

MEC for Transport and Community Safety and also the MEC for Health, towards fighting the scourge of gender-based violence.

We are also saying that it cannot be the responsibility of government only, but for all of us. If we put our hands together, we can be able to defeat this gender-based violence. We call upon all Members of this august House to join forces to save a girl child in Limpopo.

Currently, reports say, a girl child has four times chances of being raped than being educated. We must not allow that to continue. We need to work hard towards defeating that problem.

Hon Wilson, we just want to emphasise to you that when the Government of National Unity, which you proudly stood here and said you belong to, came up with the government Medium-Term Developmental Plan, looking at the three priorities of inclusive economic growth and job creation, it is because they had diagnosed all those parts you were saying while standing here.

We knew exactly that we are a Seventh Administration that is coming in with serious challenges of an economy on its own being non-inclusive. As a rural province, majority of our people have been left outside the mainstream economy.

That is why the unemployment rate in our province, despite being enriched with all these natural resources, continues to be a challenge. We have to deal with this non-inclusive economy.

Hon Wilson, even if the municipalities deal with what they are supposed to deal with, whether it is road infrastructure, on which we are working hard with them, whether it is water provision, but as long as we don't deal with the main challenge of an economy which is not having the majority of the people participating, it will become a challenge.

We should not only be blaming the municipalities for the challenges that we are facing. We must also take responsibility as to why the economy of this province only has those who have always been at an advantageous position participating.

We are also saying that we can't talk about economic growth in Limpopo without looking at the rural economy itself and without talking about women, children, or black people participating in the economy. If you want to talk the language that talks to our people, let's talk about inclusive economic growth – growth that will also be able to bring in development that will in return provide sustainable jobs. Let's work on this together and not throw stones at each other, because all of us here have got a role to play on the challenges that we are facing.

Through the Medium-Term Development Plan, we also speak about reducing and tackling poverty and reducing the cost of living. This has been identified as a priority because of the challenges that you were raising here that are affecting our people, who in their majority, are still living below the poverty line.

We also need to work together towards achieving that goal. We are also saying let's build a capable, ethical, developmental state. Surely, you will agree with me that

issues that you are raising, of the professionalisation of public servants, are issues that we are dealing with.

Hon Speaker, before I joined you here, you might have seen that I was delayed and some of the Members of the Executive Council were also delayed, like the MEC for Education, and others did not even make it. It is because we are meeting with all our senior management levels in the entire province.

All our SMSs are gathered in Polokwane to deal with all these issues: professionalisation of our public servants and addressing the challenges that our people are faced with. That responds to the question that our President gave to us.

We are attending to that looking into a public servant that will be ethical and that will practise professionalism and that will be inspired to do their best.

We acknowledge that the chairperson, Hon Phokane, has already responded to you that it is not easy to attract a chartered accountant to go and work either in the Collins Chabane Municipality or Blouberg Municipality, looking at the rurality of these particular municipalities.

To attract young professionals, we need to go all out. That is why as you would see part of our programme through our Provincial Treasury, we are looking at getting all these young chartered accountants that will be appointed through our Treasury, and we will be seconding them to go and build capacity in our municipalities.

We are the first to acknowledge that most of our municipalities still depend on consultants for annual financial statements. We have developed a programme as to how we can assist them because we can't just tell those municipalities to stop using consultants without having an alternative.

We have got to help them to build that capacity. We are the first ones to raise this issue. You are now coming here and saying, Hon Premier, you must do this and that, Yet we are the ones who raised this issue and even told you what we are doing.

We are the ones who diagnosed the problem and told you the problem and gave you even the treatment and the medication for this problem. What you are raising is not something new. It is something that we have been raising, and we have come up with a plan of addressing all these issues.

On appointing people who are qualified, we have to be the first ones who have to deal with it. Dealing with corruption and maladministration is our priority, and we are attending to that.

Honourable Members, we also want to appreciate the Sixth Administration led by our former Premier, Hon Chupu Mathabatha, because all these three reports that have been tabled here were guided through his leadership, and they have made progress up until it was evident that the Office of the Premier would obtain a clean audit.

That simply means that moving forward, if we build on the progress that has already been made, we can be able to assist all our provincial departments, especially those that have been stagnant with unqualified audit opinion.

This is because if we don't take them out of unqualified audit opinion to clean audit, they might regress. We are also going to be looking to those who have been stagnant with unqualified audit opinion as to how to get them out to move into the clean audit.

That is work in progress, because you can see for yourselves that year in year out, we start to see a number of improvements in these. Hon Speaker, let me also indicate that the work which was done by the team of our MECs and our HODs as led by the Director-General is commendable, especially when we come to the current challenge of food poisoning.

It is true that in Limpopo we have lost a 13-year-old learner from Khubvi, and up until today we have not lost any single learner. That has not just happened because we are hard at work in terms of praying. We are busy balancing our prayers while also at the same time doing the actual work.

Our teachers, who have become "deputy mothers" and "deputy fathers" to our children, are the ones for instance on the incident of Dzumeri who, even though it was only a few learners who were reacting, were able to take all learners who had contact to the hospital.

When they got to the health centre, the nurses acted proactively, calling the ambulances to take them all to the hospitals even though their symptoms might look minor. That is when people are working as a collective. The hospital was able to admit even those who did not warrant admission.

This is because they did not know what would happen because of the seriousness of how the province took this matter. Even though you have heard of an alarming number of 92 in the media, you must know that it could only be a few.

Actually, when I looked at the files of all those learners, it is only two who deserved to be admitted. We did that as a proactive measure. The MEC for Education and the MEC for Health made sure that they were at Dzumeri in order to curb these. I am not forgetting our Mayors. Our Mayors are always receiving a back lash.

When we had the first case, we called a meeting with of our Mayors. I must indicate that Mayors were themselves monitoring school vendors and advising them to stop selling all these chips.

We must appreciate that work because if that work had not been done by the Mayors since we are at provincial office, we would not have been able to save lives. There are other Members of this august House whom in their respective monitoring site visits have been able to be supportive in all these – some by being vocal and by also educating the communities. All that I am saying is that by working together we can be able to do more.

Hon Wilson, a better life for all in this province of Limpopo under the ANC-led government, not the GNU, we are going to achieve. We are going to receive it. We must be able to reassure the people of Limpopo that a better life for all is not a talk show, but a better life for all is on its way.

Let's do more together. In Limpopo remember there is a slogan that says: "Let's do more together". We have six priorities of the ANC's manifesto that this provincial government must be able to deliver on. While we have three GNU priorities, we still have the six priorities of the African National Congress.

I can remind you of them, Hon Wilson, but the fact of the matter is that you will locate the three GNU priorities within the ANC six priorities. In Limpopo, we are led by the African National Congress. [APPLAUSE]

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Premier, for responding comprehensively to the discussions of the reports. We are now moving to the next item.

7.4. Consideration and Adoption of the Reports of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development

I will now call upon the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development, Hon Mathe, to come and present the report.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I hereby move for the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 First Quarter Report for the Department of Social Development.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Mathe. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Nkonyana, you are recognised.

MR NKONYANA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the report as presented by the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Chairperson, you may proceed.

MR MATHE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I hereby move for the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report for the Department of Social Development.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Speaker. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Mohale, you are recognised.

MS MOHALE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I hereby second the report as presented by the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Chairperson, you may proceed.

MR MATHE

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. I hereby move for the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report for the Department of Social Development.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, chairperson. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Mdaka, you are recognised.

MR MDAKA

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I, Falaza Mdaka, rise to second the motion as presented by the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development, Hon Simon Mathe. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. The person who is opening the debate on our Speakers' List is Hon Shai Mpho Sonnyboy.

MR SHAI

Thank you so much, Hon Speaker; Hon Premier; Deputy Chief Whip and members of the Whippery; Members of the Executive Council; Deputy Chair of Chairs; chairpersons of the portfolio committees; and honourable Members of this august House.

Hon Speaker, allow me to take this opportune moment to greet this august House and its esteemed honourable Members.

As we meet here today, we understand that South Africa, in particular our province of Limpopo, still struggles with inequality and women representation in senior management service positions (SMS).

In the last three quarters, women have been underrepresented in the department. Posts that were vacated by women have not yet been filled. Women only held 11 of the funded managerial positions, which is not even 50%.

Madam Speaker, the underrepresentation of women in key positions undermines our collective efforts – efforts to dismantle inequality and achieve gender parity. The African National Congress is committed to promoting gender equality and it is a nonsexist organisation that is dedicated to eliminating all forms of discrimination on gender, race and class. The portfolio committee strongly condemns such underrepresentation of women in the department. Hon Speaker, the Portfolio Committee on Social Development is committed to advancing women empowerment and participation. We take immense pride in noting that the number of women who participated in empowerment programmes has surpassed the initial targets as per the APP.

We also recognise the heroic effort from fruitful collaboration with critical stakeholders such as the *Thuthuzela Care Centres* and Hlaneki VEP. This collaboration is instrumental in combating gender-based violence (GBV) against women. We commend the Department of Social Development for its noticeable efforts in fostering and enabling environment for women empowerment.

We also look forward to continuing collaboration with relevant stakeholders to ensure women development. During the 2023/24 financial year, women development budget was R5 281 million and only R3 656 million was used for women empowerment. Empowering women is key to reducing poverty.

Regarding the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), employment opportunities were created through the Department of Social Development. The portfolio committee acknowledges the efforts by the Sixth Administration.

In the first quarter, the department exceeded its initial target of 1 000 employment opportunities. The Department of Social Development created 1 484, and in the second quarter it surpassed its target of 2 500 by achieving 2 524 employment opportunities.

As outlined in our ANC manifesto, our main priority remains investing in our people and empowering them for a better future. We plead with the department to continue with the EPWP and other possible work opportunities to lessen the rate of unemployment and eradicate poverty in our province.

The EPWP employment opportunities have been instrumental in providing work opportunities for the poor and the unemployed in our country while establishing more better and permanent employment opportunities.

The portfolio committee commends the Limpopo Department of Social Development for being consistent in maintaining a workforce, where at least its 2% employees are people living with disability. This demonstrates the department's commitment to equality.

We further recognise the department's efforts in raising awareness about HIV/Aids and awareness programmes such as establishing the “Know Your Status” campaign and collaborating with other stakeholders.

Hon Speaker, the department has managed to increase the number of HIV/Aids beneficiaries receiving social and behavioural change programmes in the third quarter. The initial third quarter target as per the APP was 108 953, but that was surpassed by 4%, making the actual turnout of 113 015 beneficiaries.

This improvement demonstrates how the department is working overtime to tackle the HIV/Aids epidemic and making sure that HIV/Aids persons receive our support and encouragement.

Hon Speaker, another critical matter and social ill that affects our nation is gender-based violence, which often leads to femicide. In 2020, His Excellency, President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, in his speech during the 16 Days of Activism, referred to gender-based violence as the country's second pandemic.

As we are about to enter the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children campaign, our focus should be to ensure that every woman in this province feels safe and all perpetrators are prosecuted without impunity. Studies have also revealed that South Africa is grappling with the highest rates of GBV cases in Africa.

Madam Speaker, our beloved Limpopo province has been found to have the highest call rate of GBV reports. Last December, a final year University of Limpopo student's bright future was cut short by her boyfriend in Mokopane. This all happened just shy of graduation.

Hon Speaker, let us make it known that GBV does not only happen to women and girls, but boys and men are often victims too. Poverty and unemployment are main factors that force women to continue staying in abusive relationships. Women are also forced to endure lifetime abuse from their intimate partners just because of financial dependency.

We are pleased to know that the department has produced initiatives to empower and support our women in this province. These initiatives will assist women to escape abusive relationships.

The number of victims of gender-based violence and femicide and crime who accessed sheltering services was 36 in the third quarter, which surpassed the initial target, which was 25.

The Department of Social Development in Limpopo should continue rendering such services. The portfolio committee recommends that the department establishes more awareness programmes about gender-based violence.

Child abuse is a heartbreaking topic. Children get abused by people who are supposed to nurture and protect them. Children, both male and female, are sexually assaulted by family members and community members.

A recent case occurred in Mafukani village, where a 22-year-old man raped 2 children under the age of 5 years old. According to the reports, the suspect allegedly lured the two children to a nearby bush, where the mother of one of the children caught him in the act.

The Department of Social Development continues with the fight against poverty. People benefiting from the Department of Social Development's food security number have immensely increased during the 2023/24 financial year three quarters.

It is disappointing that not everyone who needed the food parcels received them. The food parcel contract was not in place and there was insufficient budget.

As I conclude, Hon Speaker, as the Portfolio Committee on Social Development, we advise the department to put the food parcel contract in place and possibly raise funds for food parcels. No one deserves to go to bed hungry.

Ke a leboga.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Shai. We now see that the UAT is not in the House. We shall now move to the next Member who is Hon Hermanus Frans Marx.

MR MARX

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker.

Hon Speaker, one of the core functions of the provincial legislatures is to make laws. However, these laws become meaningless if there is no effective oversight over the Executive to ensure their implementation.

Despite the portfolio committee's consistent efforts to provide guidance to the department, including recommendations to conduct oversight visits to older persons' facilities to assess infrastructure and living conditions, these recommendations were seemingly ignored. This neglect is tragically underscored by the events at the notorious Vutlhari Old Age and Disability Centre.

While it is commendable that the MEC for Social Development acted swiftly to shut down the centre after its issues were brought to light by the Democratic Alliance and other concerned groups, this House is yet to hear why this centre was allowed to operate illegally under the department's watch or which officials will face consequence management for dropping the ball.

The only logical conclusion is that the department failed to heed the advice of the portfolio committee and neglected its own oversight responsibilities, leading to abuses against some of our most vulnerable citizens, especially our elderly.

Hon Speaker, the department's consistent underspending, particularly in critical areas like children and families, restorative services, and development and research, is deeply concerning. This is despite receiving Budget adjustment.

Furthermore, the failure to fill funded positions, particularly in senior management, exposes a worrying lack of urgency and effective planning. This department has a responsibility to fill vacant posts, not only to increase capacity but also to enhance much-needed services and create sustainable jobs in this province.

Delays in appointing service providers for essential services, such as food parcel provisions, are simply unacceptable. How can the department claim to prioritise the wellbeing of vulnerable communities when even basic necessities like food security are not addressed?

The inconsistencies in reporting on the resolution of audit findings raise additional concerns about transparency and accountability. Contradictory reports erode public trust and cast doubt on the department's credibility. How can this House place confidence in the department's assertions when basic facts are not consistent?

Hon Speaker, adding to these concerns is the unprecedented and desperate attempt by the MEC to withdraw the 2023/24 Annual Report. This manoeuvre, coming after the department had participated in all relevant dispute resolution mechanisms and failed to lodge disputes timeously, was nothing short of unscrupulous.

It is astonishing that the attempt came only days after the Auditor-General's report was finalised. Hon Mathe does not take "nonsense" of this department. I am not sure if you will ask me to withdraw the word "nonsense". The committee, under the leadership of the chairperson, Hon Mathe, rightly rejected this request ... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Marx, the word you keep on repeating was ruled on yesterday. Can you withdraw the word "nonsense" in the House.

MR MARX

Hon Speaker. My apologies. I withdraw the word "nonsense" in the House.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. You can proceed with your debate.

MR MARX

Allowing the withdrawal of the report that had already been fully debated in the Legislature would have undermined the role of the committee and this honourable House in exercising effective oversight.

Hon Speaker, the portfolio committee has done everything within its mandate to ensure oversight and provide the department with reasonable and achievable recommendations. Yet, these efforts have been met with indifference.

The time has come to hold the MEC accountable for the consistent failures of her department. This honourable House must act decisively to restore public confidence and ensure that vulnerable citizens, particularly the elderly, are protected.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Re a leboga. Baie dankie. We shall now proceed to the next speaker. Members of the EFF are not here. We shall now call upon Hon Matsobane Simon Mathe, to close the debate.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker; honourable Members of the Executive Council present here today; Deputy Chief Whip and all honourable Members of this august House.

I think today we have been provided with earphones. I take it for granted that they will assist us in terms of how to use them for interpretation. I would then advise Hon Marx to now put the earphones on because in my mother language we normally say, o se ke wa tšhela letsolobolo ka mabu.

In English it means, don't taste poison with your tongue". Today, I am in a good mood., Because my son is coming back from Spain today, I am not going to be like yesterday. Don't worry. Yesterday I was wearing a white shirt. White colours reflect purity. I was not prepared for war. Today I am wearing brown, being ready for war. I am still provoked, but let me be the son of the Lord. I will be that.

Hon Speaker, as we meet here today, our country is taking a big initiative in prioritising the elderly. We must not turn a blind eye to the fact that our elderly people are being abused every day in their own homes and in the hands of those who are supposed to care for them.

Our elderly people are not only abused physically, but they are also abused sexually, financially and emotionally. Elderly people suffer abuse in the hands of their trusted family members at home and caregivers at the old age centres.

This behaviour is unacceptable and goes against our ethos as Africans. We welcome the department's initiative of the Older Persons Amendment Bill. Limpopo was the first province in the country to finalise public hearings and submit the mandate to the National Council of Provinces. The Amendment Bill is a crucial step towards protecting our elderly persons from all types of abuse – whether it is at home by a family members or in care centres by caregivers. This Bill aims to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of our older persons.

Madam Speaker, the Portfolio Committee on Social Development held a week of public hearings in October for the amendment of the Older Persons Act. The recent public hearings were held across all the five regions of Limpopo.

The public hearings were a remarkable success and the significant turnout from our senior citizens to exercise their democratic right was amazing to witness. Elderly people mentioned how much they are suffering in silence as they are robbed and assaulted by their own grandchildren. This makes our elderly people feel like strangers in their own homes.

As the Portfolio Committee on Social Development, we would also like to commend and applaud the courageous decision taken by our MEC, Hon Florence Radzilani. The MEC shut down the Vutlhari Old Age and Disability Centre. The care centre in Sekgosese was also closed due to its inhuman conditions, which violated the rights of elderly persons in every aspect. Thanks to the honourable MEC.

All 19 patients were relocated to different and safe care centres. The African National Congress has always prioritised the elderly, recognising their significant contribution to the country's democracy. We acknowledged that freedom would not have been achieved if it was not for the sacrifices made by the elderly.

Studies have shown that the number of elderly persons has increased. There are over 5,7 million elderly people in South Africa, and 535 000 of those elderly people are found in Limpopo. It is crucial for us to prioritise their wellbeing.

It is wonderful to see that family members are taking an active role in taking care of their elderly persons. Families taking care of their elderly persons has led to a decrease in the number of elderly people needing residential facilities.

Back to the business of the day, there has been an increase in the access to community-based care services due to their appealing aging activities that attract elderly persons to form part.

The portfolio committee seeks to advise the department to create more awareness programmes in case there are elderly people who seek residential care, and they are unaware that the department offers these kinds of services.

The initial third quarter as per the APP for the number of elderly persons accessing community-based care and support services was 13 400, but the actual output was 13 911. The portfolio committee recommends that the Department of Social Development creates extensive awareness programmes to inform elderly people of the availability of residential care centres.

This initiative will ensure that those seeking care are aware of what the department offers to our elderly persons. On substance abuse, drug addiction is a disease that affects people from all occupations, whether rich or poor.

Hon Speaker, the future of our country is in the hands of our youth. Substance abuse has hit the youth harder. The youth has given up on life and signed a contract with illegal addictive drugs and alcohol.

Substance abuse has destroyed a lot of families in our province. The abuse of drugs is another pandemic that needs special and extensive attention. Substance abuse is a prolonged sickness that does not choose but can affect anyone.

The portfolio committee highly applauds the Department of Social Development for the programme that is underway in partnership with Northam mines. The department in partnership with Northam mines plans to build a treatment centre in Sekhukhune District.

The purpose of the treatment facility is to provide rehabilitation for young individuals addicted to drugs. We hope for many more initiatives like these in Limpopo. In all the three quarters, the number of people reached through substance abuse prevention programme exceeded the target by more than 50%.

This is a clear indicator that more substance users are willing to get clean and the department is always available to assist recovering addicts. In the second quarter, the number of service users who accessed substance use disorder treatment was 245, when the initial quarter target was 130. The increased attendance is due to the awareness programmes by the Department of Social Development.

The 2023/24 financial year budget for substance abuse prevention and rehabilitation was R91 289, and the expenditure was R53 488, which means that it is only 59% which was used. The portfolio committee pleads with the department to continue with rehabilitation programmes for substance addicts.

Crime prevention programmes play a very crucial role in creating safer communities. These programmes empower people to become better community members. Crime prevention programmes assist in reducing the crime rate in Limpopo.

These initiatives also break the cycle of violence and crime. Programmes for people in conflict with the law, who have completed diversions, are doing very well, as more people have formed part. The ANC manifesto stated that we are going to fight and eradicate crime, corruption in our nation, and indeed we are doing just that.

The early intervention programmes for youth and children provide community-based prevention, which has made a huge difference in the lives of the youth. Through these programmes, the youth is taught to distinguish between wrong and right, which prevents them from committing crime.

Such programmes are designed to provide the youth and children with necessary life tools, support and guidance to be better members of society. We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.

Victim empowerment is vital for victims of crime and abuse. Essential support services offered are counselling, shelter, advocacy and many more. The department's awareness programmes have led to such a high rate of attendance.

In the 2023/24 second quarter, the number of victims of crime and violence accessing support services increased. The actual output was 7 952. The output exceeded the target by 527. This shows that people have been reporting cases.

In the 2023/24 quarters, the number of family members participating in family preservation services has decreased. The decrease is an indication that most family members are reluctant to attend these sessions. The department should create awareness programmes about the importance of these preservation and parenting programmes.

Many children find themselves in the foster care systems due to unforeseen circumstances. The department has quite many children in the foster care system. This shows that the department works very well with children's courts and NPOs.

Children are removed from unsafe homes and put in children's homes or placed with foster families, where their safety is guaranteed. The number of children in foster care, who were reunited with their families, is very low, reason being that children are not ready to be reunified with their families.

Only 67% of the AGSA audit findings were resolved. There are still six outstanding matters, which were not resolved as per the Third Quarter Report. We remain confident that such outstanding matters will be resolved.

Only 71% of the Budget was spent and we will receive a top-up from the Adjustment Budget Appropriation from the Parliament, which will also be put into good use.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, one Member stood before this podium and consistently persisted on using unparliamentary language, which is a presentation when referred to me. It reflected a sign of patronisation.

I want to put it on record in this august House that there is no patronisation that will be allowed to debate from our responsibilities. We will continue to play oversight without fear or favour even though we don't need patronisation.

Hon Speaker, you will agree with me that if there is sense, we will take it, but if there is no sense, we will not take it.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, chairperson. We will now proceed to request our MEC for Social Development, Hon Fulufhelo Florence Radzilani, to come and respond to the debates made by the honourable Members.

THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker; our Hon Premier in absentia; all MECs who are here; Deputy Chief Whip; Deputy Chair of Chairs; chairperson of the Portfolio

Committee on Social Development; and all members of the portfolio committee as well as the Members of this august House.

Let me start by appreciating the hard work done by the members of the portfolio committee. We will always subject ourselves to your guidance and advices in the process of executing our constitutional mandate as the department.

Hon Speaker, we acknowledge the high vacancy rate of the department. If Members recall, when I was presenting before this august House, I indicated that we are a department with a staff complement of 48. We are in the process of filling the vacant positions of the department.

We also acknowledge the delay, which was caused by the fact that we had to put our house in order, especially when it comes to stabilising the budget allocated to cater for COEs, so that we don't create future problems for ourselves.

Hon Speaker, we have swiftly advertised some of the key positions, and importantly, we will be biased towards equity, particularly at senior management level, where women representation remains at an undesired level. This is because if you want to talk about true women empowerment, we must ensure that women occupy space, especially when it comes to areas where decisions are taken.

Hon Speaker, we are equally concerned about gender-based violence and femicide – the issue that the Hon Premier has already touched on. As a result, we have instituted a research project. Through this research, we believe that some of the factors that cause gender-based violence and femicide are addressed in a proper way.

We have partnered as well with institutions of higher learning. We have just received a report from the University of Limpopo, where they have done scientific research which points out clearly areas that need our attention as the Department of Social Development.

During this morning, I was part of the NCOP Sitting virtually, where the Minister of the department, Minister *Sisisi Tolashe* was answering questions from the honourable Members. The issue of gender-based violence and femicide was raised sharply.

The Minister has indicated that, this time, we are going to get it right because we have the law in place. It is no longer just talking without being guided by the legislation. The law has been passed at national Parliament.

Hon Speaker, it is true that the department acted swiftly on Vutlhari Old Age and Disability Centre and closed it down. Currently, all beneficiaries who opted to be in the care of government are placed in various centres and are doing very well.

We are equally disappointed, Hon Speaker, especially when a learned honourable Member, Hon Marx, wants to mislead this House. We do have the records for the names of the people who elevated the matter to the department, and that person does not even belong to the Democratic Alliance.

He is part of the ruling party. If you want me to provide members of the portfolio committee with the name of the whistleblower, I can do that because on Wednesday we are meeting, honourable Members, so it is not coming from the Democratic Alliance ... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

My apologies, honourable MEC, I want to call Hon Marx to order. Let's not disrupt the speech. According to the Rules of this House, if you have got a matter to raise, you raise your hand, but you don't just interrupt the speech when it is on. Please let's follow the rules of this House. You may proceed, honourable MEC.

THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you so much, Hon Speaker, for protecting me. It will also be important for me to report to this august House that of course in the province we still have a number of centres that are operating illegally; hence, we are still hard at work to make sure that our people are not illtreated under our watch.

When people are found to be operating illegally, we won't hesitate to take action as long as it will be about protecting our people. Those who let the department continue to submit inconsistent reports, I also want to challenge them, on the basis that our submission to this august House requesting the withdrawal of the Annual Performance Report came after we had done a thorough consultation with the Office of the Premier and the Provincial Treasury because we had an issue with the Auditor-General. It is the matter that we are still processing.

The national department transferred the building asset to the department without following the Public Finance Management Act. It is something that we have raised with the AG because we learnt through the AG that certain things were not done properly.

We can't just receive it without engaging the AG about the matter, of course being assisted by the Premier and the Provincial Treasury. Failure to address this matter will create future problems for this department; hence, we are saying that we are engaging on the matter. This is the matter of concerning the Annual Performance Plan.

If you check in terms of the issues that members of the portfolio committee were supposed to deliberate on today, it has got nothing to do with that. The honourable Member who raised this matter is fully aware that we are still engaging with members of the portfolio committee.

Hon Speaker, as I conclude, I also want to say that the department acknowledges the advices from the portfolio committee, and we will ensure that, through our marketing, communication and outreach programmes, we reach out to older persons and inform them accordingly about the residential facilities run by the government, which will provide safety and comfort to them.

Hon Speaker, other issues are issues concerning the audit outcomes. I can briefly indicate that we have instituted a bi-weekly audit steering committee so that we can deal with this legacy of audit findings that keeps on recurring from time to time.

We are hard at work, and we believe that working together with members of the portfolio committee, who are there and who are going to respect their role as members of the committee, we will be able to get this department right. We will be able to execute our mandate without any difficulties.

Thank you so much, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable MEC. We think you tried as much as you could to comprehensively respond to the debate ... [INTERJECTION]

MR MARX

Hon Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In terms of Rule 96: "An explanation during a debate is allowed only when a material part a Member's speech has been misquoted or misunderstood". I want to be offered an explanation as to how the MEC misunderstands my speech.

Hon Speaker, I said the following: that it is the only issue brought by the Democratic Alliance and other concerned groups. At no stage did we say we are whistleblowers, and we have issued two statements, one from national and the other from me. I did not mislead the House, and I request that the MEC withdraws that I have misled the House.

THE SPEAKER

I still rule you out of order. There is a difference between what you are saying and what the MEC has said. You said you're the first people as the DA to raise the matter.

MR MARX

Speaker, may I please read my speech again. You are misquoting me.

THE SPEAKER

You can't interrupt me. I am not going to allow you to speak. Please seat down.

Can I repeat what I am saying. You quoted the right rule that you feel you are misquoted. You said in your debate, because we were all listening, that you are the first people to raise that matter, which the MEC has responded to, and you thought you are misquoted.

The MEC said, yes, you raised the matter, but you are not the first people to raise that matter. She said if you want more explanation on the matter she will provide it in the portfolio committee. I, therefore, rule that this matter is closed and cannot be debated on.

If it needs to be deliberated on, we will refer it back to the portfolio committee to be deliberated. The matter is closed. I will not allow anyone to speak on the matter. I have ruled on the matter, and the matter is now closed.

MR MARX

Hon Speaker, I still rise on the same Rule and say you misquoted me. And I refer you to the *Hansard* recording.

THE SPEAKER

I will not refer it to any *Hansard* recording. I have ruled on the matter, and it is closed.

THE DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. I think you are correct in your ruling. We need to respect both the decorum and the proceedings of this House. Hon Speaker, we need to arrange an induction workshop for the new Members. They are still new; they never know what needs to be done. That is my submission.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Deputy Chief Whip. The third induction workshop will take place at the beginning of 2025. We hope those Members will participate in the induction workshop.

Hon Mathe, once the Deputy Chief Whip of the House speaks, it closes the debate. Once he speaks, he closes the matter. Thank you so much, Hon Mathe. We will now proceed to the next item.

7.5. Consideration and Adoption of the Reports of the Standing Committee on Public Participation and Petitions

The debate of item 7.5 is very, very important. It affects a number of departments. We hope that the committee will be able to do justice, and we hope the MECs present here will be able to handle the matter, even on behalf of the other MECs who might not be here.

This is because, unfortunately, even the Leader of Government Business is not here. MECs, please assist on the matter. I think you will be able to take notes for your colleagues so that the matter can be attended to.

We are now on the consideration and adoption of the reports of the Standing Committee on Public Participation and Petitions in respect of the referrals as contemplated in subsection (2) and (3) of Limpopo Petitions Act, 2003 (Act No. 04 of 2003) from August 2023 to December 2023.

Over to you, committee chairperson.

MR MATABOGE

Thanks very much, Madam Speaker.

Hon Speaker: Hon Premier in absentia; Members of the Executive Council; Deputy Chief Whip; Deputy Chair of Chairs; honourable Members present here and our guests in the gallery, please receive my warm greetings.

Madam Speaker, I hereby table the report of the Standing Committee on Public Participation and Petitions for consideration and adoption by this august House. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, chairperson. Is there any seconder to the report? Hon Sebopela, you are recognised.

MS SEBOPELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I stand to second the adoption of the report of the standing committee as presented by the chairperson.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. The Member who is opening the debate on our Speakers' List is Hon Machete Phetole Percy. You are allowed to debate where you are seated or here in front. You have got an option.

MR MACHETE

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker; Deputy Chair of Chairs; Deputy Chief Whip and all MECs present here. All protocol is observed.

I am privileged to be afforded this opportunity to address this august House today.

The Standing Committee on Petitions and Public Participation, as guided and mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, the Petitions Act No. 04 of 2003 and other related legislations and laws, has been given powers to oversee and adjudicate on petitions. It also has the powers to subpoena any person for the purpose of giving evidence before this committee.

The Freedom Charter states clearly when it pronounced itself by saying, "The people shall govern", and further citing that, "All the people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country".

It is important to note that when it says that the people shall govern, it is a first core principle of the Freedom Charter, and the rest shall follow. As I speak again with regard to the Freedom Charter, we should understand that it is a statement of principle as I have indicated earlier through the South African Congress of Alliance. It is important that we also take note of that.

The Freedom Charter was adopted at Kliptown in 1955, and our democracy was ushered in, in 1994. South Africa today is a democracy. All the sectors of our society should explore all the avenues in order to be assisted.

The Standing Committee on Petitions and Public Participation is one of the components that the masses are writing to in order to express their dissatisfaction about or in all spheres of government, be it local, provincial or national, including but not limited to the state-owned entities, and other bodies of the state.

Madam Speaker and honourable Members, the primary purpose of the committee, when conducting sittings, is to allow the petitioners and respondents to reach desired and amicable solutions to the challenges that the complainants are confronted with at all levels.

In simpler terms, it is to adjudicate on all the petitions, and once resolved, then close them. We then request honourable Members not to undermine the committee, especially when they are being subpoenaed.

At some stage, in one way or the other, Members of this very august House may be subpoenaed or summoned by the committee to lead evidence in certain matters that may be affecting individuals or a collective, and we advise that it should be taken into consideration.

Madam Speaker, the committee managed to attend to 40 petitions, and others are still in the process of adjudication. The petitioners are individuals, groups or fora that represent the communities, representatives from traditional leadership, the business and young people.

Mainly, the petitions are about service delivery, and the most petitioned sphere is local government because it is much closer to the masses of the people. Government departments that are mostly affected are CoGHSTA, about housing, popularly known as RDP houses; and also the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure as a result of the conditions of our roads.

In the main, most of the petitions revolve around the third sphere of government and the departments. Honourable Members, after adjudicating and closing most of the petitions, the committee shall prioritise oversight visits, which is one of the key factors that will trace progress on the same that were closed as a result of evidence that was presented during the committee sittings. Having said that, without any doubt, the national democratic revolution is on course.

The description of the national democratic revolution is that it is a process by which the majority of the people benefit when the revolution is victorious. We have seen that in 1994, when that revolution was victorious, many people have benefited.

Madam Speaker, the African National Congress wishes to state that the institutions should prioritise petitions or grievances of the communities before they can reach a stage where they come to this level of the Standing Committee on Petitions and Public Participation and be able to have capacity to deal with or resolve them.

This is because it is a fact that people of this province have voted the ANC into power so that their aspirations could be realised. They believe that the ANC has a solution to each and every problem.

We should not underestimate the electorate because they are the ones that mandated us to serve them, and it is important that in the course of our work, at all material times, we should respond positively to the needs and aspirations of our people.

Therefore, we can call upon all the political leadership of all the institutions to take this matter into consideration because we are in the process of creating the national democratic society.

It is proper that we should also provide a description of a conscious construction dependent on conscious actions by an advanced section of our society or detachment. By virtue of being part of this Seventh Administration, we constitute that advanced section or detachment.

Therefore, at all material times, we must be seen to be responsive to the needs of the people, because we are indeed consciously constructing through our conscious actions. It is an ideal situation that we want to create, which is the national democratic society.

I believe that every step that we take, we are consciously building, and we will be able to objectively arrive at that desired situation. As we gravitate towards the end, let us radiate our province, and we dare not fail.

In conclusion, the Standing Committee on Petitions and Public Participation is a key component in assisting the masses of our people with their grievances; in that way, the democracy is more maturing because these kinds of bodies are a good test for our constitutional democracy.

We wish to resolve and close all the petitions that are before the committee. In that way, we will be playing a pivotal role in intervening on behalf of the communities that we are leading. I am sure I have represented the committee in terms of the prototype we have received.

Thanks very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Machete, for opening the debate. We will now allow Hon Hermanus Frans Marx to continue with the debate.

MR MARX

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker.

The Limpopo Petitions Act aims to encourage and facilitate public participation in governance, particularly among communities historically excluded politically, socially, and economically. The Act emphasises enhancing democracy through accountability

and transparency while respecting the rights of petitioners as well as those who are affected by the petitions.

Hon Speaker, it is evident that the Petitions Committee has been somewhat effective despite the challenges it faces. The House needs to acknowledge that. Time does not permit to show all the good work of this committee. For example, it is deeply concerning that Ms Ruth Moselane has waited 15 years to be allocated an RDP house. Just think about it, 15 years to get an RDP house. Furthermore, it is heartening that Ms Moselane placed her trust in this committee to resolve her issue, and I sincerely hope that she will soon have the home she desperately needs.

Similarly, it was disheartening to learn that Ms Sarah Mamata, a single parent of nine children, has not benefited from an RDP house registered in her name, but she is unable to get it. It is commendable that this committee addressed her petition in such a way to bring about a resolution that could satisfy her needs.

Hon Speaker, unlike other committees, whose targets are determined internally, the targets of the Petitions Committee are not determined internally but by the public. The number of petitions submitted reflects the trust the public places in the committee. Fewer petitions may indicate a lack of public trust, while an increase suggests the public's growing faith in the committee's ability to address their grievances.

Hon Speaker, I, hereby publicly commit to serving as an ambassador for the committee by educating communities about the petition process and encouraging them to bring their issues forward.

When adjudicating petitions, party politics must not interfere. In this regard, I commend our chairperson, Hon Shimane Mataboge, for fearlessly holding departments and municipalities accountable during hearings. He has done so impartially, even when the officials involved are his colleagues in the ANC.

Hon Speaker, I pledge my continued support for the chairperson in fulfilling the objectives of the Act, provided he maintains his commitment to fighting for the rights of petitioners.

Despite its successes, the committee unfortunately struggles to ensure accountability from municipalities and provincial departments. Many of these entities fail to submit the required reports on time or at all, blatantly ignoring or contravening clear provisions of the Act. This deliberate neglect hampers the committee's ability to fulfil its duties.

The root of this issue lies in a loophole in the Act. Failure to submit reports is not classified as a criminal offence. They don't need to submit a report because there is no consequence.

Hon Speaker, therefore, to address this, I have submitted a Private Member's Bill this week for certification, which introduces criminal sanctions for noncompliance with reporting requirements of the Act.

I trust that the chairperson and my fellow committee members will support this initiative. By converting this Bill into law, we can ensure that municipalities and the

departments are held accountable, thereby strengthening the effectiveness of the Petitions Act and, by extension, our committee.

Hon Speaker, the Petitions Act is an invaluable tool for enhancing democracy in Limpopo. It allows citizens to voice their grievances and ensures their concerns are addressed with transparency and fairness.

Hon Speaker, in conclusion, let us continue to use this tool to respect and uphold the rights of our petitioners while fostering accountability and trust in governance.

Re a leboga.

THE SPEAKER

Baie dankie. Unfortunately, the EFF is not here. We will now proceed to the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Participation and Petitions, Hon Shimane Morris Mataboge, to close the debate.

Over to you, committee chairperson.

MR MATABOGE

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am standing on the protocol that has already been established.

Let me take this moment and thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me an opportunity to address this august House. We are going to present report snippets that form part of the overall or comprehensive report that starts from August 2023 to December 2023.

Before that, Madam Speaker, we are gathered in this manner in this august House few days after the G20 Summit that was hosted in Brazil, where our country, South Africa, has taken over the G20 Presidency from Brazil after the summit and will host the 2025 Summit in Johannesburg.

Hon Speaker, we believe our government, especially the Head of State, His Excellency President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, shall navigate the correct path to address our socioeconomic challenges that we are facing in our country.

Madam Speaker and honourable Members, the Standing Committee on Public Participation and Petitions is one of the components that are strengthening our democracy.

Ordinary members of the public as petitioners or complainants are able to interact with their democratic government in all the three spheres of government, as well as other institutions of the state in order to find each other on any matter that is in the jurisdiction of the committee.

This is because the committee can deal with any matter that falls within its jurisdiction. Any person can complain or even write a petition to the committee as long as it falls within the jurisdiction.

Madam Speaker, the committee managed to conduct two successful educational workshops held on 01 September 2023 at GaNchabeleng, Tau-Kgaphola Tribal Office, Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality in Sekhukhune District and on 15 November 2023 at Mhinga village, Collins Chabane Local Municipality in Vhembe District.

An Education Outreach session was arranged for 08 November 2023 at Mashishimale Tribal Office, Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality in Mopani District and was, however, postponed due to by-elections in Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality in Sekhukhune District.

Honourable Members, in the period under review, the committee was confronted with a backlog of petitions from the previous year, and in that vein, we then established that we need to move with speed to adjudicate on the petitions per district, and make sure that we exhaust them timeously.

The petitions were adjudicated as follows:

- Capricorn: 18
- Sekhukhune: 08 (01 petition is closed)
- Vhembe: 06
- Waterberg: 04
- Mopani: 04 (03 petitions are closed)

All of the petitions are still in progress and will be adjudicated on.

Madam Speaker, let me indicate that the committee is doing very well in making sure that it listens and adjudicates on all the petitions before it; however, there are some slight pointers that we need to present before this august House, which other Members have also indicated about. Those are the following:

- The committee has the powers to subpoena or invite any person to appear before it, in particular the political leadership of the institution and the head of department, but the principle of the decisions that has been taken by the committee is that we prefer that it should be members at the political level or in senior administrative positions who will do that. The whole intention is that they are the people in a position to take a decision on behalf of the institution.
- The problem is when they fail to appear for some other reasons, it affects the work of the committee because, you will find that at some stage we postpone the petitions in front of the petitioners, which is not good. Therefore, we have to force the committee to subpoena either the political leadership and the HOD or the head of the administration to appear before the committee. Those are some of the challenges that are confronted by the committee.
- Before the committee can sit for the petitions, the institutions are informed on time to submit the reports at a given time frame. In most cases, we receive late reports, or totally we don't get anything. In terms of the Petition's Act that Members have been quoting, when the matters are referred to any institution, the committee expects that institution or department to respond to our referrals

within four weeks, and we want that to appeal to all institutions or departments to comply with that part, which is stipulated in the Act.

- these are few and some of the challenges that the committee is encountering.

Madam Speaker, we would like to submit that after all the necessary measures were taken to adjudicate on the petitions, there are some recommendations that may assist the process, and they are as follows:

- Synergy of plans between the departments and municipalities should be strengthened to enhance service delivery. This is because when the institution doesn't know where the problem is, it becomes very difficult to provide service delivery to the people.
- The departments and municipalities should voluntarily follow up on committee resolutions. We don't expect institutions such as municipalities or departments to wait for the standing committee to make follow-ups on them on the referrals that have been made to them.
- The departments and municipalities should respond timeously to petitions for effective adjudication. We are pleading with all these institutions that when we refer a matter to them, because these are the matters that the petitioners made either in their municipalities or departments, such a matter should be elevated to the standing committee of the Legislature so that it could be attended to because they still have hope in the standing committee.
- The MECs and Mayors should develop sound plans to ensure stakeholder management in an endeavour to avoid the risk of community protests. This is because as much as we attend to these petitions, that is going to maximise the protests that might be there in our communities or departments.
- The capacity should be strengthened in departments and municipalities to directly manage grievances and to be responsive to community issues. What we are saying is that once the employees at the level of the departments or the municipalities are capacitated to deal with these petitions, that is also going to minimise the grievances, and responding to or acknowledging receipt of the letters from the petitioners will give confidence to our people.
- There must be closer cooperation between the municipalities and traditional leaders to enhance service delivery. In most of the petitions that we received, the traditional leaders usually complained about the lack of cooperation from the municipalities. Therefore, there is a need for closing that gap between the municipalities and the traditional leaders. There should be good relationships between them.
- Consequence management should be seen to be done to enhance work ethic in departments and municipalities. This is because we might find that employees are getting these petitions and doing nothing about them, and there is no consequence management. We have this kind of people doing as they wish or not doing anything at all.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, the ANC has full confidence in the standing committee for the fact that it allows members of the communities to participate in their government. It will then strengthen the relationship between the members of the communities and their government.

Democracy that was ushered in in 1994 is participatory and people-centred, but we should not take a lot of time to resolve the petitions because that might anger the participants and ultimately cause unnecessary protests amongst the communities.

I must emphasise that and appreciate, on behalf of the committee, the level of commitment and good cooperation that we received from our MECs, who are the political heads of their departments. The majority of the issues have already been resolved.

I must just quickly say that the MEC for LEDET appeared before the committee and the issues related to LEDET were resolved. The MEC for Social Development also appeared before the committee as well as the MEC for CoGHSTA.

All the issues that were raised by our petitioners, we will be able to resolve in the form of mediation, because there was also a political will from Members of the Executive Council who were there on behalf of their departments.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I, therefore, move for the adoption of this report.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Morris Mataboge, for the conclusion of the debate. I will not give all the MECs an opportunity to respond, instead I would like the Leader of Government Business to respond. However, the MECs can decide who can respond on their behalf. MEC, Hon Lerule-Ramakhanya, you are welcome to respond on behalf of EXCO.

THE MEC FOR EDUCATION

Thank you so much, Hon Speaker. Let me greet the honourable Members of this august House this afternoon. Let me also greet all honourable MECs that are in the House, the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Participation and Petitions and the honourable members of the committee.

On behalf of the MECs that have appeared and those that have written the replies to the petitions, we want to start by appreciating the work and the easy way of engagement that the committee has introduced towards the executive committee. We want to take this opportunity to thank you chairperson of this committee and the members.

Secondly, we want to acknowledge the recommendations that have been given. We want to commit that the MECs that are affected, especially the MEC for CoGHSTA, for Public Works, and those who have appeared as indicated by the chairperson, will

if it includes municipalities and other stakeholders, sign off the covering letter on behalf of the municipalities to the committee regarding the updates and the reports that are needed.

Hon Speaker, I think the members of the committee have all agreed that this is about public participation, this is about that the people shall govern. We should acknowledge that reversing the years of apartheid, where our people were being denied identity, is over.

We have noted that there is a problem with the Department of Home Affairs and other departments such as the Department of Transport and Community Safety. We will also engage them.

We are about to be reversing the disadvantages for our people who don't have land, which delays them to have RDP houses. We are hard at work to make sure that the land that was stolen is restituted to the owners.

We want to thank the committee because the increased number of petitions to the committee is all about the increased amount of trust people have in believing that in Limpopo their voices can work for them. As the ANC-led government is in charge, we will give support where it is due.

Thank you so much, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC. From our side as the Speakership, we applaud the Standing Committee on Public Participation and Petitions for the good work done.

Petitioners are watching this Sitting live. If it was possible, it would be nice for you to highlight those cases, especially the ones that are closed, which were resolved successfully, so that they can realise the good work that you are doing.

As and when the next reports come, please consider mentioning some of those good stories to tell that indeed this committee has achieved, the enormous work that you get involved in.

We really appreciate this committee and will continue to support it because the people of the province have confidence in it that they can assist to ensure that their problems are resolved. On that note, we are now going to the next item.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There is only one announcement, that is, lunch will be served in the Committees' Boardroom, and MPLs and guests are invited.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Thank you very much. The House is adjourned to Thursday, 28 November 2024 in the Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber at 10:00.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
THURSDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

We shall now have an opportunity to observe a moment of silence for prayers and/or meditations.

[SILENCE]

THE SPEAKER

Good morning, honourable Members. I want to greet all of you as we are seated here. We shall now start with the work and business of the day. We are already done with item 1, so we will now proceed.

We have been briefed that there was a Programming Committee meeting that decided as follows:

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

There will be no motions without notice in terms of Rule 145.

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

There will be no notices of motions in terms of Rule 146.

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

There will be no Members' Statements in terms of Rule 199.

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

There will be no Executive Statements in terms of Rule 200.

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER REPORTS AND PAPERS

There are no committee reports, other reports and papers, and we will proceed directly to item 7, which is the Orders of the Day.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

I will now proceed to 7.1.

7.1 Consideration of the Reports of the Portfolio Committees

I will now call upon the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Hon Mokaba.

MS MOKABA

Hon Speaker, Chief Whip, MECs present here, honourable Members, good morning.

I, Mapula Mokaba, hereby move that the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism be adopted as the report of this august House. I so move.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable chairperson. Can we have a seconder. I recognise Hon Mdaka.

MR MDAKA

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I, Falaza Mdaka, rise to second the motion as presented by Hon Mapula Mokaba. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. I now call upon the committee chairperson to proceed to 7.1.2.

MS MOKABA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Mapula Anna Mokaba, from Mankweng cluster, rise to move that the Third Quarter Report of 2023/24 be adopted as the report of this august House. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable Member. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Matlou.

MR MATLOU

Ke a leboga, Mospikara. Nna, ke le Joshua Leswafo Matlou, ke ema go thekga se ba se bolelago. Ke a leboga.

THE SPEAKER

Honourable chairperson, you can proceed to item 7.1.3.

MS MOKABA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to move that the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report of the Limpopo Economic Development Agency be adopted as the report of this House.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder, honourable Members? I recognise Hon Kupa.

MS KUPA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I, Bela Kupa, rise to second the tabling of the report by the chairperson of the committee. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable Member. All Members of the House are part of the committees, and I expect all Members to participate. Honourable chairperson, let's proceed to 7.1.4.

MS MOKABA

Hon Speaker, I move that the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report of the Limpopo Economic Development Agency be adopted as the report of this House.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Is there any seconder? Hon Smalle, you are recognised.

MR SMALLE

Dankie Agbare Speaker. Ek staan op om die agbare voorsitter se verslag van die komitee se voorstel te aanvaar. Dankie, Agbare Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Baie dankie. We will now move to 7.1.5.

MS MOKABA

I, Mapula Mokaba, move that the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report of Limpopo Tourism Agency be adopted as the report of this House.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable chair. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Matjomane.

MS MATJOMANE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I, Delly Matjomane, rise to second the report as presented by the chairperson. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We will now move to 7.1.6. You may proceed, honourable chair.

MS MOKABA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Mapula Mokaba, move that the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report of the Limpopo Tourism Agency be adopted as the report of this House.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder, honourable Members? I recognise Hon Pheedi.

MR PHEEDI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to support the tabling of the Third Quarter Report of Limpopo Tourism Agency as tabled by the chairperson of the committee.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable Member. Honourable chair, let's proceed to 7.1.7.

MS MOKABA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Mapula Mokaba, move that the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report of the Limpopo Gambling Board be adopted as the report of this House.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable Member. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Nempumbuluni.

MR NEMPUMBULUNI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Nempumbuluni Thembeleni Colbert, rise here to second the tabling of the report as presented by the chairperson.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable Member. Honourable chair, you can proceed to 7.1.8.

MS MOKABA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, honourable Members and honourable MECs. I will now proceed to my last report. I'll call all my names. I, Mapula Anna "Prudence Ndamase", which is my combat name, rise to move that the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report of Limpopo Gambling Board be adopted as the report of this august House. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

The commander has spoken. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Rakgoale.

MS RAKGOALE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Nkakareng Rakgoale, stand to second the presentation as made by Hon Mapula Anna “Prudence Ndamase”. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, honourable Members. We shall now refer to the Speakers’ List. According to the Speakers’ List, we are going to debate all the reports at a go, honourable MEC. So, it’s one debate for all the reports.

Thank you. We will now go to the Speakers’ List and Hon Mnisi Gloria Dzunisani is the one who is opening the debate. Honourable Member, you may take the podium.

MS MNISI

Hon Speaker, Chief Whip of the Legislature, Deputy Chair of Chairs, Members of the Executive Council and Leader of Government Business, all chairpersons of portfolio committees, honourable Members of the august House and fellow citizens of our province, I greet you all in the wonderful name of Jesus, my Lord and Saviour.

Hon Speaker, as I address this esteemed House today, a week after the groundbreaking ICC ruling against Israel’s Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who is accused of genocide, the ANC commends the outstanding work of our national government in standing with the people of Palestine, initiating a legal case at the International Court and subsequently involving the ICC. This effort reflects the commitment expressed by our stalwart Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who once said that we are not free until the people of Palestine are free. Our freedom is intertwined with theirs.

Hon Speaker, I stand before the august House to debate the 2023/24 Second Quarter Performance Report for LEDET and LTA. As we deliberate on this report, we reflect on the work that has been done to drive economic development, promote tourism, and ensure sustainable growth in our province.

The African National Congress has always viewed tourism as one of the cornerstones of Limpopo’s economic growth. The sector has the potential to generate significant revenue, create jobs, and uplift communities. It is encouraging to see that the work of both LEDET and its subsidiary, LTA, aligns with these ambitions.

However, as with all other reports, we must also critically assess areas of improvement and ensure that the agencies fulfil their mandate to the fullest. The LTA has managed to exceed its SMME support target by assisting 54 SMMEs, well above the 25 planned. This shows that the agency is not only focused on tourism growth but is also deeply committed to the economic empowerment of our people.

Supporting small businesses and fostering entrepreneurship is vital for the sustainable economic development of Limpopo, and the portfolio committee commends this achievement. Moreover, the LTA has shown significant progress in gender empowerment, with 70% of procurement spending directed to women-owned enterprises, far exceeding the target of 10%. This is a concrete example of how the

agency is ensuring that women play a central role in the province's economic transformation.

The portfolio committee strongly supports such initiatives as part of our broader vision to create an inclusive economy that benefits all citizens. The work of the LTA in promoting Limpopo as a prime tourism destination is also commendable. The Integrated Destination Marketing Programme has successfully implemented domestic marketing campaigns, trade marketing platforms, and collaboration with key tourism stakeholders.

These efforts are vital for positioning Limpopo as a competitive player in the global tourism market. LEDET's report highlights similar successes. The department has made strides in promoting responsible gambling, addressing illegal gambling, and ensuring that the gambling industry in Limpopo operates in a regulated and transparent manner.

The Limpopo Gambling Board under LEDET has achieved a 100% performance rate of its key programmes, ensuring compliance and law enforcement in the gambling sector. This is a crucial part of building a sustainable and responsible economic development environment in the province. However, there are areas of concern.

While we commend the progress made and the achievement of a clean audit by LTA, the portfolio committee is concerned about other subsidiaries that require urgent attention and decisive steps so that they too become self-reliant and obtain clean audits. A clean audit is not just an administrative goal; it is a key indicator of transparency, accountability, and sound governance, which are essential for maintaining public trust.

Additionally, we are concerned about the underperformance in supporting businesses owned by persons with disabilities. While the agency has exceeded targets for women and youth-owned enterprises, it has consistently fallen short in this area. It is important that we take deliberate steps to ensure that businesses owned by persons with disabilities are given equal opportunities.

The committee calls for a focused strategy to address this gap and ensure that all marginalised groups are given the opportunity to participate fully in the economic activities of our province. Another area of concern is the lack of completion of one of the planned impact assessment studies for the Integrated Destination Marketing Programme. Impact assessments are vital to understanding the effectiveness of the agency's campaigns and making informed decisions about future initiatives.

A delay in completing these assessments indicates a weakness in operational planning that must be addressed. The portfolio committee calls for better planning and timely execution of all scheduled activities. The committee is also concerned about the budget execution, particularly the slight overspending of 6% in the second quarter.

While this is not a major issue, it does highlight the need for better financial planning and alignment between the agency's activities and its budget. The committee calls on the MEC to ensure that future budget allocations are better aligned with strategies and goals for both LEDET and LTA to avoid overspending and ensure efficient use of public funds.

Hon Speaker, while we acknowledge and commend the progress made by LEDET and LTA in promoting economic development and tourism, we believe that there is still much work to be done to ensure that Limpopo becomes a leading tourism destination and a model of responsible economic development.

The committee calls for the following steps:

- LEDET and other subsidiaries must work towards obtaining a clean audit in the coming years. The committee believes that this is essential for ensuring transparency, accountability and public trust;
- The MEC must take urgent steps to address audit findings and ensure proper financial management practices are in place;
- The portfolio committee also calls for the prioritisation of businesses owned by persons with disabilities. They also need an opportunity to participate in the economy of this province;
- The operational plans for LEDET, LTA and all the other subsidiaries, need special attention to enhance all the plans to ensure that the projects are completed on time; and
- Delays in the impact assessment and other activities must be addressed to ensure that agencies are fully equipped to measure and improve the effectiveness of their activities.

In conclusion, as we acknowledge the good work done by LEDET and LTA during the quarter under review in supporting SMMEs, promoting gender equality and ensuring the growth of tourism in Limpopo, the portfolio has recently witnessed a successful Limpopo Investment Conference 2024 hosted by the Hon Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, with the MEC for LEDET, Hon Tshitereke Baldwin Matibe.

We strongly believe that if zwithuzwo shanduka, LEDET and its subsidiaries will develop strategies to ensure that investment opportunities that presented themselves are harnessed, channelled and maximised for the prosperity of the province and its people through an inclusive economy. We stand positive that the department is in capable hands. I thank you, Hon Speaker. Let peace reign in Limpopo. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Ndza khensa, Manana Mnisi. We will now move to the next speaker on the Speakers' List, and it is Hon Jacobus Frederik Smalle. While he's coming towards the podium, like I did indicate previously, we don't necessarily tell you the minutes. You know your minutes is five, but try to manage it yourself without me saying how many minutes are left.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. My appreciation for being able to see you from this side or from this angle. Honourable MEC, Members and departmental heads, LEDET's

mission is to create and facilitate the development of a competitive economy, sustainable environment management and tourism development towards an improved quality of life for all.

Since the advent of our democracy, Limpopo has consistently ranked among the provinces with the lowest per capita GDP in South Africa. Over the same period, unemployment has risen and now exceeds 45% with youth unemployment surpassing 60% when using the expanded definition of unemployment, all primarily due to poor economic growth. In the heart of this failure, as the reports before us testify, lies LEDET and its entity, the Limpopo Economic Development Agency.

LEDA is supposed to function as the implementing arm of LEDET in the province. Economic development strategy ensures that provincial policies translate into tangible economic growth initiatives. However, the converse appears to be true.

Great North Transport, the subsidiary of LEDET, once transported 34 million passengers annually at its peak. Years of poor and reckless governance have brought this entity to its knees. Despite reports to the committee that corrective measures had been taken, the same trustees and management remain in their roles.

Its staff, pensions and medical aid are at risk. In a period under review, it fell short of its passenger targets due to shortages of buses. As the Democratic Alliance, we reiterate our recent call for Great North Transport to be placed under immediate business rescue.

Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone represents the largest special economic zone and industrial development project attempted in South Africa. Equally significant, however, are the potentially devastating impacts it could or may have on the environment, water resources, local communities, other economic sectors, and South Africa's urgent need to transition to a low-carbon economy. Of the R200 million planned for investment in the project during the 2023/24 fiscal year, we note that the underspending has resulted in a budget reduction of R360 million.

The Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone has been surrounded by controversy since its inception, dividing business and society. At the heart of this controversy is the governance of the initiative by LEDET and LEDA, particularly regarding their openness and accountability in decision-making to date, as well as the dual role the debt plays as both the driver of the SEZ and adjudicator of the important EIA processes. As the DA, we have called on LEDET to engage in an honest and open conversation with stakeholders, including farmers, communities, and environmentalists.

More recently, we have called on the LEDET portfolio committee to launch an investigation and enquiry into this matter. Regarding Corridor Mining Resources, the asset investment evaluation that was to be undertaken to facilitate the disposal of some of its assets has failed to materialise. Like GNT, Corridor Mining Resources should be placed under business rescue or administration.

Regarding Era Life Insurance Company, as the DA, we have raised concerns over the continual bailouts of Era Life Insurance based on unaudited financial statements and its questionable financial viability. Other additional concerns regarding LEDA include the failure to ensure the operationalisation of the Lebowakgomo Abattoir and

Mashashane Hatchery. The nonoperationalisation of the Tshepong and Fumani Mines delays in leasing industrial spaces, shops, and accommodation belonging to LEDA. Issues related to Limpopo Connexion, state-owned entities, including LEDA, were established to drive national and provincial priorities and to support economic growth. It is hard not to conclude that the opposite has occurred.

Not only many LEDA's projects are failing, but LEDA itself is failing. The promise of a better life for all has been betrayed. Ultimately, LEDET is answerable and accountable, and I hope that the new MEC will do just that.

Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, Hon Smalle. Unfortunately, Hon Mogaleadi Kgothatso Mogoane is not in and we will now call upon the committee chairperson to close the debate.

MS MOKABA

Thank you, Hon Speaker, honourable Members, and honourable MECs present here. Once more, good morning. I address this House exactly one week after the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Lesetja Kganyago, announced a 25 basis point reduction in the repo rate, bringing it down to 7,75% with the prime interest rate now at 11,25%.

The committee acknowledges this move as a step in the right direction. However, we believe that given the consistent downward trend in inflation over the past four consecutive sessions of the bank sitting, a reduction of 50 basis points or more would have been more appropriate and more progressive. Such a move would have allowed businesses to borrow at a lower cost and offered much-needed relief to our people regarding their home loans, car loans, personal loans, and credit card debts.

Hon Speaker, today we debate the Second and Third Quarter Reports of the Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism and its entities for the 2023/24 financial year. The mandate of the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism is to grow the economy and promote and manage environmental tourism activities.

Furthermore, the department has a mission to create and facilitate the development of a competitive economy, sustainable environment, and economic growth. This mandate is further cascaded down to entities with the Limpopo Gambling Board as a key custodian for responsible and legal gambling in the province and while the Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA) has a mandate of creating a conducive investment environment for both SMMEs and big investors in different economic sectors.

Honourable Members, the Second and Third Quarter Reports from LEDA and LGB provide us with an opportunity to evaluate the performance of two key entities in our province tasked with ensuring sustainable economic growth, job creation and the responsible regulation of industries that are vital to Limpopo's development.

As we reflect on this report, we must both celebrate the successes and critically assess areas where we need to do better. The ANC acknowledges the progress made by both entities in fulfilling their mandate and supporting our province's economic transformation. However, as always, there remain areas that we must focus on in improving performance to ensure that the benefits of these efforts are felt by all the people of Limpopo.

First and foremost, the committee commends both the Limpopo Gambling Board and the Limpopo Economic Development Agency for their achievements during the second quarter of the 2023/24 financial year. The Limpopo Gambling Board has delivered a commendable performance, achieving 100% of its targets across all its key programmes. The committee commends the LGB for its efficient management of the gambling industry, including its efforts to address illegal gambling activities, promoting responsible gambling, and ensuring that the industry operates in compliance with relevant legislation.

The law enforcement programme's success in conducting 51 investigations into illegal gambling activities, far exceeding its targets for 2025, is a clear demonstration of the board's proactive stance in tackling unlawful gambling practices. Furthermore, the confiscation of 364 illegal gambling machines and the apprehension of 44 suspects is a testament to the effectiveness of LGB's law enforcement efforts.

Similarly, LEDA's performance in the second quarter has been impressive, with several key achievements worth noting. The agency has made significant strides in advancing economic development in Limpopo. Among the most noteworthy accomplishments is the exceeding of the targets for supporting SMMEs with 125 SMMEs and 110 cooperatives being assisted, significantly surpassing the planned targets.

This demonstrates LEDA's continued commitment to facilitating small business growth and empowerment in the province, which is an essential priority for the ANC. It is also worth acknowledging the excellent work done by LEDA and the facilitation of exports where the target for exports was set at R100 million, but the agency exceeded that target by facilitating R267,6 million in export.

The committee also welcomed LEDA's progress in the establishment of industrial parks and special economic zones such as the Fetakgomo-Tubatse. The registration of this industrial park is a crucial milestone in attracting investment to Limpopo, and it aligns with the ANC's vision for industrialisation and economic diversification. LEDA's work in promoting the mining sector and assisting with the development of the Musina-Makhado SEZ is also commendable.

Although there were some delays in infrastructure development due to permit challenges, the committee recognised the effort being made to resolve these issues and remains hopeful that significant progress will be made in the coming quarter. While we celebrate the success of both LGB and LEDA, the committee is also concerned about certain challenges that need urgent attention to ensure that this agency continues to serve the people of Limpopo effectively.

One of the most pressing concerns for the committee is the continuous underperformance in the area of financial management and audit outcomes. The LGB has for several years now received an unqualified audit opinion with findings. This recurring issue is a significant concern as it points to weaknesses in the Board's financial governance. The committee calls on the MEC and the leadership of LGB to take immediate and decisive steps to address the issues raised in the audit report, particularly in relation to procurement, internal control, and compliance with financial regulations.

Achieving a clean audit should be a top priority for the board, as it is an essential indicator of transparency and accountability. Similarly, LEDA faces challenges in financial sustainability. Despite the agency's positive performance in supporting SMMEs and facilitating investment, it continues to rely heavily on government funding. The committee acknowledges that LEDA has made progress in increasing its revenue generation, but we believe that more must be done to ensure that the agency becomes self-sustainable over the long term.

LEDA must explore new and innovative revenue streams, including partnerships with the private sector to reduce its reliance on state funding and ensure that it can continue to support economic development in Limpopo without being constrained by budgetary limitations. Another area of concern for the committee is the vacancy rate within both the Limpopo Gambling Board and LEDA. The LGB has a vacancy rate of 14%, with 10 out of 73 positions unfilled. Similarly, the LEDA's ability to fill vacancy posts remains a challenge. These vacancies, especially in key areas of operations and decision-making, hinder the capacity of both agencies to fulfil their mandate effectively.

The committee urges the MEC to prioritise the filling of these critical vacancies to ensure that both entities have the necessary human resources to drive their programmes and initiatives. The Committee on Economic Development, Environment and Tourism expresses its concern over the slow progress at the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone, despite numerous commitments and assurances by the previous leadership of the SEZ to facilitate the transfer of land to the agency.

This crucial step remains incomplete. This is deeply troubling, especially given the significant financial resources allocated to this programme over the past five years. The failure to transfer the land has hindered the implementation of the Musina-Makhado SEZ project plan, delaying its potential economic benefits for our province and its people.

Therefore, the committee strongly urges the MEC, Hon Tshitereke Matibe, to institute consequence management against those responsible for failing to deliver on this critical milestone. Despite the funds allocated for this purpose having been expended, it is imperative that accountability is enforced to ensure public resources are managed effectively and that such delays are not repeated in the future. The committee is also concerned about the delay in infrastructure development in key projects such as the Musina-Makhado SEZ and the lack of progress in derisking agroprocessing projects under LEDA.

While we acknowledge that some delays are due to external factors such as permit challenges and logistical issues, we call on both agencies to improve their planning

and project management processes to ensure that projects are completed on time and within budget. The committee believes that the successful completion of this infrastructure project will be crucial for unlocking Limpopo's economic potential.

All possible measures must be taken to mitigate delays. The province has invested significantly in Limpopo Connexion, a state-owned net company under LEDA aimed at advancing digital connectivity. While this reflects a commendable and forward-thinking policy position, Limpopo Connexion is facing critical funding constraints that hinder its ability to roll out its network in rural areas. As a result, many of our communities remain disconnected from the digital opportunities and benefits that are provided by internet access. This funding shortfall is a significant barrier to the agency fulfilling its mandate to connect people in every corner of Limpopo. We, therefore, urge the Limpopo Provincial Treasury and the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism to allocate the necessary funds to enable Limpopo Connexion to achieve its objectives. Furthermore, to fully leverage this critical infrastructure, we encourage municipalities and all provincial agencies to explore modalities for utilising Limpopo Connexion as a primary network provider. This coordinated approach will ensure optimal use of resources and maximise the socioeconomic benefits of digital connectivity across the province.

Hon Speaker, while both LGB and LEDA have made considerable progress, it is clear that there is more work to be done. The committee remains committed to supporting both agencies to promote economic development, job creation, and the responsible regulations of industries in Limpopo. However, to realise the full potential of this agency, we urge the MEC and the leadership of both entities to focus on the following:

- Firstly, regarding financial management, both LGB and LEDA must work towards achieving a clean audit. The ANC calls on the MEC to ensure that this agency implements effective financial management practices and addresses any weaknesses in its internal control;
- secondly, with regard to the filling of vacancies, the committee urges the MEC to prioritise filling critical vacancies in both LGB and LEDA to ensure that this agencies can implement their programmes effectively;
- thirdly, in promoting financial sustainability, LEDA must continue to explore innovative ways to generate revenue and reduce its reliance on government funding. This will ensure the long-term sustainability of the agency and its ability to continue driving economic development in the province; and
- fourthly, both LGB and LEDA must improve their project management and planning processes to ensure that key infrastructure projects, particularly SEZs and industrial parks, are completed on time and within targets.

The committee commends the Limpopo Gambling Board and the Limpopo Economic Development Agency for their positive contribution to providing growth and development. The achievements in supporting SMMEs, promoting responsible gambling and advancing infrastructure projects are noteworthy, and we encourage both agencies to build on these successes.

However, we cannot ignore the challenges that remain, particularly in financial governance, staffing and project delivery. The committee stands ready to support the MEC and these agencies in addressing these issues and ensuring that Limpopo

continues to thrive as a hub of economic growth and opportunity. I thank you.
[APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Re a leboga, honourable Member, the chair of the committee. We shall now call upon the MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Hon Matibe Tshitereke Baldwin, to respond to the debate made by honourable Members.

THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, Hon Chief Whip, MECs and the honourable Members. I want to start by appreciating the inputs that we have received from the committee. Hon Speaker, it's a very engaging committee when we go to present our reports and we want to appreciate the oversight that they are doing to all our entities and the department.

On issues raised here, starting with Hon Mnisi, we appreciate the input that you made in terms of LTA and its role in promoting Limpopo. Hon Speaker, we also have what we term "Limpopo ka December" as a way of promoting through LTA. So this December in Limpopo will be a very different Limpopo – not Limpopo ka December. Limpopo ka December. Hon Smalle, ka December. So #Limpopo ka December.

We also appreciate the inputs that you have made in relation to what the department together with our entity, LTA, must do in areas where we are underperforming, more especially in promoting businesses of people with disabilities. I think this is something that we are going to look at – the issues around impact assessment as well as budget execution or what you call financial planning. We are going to work on that and try and improve in all those areas.

Hon Smalle, regarding the issues that you raised around GNT, as a department, we are working very hard to ensure that GNT goes back to its former glory, wherein it was also contributing to the provincial fiscus in terms of the Treasury. We have put a plan, a sustainability plan. All these entities have been given a six-month plan to turn around their entities, including GNT.

Regarding Musina-Makhado SEZ, Hon Speaker, we have received concurrence from the Treasury in terms of giving us the land from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. We are waiting for the Department of Public Works, under the GNU, Hon Smalle, you must assist us, in getting that concurrence. If we get the concurrence from the Department of Public Works, then work will start at the SEZ. The CMR has been struggling, but for now, it is financially sustainable. It can pay its own costs, but a lot of work needs to happen there. Concerning the New Era Insurance Company, we are working towards making sure that they get an equity partner to assist them in being financially sustainable.

We note the issues around the Lebogakgomo Abattoir. Hon "Prudence Ndamase", we appreciate the inputs that you have given, as the chairperson of the committee. I think that name will stick now. The one for Hon Mokaba will go away. The one which will remain is Hon "Prudence Ndamase" Mokaba. We note the inputs that you have made,

where we have performed, and areas where you indicated we must improve. We want all our entities to achieve clean audits.

Currently, LTA and LGB are on clean audit. LEDA is the one that is lagging behind, and we think that we can assist it to go back to clean audit with the other ones. All the areas that you raise critically, more especially issues around Limpopo Connexion, It's a matter that we are working with the Provincial Treasury to try and get some assistance. They have requested us to put up a plan in terms of assisting with the internet issues.

Other areas that we are going to look at include addressing financial management, critical vacancies, promoting financial sustainability, and improving project management.

Lastly, we appreciate the inputs and the guidance that we receive from the committee. Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC for the Department of Economic Development for the response. We will now proceed to item 7.2.

7.2 Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA

I call upon the committee chairperson, Hon Champ Sepuru.

MR SEPURU

I, Mmakgabo David Champ Sepuru, from Moletji, where Magesi FC is coming from, hereby move for the consideration and adoption of the 2022/23 Annual Report of the Department of CoGHSTA. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable chair. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Tshivhase.

MR TSHIVHASE

Nne Midiyavhathu Prince Kenedy Tshivhase Vele nga ethe Tshirukhwe Nethathe ndi khou tikedza zwo ambiwaho nga mudzulatshidulo wa komiti.

THE SPEAKER

Committee chair, you can now proceed to 7.3.2.

MR SEPURU

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Once more, I move for the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 second quarter report of the Department of CoGHSTA.

THE SPEAKER

I want to apologise to the House. I made a mistake. Honourable chair, you will come back later. Because the first report is an Annual Report, it will not be debated at the same time as the quarterly reports. It's only the MEC who will respond once to the Annual Report and quarterly reports. So, the chair will come back later. Let's now dispose of 7.2; then we'll come back to 7.3 later. I will now go to the Speakers' List to allow Hon Tshivhase to open the debate for us.

MR TSHIVHASE

Ndau ya nduna. Ndi khou livhuwa Tshipikara. Hangei Vhembe hune nda khou bva hone, mvula I khou na nga maanda. Zwino ndi khou livhuwa Mudzimu uri vhathu vha do la vha fura.

Hon Speaker, Chief Whip, Members of the Executive Council, honourable Members of the august House, ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed an honour and privilege for me to be afforded this opportunity to address this august House, to consider and adopt the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs.

In greeting this august House, let me remind Members of the words spoken by one of the most respected leaders of our country in 1994, Cde Joe Slovo when he said, "We could have talked about the facts and figures of South Africa's housing problem. We could have once again looked at the massive backlog and talked about the number of new families entering the market every year. But numbers don't tell even half the story. We would have been discussing in a vacuum, divorced from the people and places we aim to serve... Housing is a physical requirement. But it is also much more – it is a spiritual need which goes to the root of a dignified and tolerable life. It is at the core of a better life for all South Africans."

It is through section 114 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, as amended, that the Legislature must ensure that all organs of state in the province are accountable to it and should maintain oversight over the executive authority. Hence, we are presenting this report today.

The Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA has a constitutional obligation to oversee and monitor the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs' performance on service delivery. It is sections 26 and 27 of the Public Finance Management Act which enjoin us and the legislators to make sure that there is accountability in this department and other departments.

Hon Speaker, for the year under review, 2023/24, the department had an adjusted appropriation of R3,0 billion, and the total expenditure was R2,8 billion. For its four programmes, i.e., programme 1: Administration; programme 2: Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements; programme 3: Cooperative Governance; and programme 4: Institutions of Traditional Affairs.

This translates to 93,3% expenditure of the Budget allocated, which is an improvement of 48% in the budget which must be commended. In honouring our duty to serve, the department is encouraged to spend 100% of its budget because budget expenditure is inextricably tight to service delivery. For the same year, the department had 67 targets, of which 52 were achieved. This translates to 77,6%. Administration, and Human Settlements performed below 70%, with Human Settlements being the worst performer at 58%.

Challenges were experienced in financial management and project management with the most affected areas being in the Waterberg District, in projects like Marapong residential units, Altoostyd temporary accommodation and Vingerkraal temporary accommodation. The department has since taken over the project management of the project and readjusted the time frames for the completion of the project. There is now visible and tangible progress, and the process is moving at a faster pace than before and our people are going to get much-needed houses soon.

Other challenges like the Talana community residential units in Mopani District, Burgersfort community residential units in Sekhukhune District, Tshikota community residential units and Venetia Mine community residential units will be a thing of the past soon, and our people will be proud owners of those houses.

Hon Speaker, the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs procured 163 motor vehicles for our traditional authorities, and all qualified traditional authorities have received those motor vehicles, which are user-friendly to their respective terrains.

This distinguished House recognises the ongoing discussion concerning the Bapedi and the Vhavenda kingship. In the words of Michael Jordan, obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to clamp it, go through it, or work around it. It is imperative to resolve these differences, as the nation requires strong and united leadership.

As the Tshivenda proverb says, shango la shaya thovhele ndi muḽano. Therefore, I encourage all those involved and impacted to work together to find a solution. Hon Speaker, the department has reported progress on the construction of the traditional leaders council offices of Bakoni Royal Council, Majeje Royal Council, Dhavana Royal Council, Bakwena ba Matsipe Royal Council, and Banoka Royal Council. Hon Speaker, the Hon Premier of Limpopo province, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, launched the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children campaign on Tuesday, 26 November 2024, at Moletji village, Moshate. As Phil Jackson once said, "The strength of the team is each individual member; the strength of each member is the team." Let us all play our part. I also urge each of you in your respective areas of responsibility to contribute to making our province a safe haven for women and children where their lives and wellbeing are celebrated and valued.

Hon Speaker, in conclusion, the Annual Report of 2023/24 of the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs reflects the work done to deliver on the promises made by the ruling party in this province, the African National Congress, deriving its mandate from the Constitution of the Republic of South

Africa and the Public Finance Management Act and other relevant legislations and prescripts so that the people of this province can receive quality basic service.

We welcome the 2023/24 Annual Report as an account of the performance of the department and the commitment to continue providing quality services to the people of Limpopo, and thus creating a better life for all. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Vhothovhele, ri khou livhuwa for the opening of the debate. We now go to our Member, Hon Evelyn Rayne Wilson. I can see that today you are not so well. We are sorry about that. You are trying to deny your third leg.

MS WILSON

Thank you so much, Speaker. Honourable Members, glaciers are the largest and possibly the slowest moving objects on earth, and their impact is often overlooked. Glaciers move exceptionally slowly by internal deformation, which can have devastating consequences on the environment and human life. Similarly, the glacial pace by which the department addresses critical challenges results in a continuous regress, especially in our municipalities, where efficacy is the exception rather than the norm. This, too, has dire consequences.

Oversight, accountability and meaningful interventions remain critical concepts that cannot be separated from the financial management and public accountability process. Honourable MEC, for the year under review, in programme 1, which is Administration, we saw underexpenditure of R32,5 million up from the R25,5 million...[INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Wilson, Hon Mathe is raising his hand. Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Can the honourable Member indicate if she can take a question.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Wilson, are you ready to take a question?

MS WILSON

Due to time constraints, I won't take questions now, but Hon Mathe is welcome to address me after the meeting. Thank you, Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

She's not willing to take a question.

MR MATHE

[Inaudible]

THE SPEAKER

Okay, you can raise a point of order.

MR MATHE

[Inaudible]

THE SPEAKER

Okay, Hon Wilson, you can proceed.

MS WILSON

Thank you, in programme 1, which is Administration, we saw underexpenditure of R32,5 million up from the R25,5 million the previous financial year, only 7 of the 12 annual performance indicators were achieved. In programme 2, which is Human Settlements, you underspent by R146 million and only achieved 63,2% of the 19 targets, although there was a slight improvement, and we have seen improvements coming, and now we are dealing with that particular financial year. So, we have seen some slight improvements, but the department only built 5,066 houses, which is 5,467 less than four years previous to COVID... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

You can switch off the mic, one mic should be off. Over to you, Hon Mathe, you can present your point of order.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I'm rising on a point of order because Hon Wilson seems to have a short memory and portrays double standards in this House. I am raising that, Hon Speaker, precisely because she chooses which departments to speak ill about and which other persons she will speak well about. For example, there was an incident in Polokwane Hospital, where the machines burnt. In the meeting with the department, which she was part of because the CEO is white, she was saying, let's be patient, let's allow the CEO to fix. Today, because the MEC is black, she's not saying let's allow the MEC to fix. So I just wonder why she plays double standards in this House. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Let's hear if the honourable Member is ready to respond now or later.

MS WILSON

I'll respond to that later. Programme 3, Cooperative Governance, must capacitate municipalities and was allocated R226,8 million, of which 97,6% was spent to achieve 25 of the 26 targets. The question is, MEC, how is this possible when our municipalities did not improve in audit outcomes, raked up R2,77 billion in unauthorised expenditure, owe Eskom and the water boards R2,73 billion, increased spending on consultants by 6% to R279,8 million? There were stoppages of funds to nine municipalities due to underspending and material irregularities, which have caused a combined financial loss of R1,44 billion... [INTERJECTION]

MR MATHE

Orde! Order! Order! No, no, no! There was never a stoppage of funds to municipalities like Thabazimbi Municipality. What happened was that the DA wrote to ABSA to freeze the bank account of that municipality. What is that? What is that? They wrote to a bank to freeze the account of the municipality. Today they come here and say that we have stopped financing those municipalities. That is another double standard, Hon Speaker.

MR SMALLE

On a point of order, Hon Speaker!

THE SPEAKER

Honourable Member, did you raise your hand? You can proceed.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. First of all, I rise on a point of order. House Rule 92 stipulates that once a Member has requested a point of order, you must first recognise the Member before an honourable Member can proceed with his point of order. Hon Speaker, I would also like to refer further to House Rule 94, which is the repetition of the continuous interjections by the Member on Hon Wilson.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Smalle, what rule are you quoting?

MR SMALLE

I first rose on Rule 92 to make you aware that I wanted to make a point of order, and then I referred to Rule 94 because House Rule 92 requires me to be recognised by yourself, Hon Speaker, before I can speak.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Smalle. Hon Mathe, in terms of House Rule 92(2), a Member may not interrupt a Member who's rising on a point of order before the Presiding Officer makes a ruling on the initial point of order. I think you are irrelevant,

Hon Smalle, as well because I'm not sure which rule you are quoting. The one that I'm quoting calls you to order because Hon Mathe was raising a point of order. So, we must allow Hon Mathe to raise his point of order, and we must rule on the point of order which Hon Mathe raised.

So, I just want to check, Hon Mathe, are you done with your point of order?

MR MATHE

For now I am, but I'll come back in the next 80 seconds. That one is going to speak in July next year. She's not going to have peace here up until she withdraws that nonsense.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mathe, I don't think we must take that route, and every day has got its dynamics and issues. What I'm saying is that let's raise points of order in line with the rules so that we don't just interject outside the rules. Over to you, Hon Wilson.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Speaker. While I've got 30 seconds, I'm quite amazed. I didn't realise the MEC had a new spokesperson. I thought I was speaking to you, MEC. I was awaiting your answer, not the Hon Mathe's. However, I thank you for listening to me. About 26 municipalities did not include KPIs and targets in their service delivery and budget implementation, including targets and indicators on the quality of water, wastewater disposal, and the backlogs in water and wastewater.

In hindsight, we all know about the damming SAHRC inquiry about Limpopo's water crisis. For the year under review, MEC, the AG singled out Sekhukhune District Municipality. It completed only six of the 404... [INTERJECTION]

MR MATHE

Order, order, order!

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Hon Wilson continues to mislead this House. I'm a Member of the provincial Legislature – I'm not a spokesperson for MEC Makamu. Now she's saying in this House that she wasn't aware that MEC Makamu has a new spokesperson in Mr Mathe and not in Hon Mathe. I understand she hates Africans, but she cannot just do it publicly. She must withdraw and apologise. I was sworn in by the judge – Judge Moletje Phatudi. I'm not a spokesperson. I'm not a civil servant. I'm an honourable Member with ethical and honourable behaviour. She's out of order.

THE SPEAKER

Okay. Can I check something, Hon Wilson? Have you mentioned that statement?

MS WILSON

I said that because Hon Mathe was responding to my debate. The MEC is supposed to respond, and not Hon Mathe. He is not the spokesperson for the MEC.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Wilson, let's follow the correct procedures. If you respond directly to Hon Mathe without listening to the Presiding Officer, we will have difficulty in managing this debate. So, if you said so, I think you should withdraw the words.

MS WILSON

I withdraw.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. You can proceed with the debate.

MS WILSON

It completed only six of the 440 ventilated improved double-pit toilets, which is only 1% of which it planned to build in 2022/23 to upgrade sanitation for the Legolaneng community. This target was not met due to the late appointment of a contractor. The municipality also only managed to provide 126 000 of the planned 315 000 ml of water, which is 40%, and using water tankers to supplement water provision and lessen the impact of delayed water projects. This target was not achieved due to broken water tankers... [INTERJECTION]

MR MABOTJA

On a point of order!

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mabotja, you are recognised.

MR MABOTJA

I'm rising on a point of order because as I have been browsing the Speakers' List, I can see that the time allocated to Hon Wilson is over.

MR SMALLE

On a point of order!

THE SPEAKER

I'm not going to allow any point of order. Can I allow Hon Wilson to conclude her presentation.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker. We still find people in Sekhukhune pulling water and washing in holes along with cows and goats. The municipality underspent its municipal infrastructure grant by R232,96 million, representing 49% of the grant allocation. A very serious and very hard look must be put into the Sekhukhune district. At present, it does not appear to be salvageable, and I think very urgent interventions are required.

Hon Makamu, we can no longer afford to have targets set only on the interventions conducted by the department. The targets must be set on successes, if not, it renders set targets meaningless and regress across all programmes is guaranteed.

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, it is incumbent on the Seventh House to intervene to hold the department accountable to save our towns by ensuring effective municipal councils and professional officials who spend prudently are held accountable and, most importantly, prioritise service delivery. And this is the advantage of doing Annual Reports long after the fact.

This is for the 2022/23 report, and these are based on the AG's comments. So, now we can see how far we have come in 2023/24. I think some serious interventions are required, MEC. We cannot have the same old, same old, copy-and-paste resolutions, and I look forward to improvements in this department.

Thank you

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Wilson. We will now proceed, and Hon Mapoulo is not here. We will call upon the chair of the committee, Hon Sepuru Mmakgabo Champ, to close the debate.

MR SEPURU

Thank you. Hon Speaker. Indeed, I'm from Moletji, hence my name Mmakgabo. You'll never find these names anywhere other than in Moletji. Hon Speaker, the Premier in absentia, MECs present, honourable Members, chairpersons of portfolio and standing committees, I'm not going to be long because my fellow Member, Hon Tshivhase, has touched on almost all the points that I was supposed to raise.

So, I will only be raising those issues and emphasising those that were not raised. I indeed feel honoured and privileged to be afforded this opportunity to address this August House on the occasion of considering and adopting the 2022/23 Annual Report of the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, CoGHSTA in short.

I want to take this opportunity to greet this august House and indicate that access to adequate housing is enshrined in the Constitution. Section 26 provides that everyone has the right to access adequate housing and that the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources, I must emphasise this, Hon Wilson, “within its available resources” to achieve the progressive realisation of this right.

Through CoGHSTA, the people of Limpopo province are entitled to better houses. They are entitled to municipalities that are functional and efficient and can provide quality basic services to them. They are also entitled to live in traditional leadership areas where cooperative governance is reigning supreme. The department is supposed to have 50% women representation in the senior management services.

Currently, it is sitting at 41,5%, so it is gradually moving towards the attainment of 50% and more. This is pleasing and a lot of work still needs to be done to ensure that we achieve these targets. The department is implored to hasten this process for the attainment of women’s empowerment and gender equity in the department.

Madam Speaker, at the end of the financial year, the department had delivered 7 023 housing units against the target of 7 291. This translates into 96,3% achievement. A total of 1 500 asbestos roofs were removed and replaced.

With regard to Phase 1 in Seshego, through the Housing Development Agency as the implementing agency, contractors have been appointed, and they have taken sites for 755 houses. With regard to Phase 3, enumeration and auditing of 10 500 asbestos roofs across the province has been completed. We applaud the department for moving with speed in this direction.

However, we are ever worried about your CRU units in Altoostyd, Vingerkraal and other CRU projects. In Altoostyd, for instance, we have the challenge of people living in unhealthy conditions in the sense that ablution facilities are not functional and this is causing a health risk to the residents down there. We were shocked when the department was ready to provide pit latrines instead of servicing or repairing the ablution facilities that have been in existence.

However, we were pleased with the undertaking from the MEC that the issue of fixing the toilets in Altoostyd will be done by December, which is next month. We will hold you accountable for that, honourable MEC. We will indeed undertake oversight visits to ensure that you have fulfilled your promise.

Madam Speaker, at the end of the financial year, the department had procured 163 vehicles for our traditional authorities and all qualifying traditional authorities have received vehicles – which vehicles are user-friendly in their territories. This will help them navigate areas whenever they will be undertaking their work.

The department also managed to procure boardroom furniture for 10 traditional councils and full office furniture for 24 traditional councils. We applaud the department for doing this and we urge the department to move with speed in delivering the same services to other outstanding traditional leaders. The municipalities will spend less than 40% of their municipal infrastructure grant, when municipalities are expected to

spend at least 40% of their MIG by the end of December to avoid surrendering the grant allocation.

This is a great concern to the portfolio committee as our people are crying out for services out there, and the department is urged to develop and implement a turnaround strategy to assist the struggling municipalities. This brings us to the end of our presentation, and I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable chairperson, for closing the debate. We shall now proceed. We will not call the MEC now; we will allow you to present the Second and Third Quarter Reports. Over to you, chair.

MR SEPURU

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I stand to move for the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 Second and Third Quarter Reports. I so move.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Is there any seconder? Hon Mokoete, you are recognised.

MS MOKOELE

Re a leboga, Mohlompegi Mospikara. Ke le Mosibudi Esther Mokoete, ke rata go tlatša se Modulasetulo a boletšego ka sona. Re a leboga.

THE SPEAKER

Re a leboga, Mohlompegi Mokoete. We will now proceed to 7.3.2. I call upon the honourable chairperson.

MR SEPURU

Madam Speaker, should I also move for the adoption, or should I proceed with my presentation?

THE SPEAKER

You should still move for the consideration and adoption of the Third Quarter Report.

MR SEPURU

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Mmakgabo Champ Sepuru, hereby table the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report of the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA for consideration and adoption by this House. I so move.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Is there any seconder? I recognise Hon Mataboge.

MR MATABOGE

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise to second the tabling of the Third Quarter Report for consideration and adoption by this House.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Honourable chairperson, please sit down. We will now refer to the Speakers' List. According to the Speakers' List, the honourable Member who is opening the debate is Hon Phokane Maudu Johannes.

MR PHOKANE

Hon Speaker; Chief Whip; Leader of Government Business, who happens to be the only MEC in here; honourable Members of the august House; ladies and gentlemen, a ke le tamiše. Ke lebetše MEC Mahoi. Ke be ke sa le bone. Ke le tamišitše.

Hon Speaker, it is indeed an honour and privilege for me to be afforded this opportunity to address this august House on the 2023/24 financial year Second and Third Quarter Reports of the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs. In our endeavour to outline the performance of the Department of CoGHSTA, we shall try our best to submit ourselves to and be persuaded by Amilcar Cabral's most famous quote in this House. We shall be frank and tell no lies about the achievements and shortcomings of the Department of CoGHSTA during the period under review.

Hon Speaker, section 114 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa enjoins the Legislature to ensure that all organs of state in the province account to it, and that it should maintain oversight over the executive authority. The Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA, which I presently represent here on this platform, is mandated to oversee and monitor the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs on their planned APPs. Hon Speaker, the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs is composed of four programmes, i.e., programme 1, which is Administration, whose purpose is to provide strategic and effective leadership, management and administrative support to the core functions of the department; programme 2, which is Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements, whose purpose is to ensure that there is a provision of housing development, access to well-cared-for accommodation in well-located areas, access to basic services and access to social infrastructure and economic opportunities; programme 3, which is Cooperative Governance, whose purpose is to provide technical and oversight support to municipalities to implement their mandate; and programme 4, which is Institution of Traditional Affairs, whose purpose is to support the institution of traditional leadership to operate within the context of cooperative governance.

Hon Speaker, the Department of CoGHSTA has been performing relatively well throughout the quarters of the 2023/24 financial year in all programmes concerning the achievement of the targets that were set. In comparison to the performance of the

quarters of the previous financial year, it also managed to achieve all its set targets in both the second and the third quarters in the Cooperative Governance programme. That means the Department has been able to consistently monitor and support municipalities.

Hon Speaker, it should be noted that even with the support given by CoGHSTA, four municipalities failed to ensure that they spent 40% of their MIG allocation by December 2023. In addition, other municipalities didn't generally do well on a variety of issues. The department should, therefore, work within the available legislative framework to strengthen its support to all these municipalities that have been effective in their provision of services to the people. The achievement of targets under this programme will remain a pyrrhic success as long as it does not translate into a positive impact on the performance of municipalities.

Hon Speaker, in respect of the budget performance by the department during the period under review, which is the second and the third quarter, the portfolio committee has noted that the department was able to spend about R2,1 billion as of 21 December 2023, cumulatively, out of the total Budget allocation of R2,7 billion, which was a notable improvement from the performance of the previous financial year. In terms of percentage, it is an improvement of 15,1%, from 61,9% as it was in December 2022 to 77% as it was in December 2023.

Hon Speaker, Chapter 2 section 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa puts direct responsibility on the department to ensure that everyone has access to adequate housing, a responsibility carried out through the ISHS subdepartment. At the end of the period under review, the department's performance under this programme was 50%, which was a performance far above what it achieved in the previous financial year. Despite the improvement in this regard, the portfolio committee remains concerned about the dire situation that some communities find themselves in as they await the government to complete housing projects that are meant to provide them with adequate shelter to restore their human dignity.

The department is expected to act with the agency required to fast-track the building of housing units that were promised to our people. The people of Altoostyd, Marapong, Skierlik, and other communities deserve a better life as promised by this ANC-led government. The ANC anticipates that what it outlined in its 2019 manifesto, where it indicates, through the NDP, we seek to advance a coherent programme to transform human settlements and to ensure that the delivery of housing is used to structure towns and cities and strengthen the livelihood prospects of households and overcome apartheid's spatial patterns, is realised.

Hon Speaker, on matters of gender equity in terms of employment at the senior management level in the department, it is at 41,5% of its gender equity target of 49%. Even though the department has not yet achieved a 50% female representation in its senior management service, there is a conscious, gradual, and steady movement towards that target. The department is encouraged to relentlessly strive towards the achievement of the 50% equity target and beyond.

Hon Speaker, the department has reported progress on the construction of offices for traditional councils. It should also be noted that this self-serving department has been

able to provide office furniture for some traditional councils that are in need. The portfolio committee encourages the department to ensure that the construction works taking place in these traditional councils get concluded.

It is also safe to note, Hon Speaker, that traditional leaders were bought new bakkies so that they could fairly and easily access all their areas of jurisdiction, so that they could even visit their subjects and assist them when the need arises. Chapter 12, section 212, of the Constitution acknowledges the role of traditional leadership as an institution at the local level on matters affecting local communities. The department has consistently responded to that section of the Constitution as it offers support to traditional councils and traditional leadership in the form of the provision of tools of trade.

In conclusion, Hon Speaker, the Second and Third Quarter Reports of the 2023/24 financial year of the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs reflect the work done to deliver on the promises made by the ruling party in this province, the African National Congress. We welcome the 2023/24 Second and Third Quarter Reports as an account of the performance of the department and a commitment to continue providing quality services to the people of Limpopo province and thus create a better life for all. I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Phokane. We will proceed to the next speaker, who is Hon Evelyn Rayne Wilson.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker. The Democratic Alliance was a party to the oversight report on the Department of CoGHSTA for the 2023/24 fiscal year. We note the findings of the portfolio committee, specifically regarding the tracking of 16 resolutions, and they are as follows:

- The department must ensure that there is consequence management for officials responsible for financial misconduct, financial mismanagement, irregular, fruitless, and wasteful expenditures, and that those misappropriated funds are recovered.
- The department should always provide a breakdown of houses built, as well as those that are rectified.
- The AG raised material irregularities in the preparation of the annual financial statement of the department since the 2017/18 financial year. The committee must monitor the progress of these recommendations.
- The department should provide the portfolio committee with all MIG expenditure reports, and the department should ensure that the municipalities employ CFOs, technical service managers, and planning managers, i.e., section 56 managers, with the requisite skills to perform their responsibilities, and not rely solely on consultants for functions that they were hired to perform. The

department should consider prioritising disaster management services. We feel that there's a very grey area there, MEC.

- The department should consider assisting municipalities with communities where there is no water access. Honourable MEC, your department has been allocated R296,4 million to support and provide oversight to our municipalities, but what exactly is the money being spent on?

The AG found that inadequate oversight and slow implementation of corrective actions continue to overshadow the audit outcomes of most of the municipalities in Limpopo. In the 2022/23 audit findings, not one municipality received a clean audit. Eighteen received a qualified audit with findings, eight municipalities received qualified audits, and Modimolle-Mookgophong received an adverse audit opinion. At 22 municipalities, ruthless and wasteful expenditure totalled R230,58 million and placed pressure on their financial health, while the amounts owed to Eskom and the water boards remained exceptionally high at a combined R2,73 billion. This has resulted in many hardships in many areas.

Despite over-reliance on consultants and at an increased cost of 6% to R279,87 million, audit outcomes remain unchanged. We don't have the people to correct the audit outcomes, but it appears the consultants are not able to do it either. That becomes problematic.

About 19% of municipalities cannot meet their obligations, and nine municipalities approved unfunded budgets, contributing to a total of R2,77 billion in unauthorised expenditure. It's a scary amount. The much-publicised intervention in Thabazimbi on 04 October 2024 notwithstanding, when can the portfolio committee expect progress reports on the other dysfunctional municipalities? There is a strong correlation between cadre deployment, financial instability, and poor service delivery.

We recommend that the MEC urgently conducts a skills audit of all municipal managers. The department must stop pandering to inept partners. Our municipalities require skilled individuals to manage them effectively, and appropriate performance evaluations and accountability measures should be in place. Hon Makamu, if our municipal political and administrative leaders fail to deliver the results, they must be replaced.

Section 139 interventions should not be used as a last resort. They must be implemented immediately when municipalities are not capable of self-correcting challenges. According to Stats SA, Limpopo has the highest number of households without access to piped water, at 25,5%.

That's against the country's average of 8,7%. We know what the Human Rights Commission report said concerning noncompliance with the Water Services Act or section 27 of the Constitution. There were recommendations to ensure that the constitutional right to sufficient water is adhered to by the government, but we are not getting tangible evidence of any positive change at the grassroots level.

We are in for a drought and the situation is going to become very dire in many communities. While the Premier recently welcomed the R122 million in investment

pledges, this House must realise that the municipal infrastructure is the bedrock on which investments thrive. Without sufficient access to water and electricity, well-maintained wastewater plants, and municipal waves, we can wave those investments goodbye to the detriment of the 2 million unemployed in Limpopo – those who are not economically active and discouraged job seekers in the province. We have the potential to make great changes, but we need to do consequence management and have accountability to achieve that. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. I can see that the honourable Member allowed you to finish. We will now proceed with something that we'll have to look at in the future so that we can sort out the matters between Hon Wilson and Hon Mathe. We will now proceed. Hon Mapoulo is not here, and I will call upon Hon Champ Sepuru to close the debate.

MR SEPURU

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Once more, I take this opportunity to appreciate the time given to us as the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA to conclude the debate. We have demonstrated, Hon Speaker, our appreciation of the pivotal role our traditional leaders play in the lives of our people. The department had an adjusted budget of R634,9 million for this programme, of which 60,3% was spent at the end of the third quarter.

This translates into 83,3% achievement if we are to assess it based on the target. This performance is appreciated, and the department is encouraged to do more. This translates into service delivery to our people.

The construction of traditional council offices of the Bakone Royal Council, Majeje Royal Council, Davhana Royal Council, Bakwena Ba Motsepe Royal Council, and Manuka Royal Council is appreciated. We implore the department to move with speed in constructing more traditional council offices for outstanding traditional leaders. However, the department is moving at a snail's pace in resolving succession claims and disputes.

When we were in Lephalale, there were complaints from the Seleka Traditional Council. We have also received a letter of complaint and request for intervention from the traditional council of Zebediela. This can't be left unattended because it serves to cause challenges in traditional council areas.

We don't need to wait for the courts to force us to address these issues. It is quite important that we need to move with speed. Therefore, on behalf of the portfolio committee, I request the report for the claim from Zebediela and the one from GaSeleka.

Madam Speaker, our traditional leaders also must help the government, especially the Department of CoGHSTA, when coming to the implementation of projects. They are those traditional leaders who demand a lot of tribute. Tribute is your "lotšha fee".

When you get into the traditional councils and you want to implement a particular project, they will demand a lot of money. This needs to be nipped in the bud. The department must see to it that this challenge is resolved.

As the portfolio committee, we are victims. When we went for an oversight visit in Mopane, we were screwed off R2,000 as lotšha fee. So, you ask yourself, how do we expedite delivery when traditional leaders demand tribute like this? In our culture, we understand that tribute is not fixed.

You fork out what you can afford. We appreciate, once more, that traditional leaders were supplied with vehicles, Ford Ranger double cab bakkies, so that they could fairly easily access all their areas of jurisdiction. We appreciate that.

However, we still press the department to do more. We need to hold hands with our traditional leaders in educating our people about climate change and how to assist in making sure that it does not get worse. This we can do well as there are meetings of people in traditional councils at the “goro level”, at least once per month.

Our traditional leaders should be implored to assist the department by not allocating stands in low-lying areas. This serves as a trap to the department when coming to the provision of services, housing in particular. Traditional leaders need to observe 1:50 years flatline so that we don’t create unnecessary problems for our people.

On your way to Mankweng, both on the left-hand side and right-hand side, most people were allocated stands in the flood areas. Soon, we will be requested to intervene because of disasters that might have struck those places. As we have said, the people need houses, and they need these houses as in yesterday.

So, the department must move with speed in the provision of houses. We need to expedite those projects that we have mentioned, i.e., Marapong community residential units, Altoostyd, Vingerkraal, Talana and Burgersfort community residential units in Sekhukhune, Tshikota community residential units and Venetia Mine community residential units and CRU in Vhembe Districts.

We experienced challenges of contractor capacity, delays from contractors' nonpayment of subcontractors and subsequent delays and vandalism. Our people are becoming anxious and agitated. When we were doing our oversight, the people told us that they were waiting for the provision of their houses. We know it is houses that they need, and the department must just fast-track the process of providing houses.

Hon Speaker, recently we had floods and the advice that we want to give to the department is that when we have got floods and you find that there are roofs that have been blown off and windows that have been smashed by hail and heavy rains, we then need to assist in terms of disaster management plans, disaster management teams and disaster management budget, and extra personnel need to be adjusted and mobilised.

We wonder how far we have moved in this regard, and we would request the department to give us a report on the floods that have just occurred recently. On Cooperative Governance, the department carried out its mandate well as mandated

by section 154 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as it acquired 96% achievement on its planned targets, which translates into 1,8% improvement from 94,1% over the same period in the previous financial year.

Hon Speaker, I have come to the end of my presentation.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, so much. We thank the chair and the committee for presenting all the debates. We shall now call upon the MEC for CoGHSTA, Hon Makamu, to come and respond to the debate.

THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

Thank you very much. Greetings, Hon Speaker; Chief Whip of the majority party, my colleague, MEC Mahoi in attendance; honourable Members; chairperson of the committee on COGHSTA; and Members. Let me appreciate and talk to the reflections on the Annual Report of the 2022/23 financial year. We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the committee for the vigorous oversight. Definitely, you could get the sense of brutality and honesty and wanting to guide the department to deliver on its mandate.

Hon Speaker, on the issue raised on administration, let me indicate that we are meeting the gender equity target as espoused in our legislation. However, we are definitely making serious strides to make sure that by the end of this financial year we should have achieved the target of at least 50% at senior management level. I must say, Hon Speaker, that we might be the only department which, with the executive of five branches, has three women and one man currently. Our HOD is a female, our DDG for Human Settlements is a female and our DDG for Cooperative Governance is a female. We only have the CFO who is a male. That is our attitude towards empowering women within the department. [APPLAUSE]

We are aware that as a department we have been so stagnant in terms of the audit outcomes, getting unqualified audit opinions with matters. Hon Wilson, you still have to go and research; the Department of CoGHSTA does not have MIs (material irregularities). It might be having items or matters that need to be dealt with. It could be that you are referring to misstatements in our financial statement, which is a matter that we have resolved. We do not have MIs. We do have municipalities that have MIs, including in Thabazimbi.

Honourable Members, I agree on the issue of human settlements. Our mandate is to provide houses, and Hon Wilson acknowledged here on the platform that we targeted to build 4 973 houses, but we are at 5 066. We have overachieved to show our political will to building houses. I must agree, and I am the first one to acknowledge, that the CRU units, starting from Marapong, Tshikota and Talane, have been delayed in terms of the challenges that we faced. That resulted in people living in a very bad situation in Altoostyd farm.

Hon Speaker, I must confirm here that we have appointed two contractors to go and assist in making sure that the people who were given shacks are relocated and given houses in Altoostyd. That will happen, honourable chair, before December. We are also going to deal with the ablution block as mentioned, because the procurement is as expected.

We must indicate, Hon Speaker, that water is a challenge in the province, and we are working well with our municipalities and the DWS in resolving the issue of water to an extent that not so long the Premier will be convening a water summit out of the work that we are doing together with the municipalities to get the status quo and the challenges of water in the province.

It would be unfair if I do not talk to the Eskom debts, Hon Wilson, that you have mentioned when you were here on the platform. I am not trying to name and shame. The highest debts are with Modimolle–Mookgophong Municipality and Thabazimbi Municipality. I took an initiative in the Sixth Administration with Bela-Bela, Musina, Modimolle–Mookgophong and Thabazimbi. The two municipalities, i.e., Bela-Bela and Musina, as we speak, are up to date and running with the current accounts. The two municipalities, which did not want to submit to the MEC's leadership, were in the hands of the DA, unfortunately. They said they would engage Eskom on their own at Eskom Head Office, Megawatt Park. That is why we are unfortunately in this situation today; it is because they did not allow the support of the Department of CoGHSTA, but we are working on it.

I must also indicate, Hon Speaker, that section 139(1)(c) cannot be the first; it must be the last resort, like we have applied it. Section 154 of the Constitution provides that we as CoGHSTA should be able to support municipalities, and that is what we are trying to do with Thabazimbi. That is why we went to the last resort of section 139(1)(c), and we have a record here that we went to Mogalakwena Local Municipality and invoked section 139(1)(b). The municipality is working now; it is moving. People are receiving services. They may not necessarily be up to scratch, but you can see the work that was done by the department to support the municipality is yielding results.

On traditional affairs I acknowledge that as I am standing here the kingdom of Bapedi and Vhavenda and the queenship of Balobedu are not having leadership because of the challenges. I take a cue from the portfolio committee that we should be upfront and not wait for the court to entertain matters that are supposed to be entertained by us as a department; we should be able to deal with that. Honourable chair, I take full responsibility for the complaints raised by the Seleka Traditional Council. I have already started since the portfolio committee has raised it with us. The matter which was between the family has been taken out of the court. We are busy processing to recognise the heir of the throne in Seleka. I must say that the Zebediela matter, as you have raised it, is a matter that indicated that the family is divided into three groups. We have already referred the matter to the investigative committee in terms of section 59 of the TKLA (Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act). I met the House of Traditional Leaders on Monday to make sure that they submit the names of the people who should be able to support in terms of the law. We will keep on making sure that we deal with that.

On the issue of disaster, the capacity of the department is questionable. We are not up to scratch. I can confirm that on 27 October the province, in the four districts, i.e., Sekhukhune, Mopani, Vhembe and Capricorn, was bedevilled by a serious disaster. We have successfully compiled a report, which has now been declared and classified by the Minister as disaster areas to enable the province to access the Disaster Management Fund. We are working on that.

I must tell you that yesterday I was visiting Collins Chabane. I visited the areas Jilongo, Plaatjie and Lombard where people were badly affected by the disaster on Saturday. As I was coming to work this morning I received the bad news that Magona and Govhu, around Collins Chabane, is also bedevilled by another disaster. We are accepting that we should be able to educate our people. We will work with our traditional leaders so that even when we allocate sites, we allocate them in the area which has been approved. I think we should be working on that.

Hon Speaker, I would like to end here and say to the portfolio committee that their counselling will be the marching orders in the department, and we will make sure that we improve and deliver services to the people of the province. I thank you, Hon Speaker. [APPLAUSE]

THE SPEAKER

Hi khensile, ha khensa, hi khense swinene. We will now proceed to item 8.

8. SNAP DEBATE ON THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

We will go directly to the Speakers' List. According to the Speakers' List, Hon Shai Mpho Sonnyboy is the one who is opening the debate.

MR SHAI

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Deputy Chair of Chairs, Chief Whip and Members of the Whippers, Members of the Executive Council, chairperson of the portfolio committee, honourable Members, I greet you all in the name of zero tolerance for violence against women and children.

Today, I want to talk about a national pandemic that affects many households in South Africa and outside South Africa. The pandemic is called gender-based violence and femicide. Studies have revealed that South Africa is grappling with high rates of gender-based violence.

Madam Speaker, gender-based violence happens every day even around us, but we simply fail to assist or to identify it. Gender-based violence commonly abbreviated as GBV is a violent act directed towards individuals based on societal expectations regarding gender roles, behaviour, impacting women and girls predominantly within relationships.

Let us not ignore the fact that men and boys can also be victims of GBV, but women are often a burden due to prevailing power imbalances and societal norms that accord

them lower social status. Femicide, sometimes referred to as feminicide, is the killing of women or girl children all because of their gender. Femicide can be in different forms, such as murder of women because of intimate partner violence, torture and slaying of women.

Honourable Members, it is shocking that South Africa has the highest rates of GBV in Africa. Gender-based violence encompasses a broad range of abuses, which includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological abuse etc. Gender-based violence can ultimately lead to femicide, which is the extreme and tragic consequence of GBV.

Poverty and illiteracy are significant factors that contribute to women staying in abusive relationships. Women may feel trapped, but due to economic dependence or lack of education, it makes it difficult for them to escape the cycle of abuse. Stats show that between 25% and 40% of South African women have experienced sexual or physical intimate partner violence abuse in their lifetime. The second quarter crime statistics for 2023/24 reported that South Africa recorded 10 516 rapes, 1 514 cases of attempted murder, 14 401 assaults against women just in a short period of 3 months and 881 women were murdered.

While South Africa is still recovering from the gruesome death of a 19-year-old university student, Uyinene Mrwetyana, who was raped and murdered at a post office in Cape Town, not forgetting another inhumane murder of 28-year-old Tshagofatso Pule who was 8 months pregnant when her lifeless body was found brutally stabbed and hanging from a tree.

There are many more reported and unreported cases of GBVF in South Africa. GBVF is unacceptable – it is a symptom of deeper societal issues such as patriarchy and gender inequality. It is encouraging to note that our government has established various support organisations and initiatives to assist victims of GBV, which include the National Gender-Based Violence Command Centre; the GBV National Strategic Plan; the Department of Social Development's Victim Empowerment Programmes; and the South African Police Service's Family Violence, Child Protection, and Sexual Offences Units.

The government offers skills development programmes and funding opportunities to empower women and help them gain independence from their abusers. Some examples include the National Rural Youth Service Corps; the Expanded Public Works Programme; the Small Enterprise Development Agency; and the Women Empowerment Programme.

These programmes and initiatives aim to address the root causes of GBVF and provide support to those affected. However, more work still needs to be done to combat GBV and femicide in South Africa. If we all join hands and work together, we can combat GBVF and create a safe South Africa for ourselves and generations to come.

During these 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, it is important to identify households affected by this pandemic. Research has shown that GBV is often a hidden crime with many victims suffering in silence. Therefore, it is very important to encourage community members to be aware of their surroundings and report

suspected cases of gender-based violence. Social services schools and clinics must work together to support affected families. By identifying these households, we can provide necessary support, including counselling, shelter and legal aid to help survivors heal and rebuild their lives.

We also plead with the police to exercise sensitivity when handling cases of gender-based violence. It is heartbreaking to know that there have been instances where victims have been met with insensitivity and blame from law enforcement officers who are supposed to be implementing policies that favour victims. It is also important to address the intersection of gender-based violence and child abuse. Studies have shown that households experiencing gender-based violence are more likely to also experience child abuse. This is because gender-based violence often creates an environment of fear and trauma.

This trauma can have a long-lasting effect on children. It is also crucial to stand together in solidarity against gender-based violence. During these 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, let us provide a platform for individuals and organisations to come together and condemn this pandemic.

Honourable Members, we must also be voices of survivors, and we must also advocate for policy change and policy implementation. During these 16 Days of Activism, as the Committee on the Quality of Life, we also demand for increased support for gender-based violence prevention and support initiatives. By working together, we can create a society that values and respects the rights of all individuals, particularly women and children.

Honourable Members, let me bring to your attention a very critical issue that demands our urgent attention. Alarming rates of teenage pregnancies are usually a result of statutory rape. We must not turn a blind eye to this crime. It is rape, regardless of whether it is statutory or not; it is a human rights violation. It is important to know that children by law and morality cannot consent to sexual intercourse with adults. Honourable Members, we require awareness programmes to educate men and woman that statutory rape is a serious offence against the law. Statutory rape is a punishable offence. As leaders, it is our responsibility to spread this message and protect teenagers.

As I conclude, Hon Speaker, during this period of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, let us move in one direction and fight this social ill that has left children as orphans. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Shai. We now move to the next honourable Member to debate, and that is Hon Wilson. It is your opportunity, honourable Member.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Speaker. Honourable Members, violence against women and children remains the most widespread and pervasive human rights violation worldwide affecting more than an estimated 1 in 3 women,— a figure that has remained largely

unchanged in the last decade. In just 3 months, 957 women and 315 children were murdered in South Africa – that is 11 murders a day. It is horrifying. The theme for this year's 16 days of activism campaign, 'Time to Act Now' [sic] could not be more apt in our province.

The DA in Limpopo is gravely concerned by the high number of sexual offences as revealed in the SAPS annual crime report for 2023/24. During that year, 4 804 sexual offences cases, including rape, sexual assault and contact sexual offences, were reported to SAPS and 3 412 sexual offences were detected as a result of police action.

This is 13 heinous crimes per day on the vulnerable of our society. This exclude those crimes that are not reported as a result of intimidation and women who are turned away by the police stations. Lack of reporting is mainly on the basis in lack of trust in our police services or ill treatment. Alarming, this is almost 1000 cases more than 5 years ago. One hospital in this province reported 500 babies born to girls under the age of 14. Our babies are having babies. It is alarming and unacceptable... [INETERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mathe, you are recognised. You may take your seat, Hon Wilson.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I understand GBV and everything. I just want to establish, because this is a sensitive issue and there is no way that a person can refuse to take a question, whether the honourable Member can take a question.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Wilson are you ready to take a question?

MS WILSON

I am within my right to decline a question and I duly decline. Thank you, Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Can we now proceed.

MS WILSON

These statistics do not reflect the untold physical, emotional and psychological suffering... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

I am rising on a point of order, Hon Speaker. I acknowledge that this is a very sensitive debate. I acknowledge that the person I raise an order against is a female. I raise a point of order, Speaker, that Hon Wilson condemns and speaks about all these ill things that are happening, when she herself is verbally abusing us in this Chamber. How can she speak about abuse when she is an abuser, because by saying what she said to Dr Selane, that was verbal abuse? I just want to understand, how can she be talking about abuse when she is an abuser?

THE SPEAKER

If I remember, Hon Mathe, the debate was referred to the Rules Committee. Can we allow the Rules Committee to conclude on that matter. Thank you. Hon Wilson, you may proceed.

MR SMALLE

Hon Speaker, please recognise me.

THE SPEAKER

I am not going to allow any other person to speak. Can we allow Hon Wilson to complete her debate.

MS WILSON

These statistics do not reflect the untold physical, emotional and psychological suffering endured by the victims who were brave enough to report their cases. Gender-based violence is not a women's-only issue nor is it a male-only problem. It is a human issue, a societal issue, a national issue. Most incidents of GBV occur at the home of the victim, perpetrator, family or friends or in public spaces, but society is turning a blind eye to GBV, which is tantamount to tacit condonation.

It is also clear that the former Premier's gender-based violence technical committee was mere window dressing as GBV increases unabated every quarter; unless we act now, the heinous cycle of violence against our women and children will continue. We must implement a tangible, multi-disciplinary approach to gender-based violence and femicide, so that departments work in a unified way towards fighting GBV to deal with these social ills, we need effective coordination now.

Honourable Members, we need to act now. All victims of GBV who report their cases are clarion calls for action and they demand a response. It is incumbent upon this House to take responsibility for the scourge of rape, violence and death that our women and children are subjected to daily. Until we prioritise GBV and allocate resources equal to the scourge we face, our women and children will not be able to enjoy the freedoms accorded to them in the Constitution.

They include the following:

- Investing in evidence-based identification measures that enhance the likelihood of GBV perpetrators being apprehended;
- Enhancing GBV prevention systems and strengthening community support strategies;
- Ensuring GBV survivors have access to response services by providing GBV victims with critical material assistance, such as healthcare, legal services, shelter, and dignity kits;
- Increasing public awareness campaigns on GBV; and
- Developing perpetrator interventions to focus on perpetrators of family and sexual violence in a way that both responds to and prevents violence.

Let this House be instrumental to collaborate, connect and contract to ensure that GBV is eradicated in our province. I am a survivor myself of gender-based violence; this is an issue very very close to my heart, and it is something that I take very seriously. I will work with everyone and support any programme that supports the sexual abuse of children and rape. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Wilson. We will now proceed to speaker 3, who is not available. We will proceed to the chair of the Standing Committee on Quality of Life, Hon Mahlodi Caroline Manthata-Mahasela.

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Let me first greet the Chief Whip – I saw him here – and all the members of the Whippery, the Speaker of the House, leaders of the opposition, Members of the Executive Council and honourable Members of this august House.

As we gather here today, we are on the fourth day of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children. This period should serve as a reminder of our collective responsibility as South Africans to protect the most vulnerable members of society.

Madam Speaker, our efforts to combat gender-based violence and violence against children must be a daily endeavour. These 16 days are for us to intensify our awareness. The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign that aims to raise awareness about violence against women and girls. It also raises awareness to prevent violence.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign was launched in 1991 by the Centre for Women's Global Leadership in the United States of America. South Africa started forming part and joining the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign in 1998. The 16 days in between these two dates are dedicated to raising awareness and mobilising action to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. The importance of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is to raise awareness about the impact of gender-based violence on victims, families and communities. The 16 Days Of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence also assists in mobilising government organisations, NGOs,

advocacy groups and individuals in taking action to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

This initiative also provides support to survivors and families of gender-based violence victims. The 16 Days of Activism also allows victims to voice out what they are going through or what they once went through. Economic dependency and societal pressures are significant barriers that stop women from leaving abusive relationships. Financial dependence, as women rely on their abusive partners for financial support, makes it difficult for women to leave the relationship. Limited employment opportunities make women more dependent on their abusers. African cultural expectations that women should endure difficulties in their marriages can perpetuate the cycle of abuse. Ka Sepedi ba re, mosadi o swara thipa ka bogaleng. We usually say that Motho wa mosadi ke wa go kgotlelela gomme a sware thipa ka bogaleng. Ke bona o ka re, ke yona taba ye e dirilego gore batho ba ba tlaišago ba hwetše maatla a go tlaiša bana le bahumagadi.

Families and societies prioritise maintaining the relationship over supporting the victim of abuse. These societal norms protect the perpetrator instead of holding them accountable for their actions. The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is very crucial in assisting breaking the cycle of abuse. Boy children who grew up witnessing male figures in their lives abuse their mothers tend to normalise this behaviour. Why are they doing so? It is because they grow up believing that it is acceptable for men to abuse women. Also, girl children who witness their mothers, who are their role models, stay in abusive relationships, assume that being abused is acceptable and that it is a tolerable norm.

Honourable Members and Hon Speaker, it is so disheartening that pictures of missing children are all over the social media. The most painful case is of Amahle Thabethe who went missing in 2019 and five years later there is still no trace of her. Amahle is one of many children who go missing every day. Some of the missing minors are usually found dead. It is so pathetic.

Madam Speaker, I cannot even begin to imagine the pain the families of these missing children go through. The disappearing of children is a societal problem that requires citizens to hold hands and find ways to protect children.

Providing counselling and intervention programmes for children who have witnessed abuse can assist them understand that abuse is wrong and should not be tolerated. Educating communities about the effects of gender-based violence can help shift ancient societal norms. We urge the police and the justice system to take a firm stance against perpetrators of gender-based violence.

We demand that those found guilty of gender-based violence, including rape and abuse, should receive the harshest sentence possible. It is important that our justice system sends a strong message against GBV perpetrators and makes an example of them so that it is clear that GBV will not be tolerated in our society. By imposing severe penalties on perpetrators, we can stop potential offenders from committing GBV.

The fight against gender-based violence is a fight that requires all members of society. Cultural and traditional notions about masculinity often perpetuate GBV by promoting

attitudes and behaviours that emphasise control and power. However, it is still possible to redefine masculinity in a way that promotes healthy relationships, mutual respect and nonviolent conflict resolution. It is crucial that men themselves, who are the ones always perceived as perpetrators of GBV, stand up and raise awareness against GBV and say enough is enough, no to GBV.

During this 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, we urge family members to be vigilant and supportive. If a child reports abuse or exhibits changes in behaviour, we advise parents and guardians to immediately seek medical attention if they suspect any form of abuse. We plead with and advise parents and guardians to believe children when they report that they are being touched in disturbing manners. Believing and supporting survivors of gender-based violence is crucial in helping them heal. This can also be crucial for them in rebuilding their lives. It is also important to educate children about what is appropriate so that they are able to speak out if there are any attempts of sexual abuse.

We can prevent further abuse and trauma by holding perpetrators accountable and not making victims feel bad for speaking out. As we observe the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, it is also very important that we address an overlooked aspect of the fact that boy children can also be victims of sexual abuse. Societal norms and stereotypes often lead to assumptions that only girl children are vulnerable to rape. However, this is not true; boy children can also be victims of sexual abuse. It is very important that we address and acknowledge this reality so that we can protect our kids. This year, we are reimagining masculinity and engaging men as allies in the fight against GBVF. There is no excuse for gender-based violence and it should not be tolerated. Honourable Members and Hon Speaker, let us act now and break the silence; together we can do more.

We also appreciate our Hon Premier who started this awareness campaign of gender-based violence or this gogga or this monster called GBV. We applaud her for that.

As I conclude, we would like to commend the Department of Social Development for all the initiatives and programmes they are running to stop GBVF while empowering victims and survivors. I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

As members and honourable Members of this Legislature, we all say no to gender-based violence. We must continue to support the victims and make sure that we call upon all perpetrators to rot in jail. On that note, chair, we appreciate the work of the committee. From the Speakership, we will be issuing a poster on an individual Member of the Legislature with your poster that you will be able to use on social media during this period to say no to gender-based violence. On that note, the debate is closed. We will move on to item 9.

9. NCOP BUSINESS

9.1 Motion for the Ratification of the Appointment of Special Delegates who Attended NCOP Plenaries

Hon Chief Whip, the floor is yours. I suggest that you deal with the two items at the same time – both items 9.1 and 9.2.

THE CHIEF WHIP

As it pleases you, Hon Speaker. Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. Good afternoon to all honourable Members; Leader of Government Business, Hon Makamu; other Executive Members present here; Whippers present here; and all honourable Members.

Hon Speaker, House Rule 226(3) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the House read together with section 61(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides for the designation and appointment of special delegates when the House is not sitting.

In line with these provisions, the following honourable Members were appointed to attend below-listed NCOP plenaries when the House was not sitting:

Hon Speaker, I will seek your indulgence – the list is quite long. I will only read the dates, and they are as follows: 03 September 2024, 04 September 2024, 05 September 2024, 10 September 2024, 12 September 2024, 03 October 2024, 08 October 2024, 10 October 2024, 15 October 2024, 29 October 2024, 31 October 2024, 05 November 2024, 06 November 2024, 07 November 2024, 12 November 2024, 14 November 2024, 19 November 2024, 20 November 2024, 21 November 2024, 22 November 2024, 26 November 2024 and 27 November 2024.

Hon Speaker, I hereby move that this august House resolves to ratify the appointments of the above-mentioned special delegates in line with the above-mentioned provisions. I move accordingly, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Can we call for a seconder before you go to the next one. Can I get a seconder, honourable Members. Mohale Christinah, you are recognised.

MS MOHALE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I second the motion moved by the Chief Whip.

THE SPEAKER

Thank so much. Hon Chief Whip... [INTERJECTION]

MS SMALLE

Hon Speaker, on a point of order, please!

THE SPEAKER

Is it a point of order?

MR SMALLE

Yes. Thank you, Chairperson. I rise on Rule 226(5) that says the names of these special delegates and the period or purposes of designation must be published in the minutes of the proceedings. A ruling must be made now or at the next Sitting.

THE SPEAKER

Which rule are you reading?

MR SMALLE

It is Rule 226(5) that deals with designation of special delegates.

THE SPEAKER

Yes, what does subrule 5 say?

MR SMALLE

It says the names of the special delegates must be minuted in the proceedings of the House. If it does not come in the form of a report or if the names are not being recorded, how do the names of these individuals come into the minutes? You might want to express yourself there or come back with a ruling. I am just asking.

THE SPEAKER

The report has names, and it will appear in the minutes. May we now proceed.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you, Hon Speaker. The names are here, hence I sought the indulgence of the Speaker not to read them. I did not seek the indulgence to exclude them.

THE SPEAKER

If you do not mind, I can allow him to read them, but the names are there. They will appear in our minutes.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, for your protection. I feel very protected names are here. Hon Speaker, the NCOP has scheduled five plenaries which require the provincial special delegates to attend in terms of House Rule 226(1) as follows:

- Annual Address by the President of the RSA to the NCOP and Debate thereon, 28 November 2024, which is today at 14:00: Hon P C Ramathuba, Hon M J Makhurupetje, Hon E M Mokgonyana, Hon H P Ngoben;

- Question to Cluster 3B: Governance (Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities), 03 December 2024: Hon F F Radzilani, Hon S M Mathe, Hon M C Mohale, Hon D Nenguda;
- Consideration of the Division of Revenue Amendment Bill, Debate on World Aids Day, 04 December 2024: Hon K E Mahoi, Hon D M Mashego, Hon M S Pheedi, Hon M S Pheedi, Hon C D W Malebana;
- Questions to the Deputy President, 05 December 2024: Hon Dr P C Ramathuba, Hon M G Makhurupetje, Hon T P Mamorobela, Hon E M Mokgonyana;
- Consideration of Older Persons Amendment Bill [B11B-2022] Special Appropriation Bill, Global Minimum Tax Amendment Bill, 10 December 2024: Hon F F Radzilani, Hon K E Mahoi, Hon S M Mathe, Hon M S Pheedi; and
- Consideration of the Reports on Appropriations on the Proposed Division of Revenue, and the Conditional Grant Allocations to Provinces and Local Government, 11 December 2024. Hon K E Mahoi, Hon M C Manthata-Mahasela, Hon N C Rakgoale.

I so move, Hon Speaker. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Is there any seconder? Hon Sebopela, you are recognised.

MS SEBOPELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I stand to second the motion on the appointment of special delegates that are going to represent us in the NCOP. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Hon Smalle, you are recognised.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise on Rule 226(1); if you allow me, I will read....
[INTERJECTION]

MR MATHE

Order! Order!

MR SMALLE

Chairperson, allow me to read the order on the point of order, please. I do think that we have made a mistake.

THE SPEAKER

Where are we?

MR SMALLE

Hon Speaker, Rule 226(1) says, “The House must, by way of resolution, and with the concurrence of the Premier and the leaders of the parties entitled to Special Delegates, designate three Special Delegates...” This is in line with section 61(4). When I heard the Chief Whip read the names, I continuously heard four names per Sitting. The Rule makes provision for three... [INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Smalle, before you conclude about the names, can you read not only subrule 1 but also subrules 2 and 3.

MR SMALLE

Should I read subrules 2 and 3?

THE SPEAKER

Yes, because the subrules are complementing each other.

MR SMALLE

“The designation of Special Delegates may be moved [by way of notice] ... “That means the names may be moved, but subrule 3 remains there. I would ask that if you do not want to make a ruling now , you come up with a ruling on that issue during the next possible Sitting from your legal team, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

I will not make a ruling. We all understand that the Chief Whip is the Chief Whip of the House of the Legislature. If there is a matter that other parties feel uncomfortable with, as the Chief Whips Forum, they can have that discussion, not now. Can we now proceed and agree that the NCOP special delegates processes have been concluded. Thank you so much. We are now on item 10.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are there any announcements? Hon Marx has an announcement. Can we hear from him.

MR MARX

Thank you, Speaker. I just want to remind all the Members that it is my birthday tomorrow and they must please not forget to declare all the gifts that they are going to bring me. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

I like that, and indeed you know they might wake you up at 05:00 to remind you that it is your birthday. I am definitely sure that they are going to do that. We can just wish you a happy birthday in advance, and we will not forget the gifts. I will now hand over to the Deputy Chair of Chairs, Hon Ngobeni, to give us further announcements.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker; Chief Whip and members of the Whippers; esteemed Members of the Executive Council; MEC, Hon Basikopo Makamu, the Leader of Government Business; MEC, Hon Mahoi; MEC, Hon Ramakhanya; chairpersons of committees, in particular Mapula Anna Mokaba, “Prudence Ndamase”; should you consider to open a camp of any sort, I am your first recruit. I will be called the detachment of Prudence Ndamase.

Honourable Members, I want to first and foremost join the people of the province and the country to extend my fair share of congratulatory message to Kaizer Chiefs for the high-octane performance when they heavily thrashed Richards Bay. That was in passing.

I take the liberty, Hon Speaker, to make the following announcements:

- A memorial service of the late Ms Tshimangadzo Wendy Khosa will be held here at the Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber today at 14:00;
- Honourable Members and staff of the Legislature are encouraged to attend the memorial service of the most outstanding protocol official who dedicated her life to the service of the Limpopo Legislature;
- The family has informed us that her funeral service will be held on Saturday, 15 November 2024 at Mount Horeb Presbyterian Church, Polokwane, at 06:00. May her soul continue to rest in perfect peace;
- Honourable Members are informed that their access tags, I know that Hon Smalle has always been very passionate about this, are available for collection, and this exercise will be done during lunch time. When Members will be having lunch, they will be given the tags;
- We also remind honourable Members that tomorrow Friday, 29 November 2024 there will be a Sitting in the Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber; and
- Lastly, lunch will be served in the Committees’ Main Boardroom.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Ba re o ka se bolele ka Chiefs o sa bolele ka Magesi. Honourable Members, firstly, I want to appreciate you MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya. We know that you had some engagements, but the fact that you were able to come and join us is encouraging. We

appeal to other MECs to do that. Leader of Government Business, thank you so much for supporting us.

Normally, according to the Programming Committee, tomorrow they want us to conclude the business of the year. Secretary, we normally close in a special way. We all know that tomorrow will be the same way, but one important thing is that we want a quorum because we want to conclude the budget process. If we manage to come and have a proper quorum, we might get an early holiday. That might be our last day for the year; we might be rising. Honourable Members are allowed to wear their casual clothes tomorrow as a way of saying goodbye to each other.

11. ADJOURNMENT

On that note, honourable Members, the House is adjourned to Friday, 29 November 2024 in the Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber at 10:00. Let us start exactly at 10:00 so that we are able to finish early. The House is adjourned. Thank you.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]

**VERBATIM SPEECHES OF THE
LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE
LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
FRIDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2024
MEETING OF THE HOUSE: 10:00**

1. PRAYERS/MEDITATIONS

THE SPEAKER

Thank you; we may take our seats.

I'm told that if there is any MEC who did not dress for the occasion, we are not sure what will happen to the Budget. That is on a lighter note. Good morning, honourable Members. We are here today on a very nice day where all of us are very excited to be coming towards this end. It has been a hectic year. Anyway, let's proceed.

I want to apologise for the fact that we did not do the prayer. Can we please rise again?

[SILENCE]

Thank you so much. Hon Pheedi, I think your title is very important and you are becoming relevant. Thank you so much. We will now proceed with the business of the day: 29 November 2024, where our Sitting will proceed with the Orders of the Day.

The programming committee has indicated that because of the business of the day that we will be considering, there will be no Motions without Notice in terms of Rule 145; Notices of Motions in terms of Rule 146; Members' Statements in terms of Rule 199 and Executive Statements in terms of Rule 200.

[ITEMS 2–5 DISPENSED WITH]

2. MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

4. MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

5. EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS

We will now immediately proceed to item 6.

6. TABLING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS, REPORTS AND OTHER PAPERS

6.1. Tabling of the Auditor-General's 2023/24 Consolidated General Report of the National and Provincial Audit Outcomes.

The report will be presented by the MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Mahoi.
[APPLAUSE]

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Madam Speaker, Members of the Provincial Legislature, section 188(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act No. 108 of 1996, provides that the Auditor-General must submit an audit report to any Legislature that has direct interest in the audit. In accordance with the provisions of the above-mentioned legislation, and in terms of section 21 of the Public Audit Act, Act 25 of 2004, I, therefore, table in this august House the Consolidated General Report on the National and Provincial Audit Outcomes for consideration. I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, honourable MEC. The 2023/24 Auditor-General's Consolidated General Report on the National and Provincial Audit Outcomes is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury and Scopa for consideration and report back to the House.

6.2. Tabling of the Withdrawal of the Annual Report of the Department of Social Development for the Financial Year Ending 31 March 2024

On behalf of the MEC for Social Development, Hon Radzilani, the MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya will table the withdrawal. The honourable MEC for Education will stand on her behalf.

THE MEC FOR EDUCATION [ON BEHALF OF THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT]

Ndi matsheloni. Hon Speaker, let me take this time to greet you; Deputy Chair of Chairs; Chief Whip; colleagues; honourable MECs; Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development and its Members; and also, honourable Members of the House. I stand here to table the Withdrawal of the Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2024 for the Department of Social Development, Vote 12.

In terms of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999, section 65(1)(a), the Executive Authority responsible for the Department or Public Entity must table, in the Provincial Legislature, an annual report, financial statements and audit reports within one month after the Accounting Officer for the department receives the audit report.

Section 40(2) of the PFMA requires the Auditor-General to issue the audit report by 31 July. On receipt of the audit report by 31 July 2024, the department immediately requested the Auditor-General to reconsider the aspects of the report related to the annual financial statements. The Auditor-General formally responded on 02 October 2024. On the basis of the response, the department submitted a letter to the Legislature requesting the withdrawal of the annual report for 2024 to pursue a dispute in line with the applicable AG processes and procedures.

The department has, in terms of reporting requirements, submitted the annual report, financial statements and audit report to the Legislature by 30 September 2024 to comply with the timely processes of tabling annual reports in the Provincial Legislature. The department has formally launched a dispute with the AG regarding an aspect of

the audit report related to the annual financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2024.

Due to the decision by the Department of Social Development to pursue the AG's process for resolving the dispute, the withdrawal of the annual report is imperative. The implication of the withdrawal of the annual report is that the annual report must follow the National Treasury guidelines for late tabling of the annual report once the legislature exceeds the withdrawal of the currently submitted annual report in line with section 65(2)(a) of the PFMA. On completion of the dispute resolution processes, the department will re-table the annual report.

The AG has committed to expedite the process. The department therefore requested the Legislature to accede to the request to withdraw the annual report for the financial year ending 31 March 2024 for Vote 12 on the basis of the ongoing dispute in line with the applicable Rules of the House. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, honourable MEC. The matter is referred to the Portfolio Committee on Social Development for consideration and report back to the House. Thank you. Hon Mathe, you are recognised.

MR MATHE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I am not sure if my understanding is ...[INTERJECTION]

DR SELANE

Hon Mathe is wearing a nice shirt.

THE SPEAKER

What is the implication of that, Hon Selane? Order! Dr Selane. Hon Mathe, you are on the floor.

MR MATHE

Today I mean business, and serious business because the business we are dealing with here is serious. I know we have a strategic alliance with Dr Selane, but the person we have grouped against is not here today, so there is no need to redirect that attack.

Hon Speaker, unless my understanding of the processes is incorrect... I'm speaking with an understanding that if I do not understand, I would be guided. There is a request for the withdrawal of the annual report that was submitted to the Legislature. Therefore, my thinking was that after the request has been tabled, we as Members of this Legislature would be requested or would be expected to either second the request or not, so that the process does not have to go to the portfolio committee.

As the chairperson of that portfolio committee, with the evidence that has been provided, the letter that has been sent to the Minister, and all the legal processes as outlined in the ...[INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mathe, I think you are not quoting any rule that you want to put this matter on as a point of order.

MR MATHE

I am not raising a point of order.

THE SPEAKER

What are you raising?

MR MATHE

I am saying that this process should not go back to the portfolio committee.
[INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Then, I rule you out of order.

MR MATHE

We are seconding the withdrawal.

THE SPEAKER

But I ruled you out of order.

MR MATHE

Do you want us to withdraw it next year?

THE SPEAKER

But I ruled you out of order, Hon Mathe.

MR MATHE

Okay, my dear friend.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, chair. You are the chair of the committee.

MR MATHE

Then I support the withdrawal.

THE SPEAKER

We are happy that you support the withdrawal, but that debate will happen in the portfolio committee.

MR MOSS

On a point of order, Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

What is the point of order?

MR MOSS

This is just a clarity-seeking question. This matter was discussed in the portfolio committee and the portfolio committee made it clear that we are not going to allow the withdrawal. I find it difficult ...[INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

I have already ruled Hon Mathe, as the chairperson, to withdraw because I won't allow you to bring the debate of the portfolio committee into this House. So, both of you are out of order. The matter has been formally referred to the Legislature by the committee.

7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

We will now proceed in terms of the Orders of the Day.

7.1 Motion for the Suspension of Rule 173 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the House

Over to you, Hon Chief Whip.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you, Hon Speaker and good morning to Members of the Executive present here; Whippers; Members from the opposition benches; people in the gallery. House Rule 173 provides that: "Unless otherwise provided in this rule, not more than one stage of a Bill may be taken on the same Sitting day, and objection to a further Sitting is made by four or more Members." It has therefore become necessary to invoke the provision of House Rule 5 to suspend the provision of House Rule 173 in order to allow the House to finalise the Limpopo Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B02-2024] today. I move accordingly, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Can I check with the House if there is any seconder for us to suspend Rule 173. Hon Smalle, you are recognised.

MR SMALLE

Hon Speaker, I stand to second the proposal made by the Hon Chief Whip. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. We will now proceed to item 7.1.1.

Second Reading debate on the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B03-2024]. My apologies. Can I get the chair to move the report. He must tell us his title so that we are able to call him with the right title.

THE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

The title is still coming, Hon Speaker. Hon Speaker, I stand before this august House to present the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury on the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill, 2024, for consideration and adoption by the House.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder, honourable Members? Hon Nkonyana, you are recognised.

MR NKONYANA

My name is Hon Bongani Nkonyana. I second the motion as moved by the honourable chair. I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We shall now refer to the Speakers' List. Over to you, Hon Christian Nkakareng-Rakgoale-Mmago Neo.

MS RAKGOALE

Hon Speaker; Ms Makoma Grace Makhurupetje-Mmago Tšhego; Chief Whip of the majority party, Hon Mokgonyana Essob; Deputy Chair of Chairs, Hon Hasani Peter Ngobeni-Mlambwa; MECs present here today; Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury, Mr Maseko Solomon Pheedi, and all honourable Members, good morning.

BACKGROUND

Morning.

MS RAKGOALE

I'm one person who likes attention, unfortunately. Thank you so much.

Hon Speaker, the Limpopo 2024 Medium-Term Provincial Budget overview was presented at an era when both the country and the province have progressively assessed the Seventh Administration's 100 days of progress since its inception.

We have also seen progress in load shedding where, as a country, apart from reduction in some places, we have gone beyond 120 days continuously without interruptions. The intended purpose of the provincial Budget will always be to boost economic growth, enhance service delivery, reduce unemployment rates, poverty and inequality, and to provide a better life for all the Limpopo citizens, including Hon Smalle.

On provincial spending patterns, the projected over-expenditure of R779 million occurred as a result of the following:

- The Department of Education overspent by R224 million on contractual obligations due to fiscal consolidation of scholar transport and e-Learning.
- The Department of Health overspent by R250 million on non-negotiable items such as medicine supplies and contractual obligations.
- The Department of Social Development has also overspent due to under-budgeting on COE, while the Limpopo Legislature's overspending was due to an additional 15 Members, from 49 to 64.
- There is a projected underspending of R100 million in the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture on the provincial theatre, which has long been under construction. It is necessary that the department prepares progress reports on this project.

The Limpopo Provincial Equitable Share for the 2023/24 financial year was R67,8 billion and increased to R70,5 billion through the adjustments of the Budget tabled in November 2023 and March 2024, respectively. The overall Equitable Share for the financial year 2023/24 is R61, 6 billion or 98,8%, resulting in underspending of R871,3 million or 1,2%. The departments applied for rollovers amounting to R190,1 million, and an amount of R175,7 million was approved as a result of Equitable Share rollovers from the 2022/23 to the 2024/25 financial year.

Included in the rollover is an amount of R47,7 million under the 2023/24 revenue retention for the Legislature. Departments have surrendered unspent funds as per the Treasury Instruction Note 01 of 2024/25. The province spent R11,2 billion of the adjusted allocation of R11,4 billion on Conditional Grant rollovers. An amount of R200,8 million was not spent by the province, as applied for the rollovers of R133,6 million. Numbers, Hon Abednigo, is not child's play.

The National Treasury approved a rollover of R132,2 million, while an additional amount of R90,8 million rollover approval was confirmed for RAL, especially for the Welisizwe Project. Therefore, the province will surrender an amount of R68,6 million to be allocated as follows:

- The Department of Education: R53 million

- The Department of Agriculture: R7,7 million
- The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure: R5,4 million.

As mandated by section 12(4) of the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act, 2009, amended in 2018, the Minister has the responsibility to table the Division of Revenue Amendment Bill together with the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement. The Bill recommended some changes, which will need the honourable House to consider and adopt, as it was discussed by the department and the portfolio committee.

An overall amount of R3,7 million has been added to the three district municipalities in Limpopo for the Municipal Systems Improvement Grant. Therefore, the initial allocation increased from R20,1 million to R23,8 million after the 2024 adjustments and will be utilised as follows:

- Vhembe District Municipality was allocated an amount of R2,4 million, whereby R400,000 was added, and the adjusted allocation now amounts to R2,8 million
- Waterberg District Municipality was allocated R12,4 million, whereby R2,1 million was added and the adjusted allocation now amounts to R14, 5 million
- Sekhukhune District Municipality was allocated R1,1 million, whereby R1,2 million was added, and the overall adjusted allocation now amounts to R2,4 million.

A total of R87,6 million was added to four local municipalities: Lephalale, Bela-Bela, Modimolle-Mookgophong, and Elias Motsoaledi in Limpopo for the Municipal Disaster Recovery Grant.

The initial allocation increased from R44,7 million to R132,3 million after the 2024 adjustments.

- For Lephalale Local Municipality, there was no additional allocation made; however, the adjusted budget allocated was R19,4 million.
- For Bela-Bela Local Municipality, there was no additional allocation made, but an amount of R11,5 million was budgeted for.
- For Modimolle-Mookgophong Municipality, there was no additional allocation made, but a budget adjustment allocation of R28,9 million was made.
- For Elias Motsoaledi Municipality, no additional allocation was made; however, a budget adjustment of R27,7 million was approved.

Hon Speaker, allow me, on behalf of the Limpopo Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury, to request the House to consider and adopt the Report of the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill as a report of this House.

Happy birthday, Hon Marx, and all the best to colleagues until we meet again in January. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. The next speaker is Hon Smalle Jacobus Frederik.

MR SMALLE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Good morning, honourable MECs and Members of this august House; officials and colleagues. From the onset, let me say that the Democratic Alliance does support the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill that has been put forward. The 2024 Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement, which precedes and influences the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill, was first delivered by the National Government of Unity, of which the Democratic Alliance is a partner.

Our ability as a nation to overcome the unsustainable economic and fiscal challenges we face will depend on the GNU's capacity to fully implement structural reforms that address impediments to growth. This must be achieved while exercising fiscal restraint, improving government ethics, and enhancing state capabilities, including here in Limpopo.

Regarding the Adjustment Appropriation Bill before us today, the Democratic Alliance must express concerns over the governance of some of the Limpopo Administration's various government departments and its efficiency of their spending. We must ask ourselves whether all our communities receive benefits commensurate with the magnitude of government expenditure, and whether we are creating a better life for all. We note that the nett effect of the proposed adjustments is an upward revision of approximately R835 million for the current fiscal year to address spending pressures. However, we issue the following caution: similar funding to address over-expenditures may not be available under the 2025 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, given our constrained fiscal environment. The departments and entities must ensure that recurring costs remain within stipulated baselines and must focus on improving efficiency and effectiveness in light of these constraints.

Despite these constraints, we welcome the R83 million increased revenue generated by the Limpopo Gambling Board and R239 million in interest revenue from Treasury.

- Vote 1: Office of the Premier: we welcome the R1,6 million allocated towards Disaster Recovery Services and the Provincial Energy Strategy, which are critical given the nature of disasters that continue to plague Limpopo.
- Vote 2: We acknowledge the necessity of an upward adjustment to accommodate the increase of Members in this august House.
- Vote 3: We also commend the increased allocation towards scholar transport and the reprioritisation of R223 million for e-Learning through the procurement and distribution of ICT in our various schools.
- Vote 4: We support the increased allocation for disaster awareness, the procurement of animal feed, and R12,5 million set aside to combat foot-and-mouth-disease.
- Vote 6: We note the concern of a significant reduction in allocation, particularly due to the surrender of R360 million in earmarked funding for the Special Economic Zones. We remain troubled by the governance issues surrounding the Makhado-Musina SEZ project and the performance of LEDA in driving economic development; We further welcome the R117 million allocated to the Department of Health, which will address pressures relating to contractual obligations, operational needs and non-negotiable items like medicines and medical supplies.

- Vote 9: Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure: We note the R402 million increase, much of which was allocated to the troublesome Road Agency Limpopo to address road project pressures and supplement constant costs for the Steelpoort steel bridge project.

In conclusion, we must remind ourselves that the GNU was formed in response to years of poor and reckless governance that has brought South Africa to its knees economically and fiscally, threatening the very sovereignty of our nation. Today, we are striving to claw our way out of multiple crises. Our priorities are clear; we urgently need economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction and the development of an ethical and capable state. Do we have an ethical and capable provincial administration? Does this Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill advance the structural reforms necessary to remove impediments to growth?

That is the fundamental question, we, as the Seventh Administration, will have to answer and address over the next five years. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Smalle. The EFF is not here. We will request Moruti Pheedi ba tle go re tswalelela ngangišano. Over to you, Hon Pheedi. Why does he look surprised? He told me in confidence, you know. He said I must be careful and make sure that he doesn't have flu, and he prayed for the MEC not to catch the flu; otherwise, the whole of Limpopo would catch the flu today.

MR PHEEDI

Hon Speaker, as you correctly quoted me, I have been looking for quite some time. When I heard that there are honourable Members with different titles, I checked myself and found it very difficult to find a suitable title. I even tried to apply to the South African Council of Churches just to get a certificate that would allow me to be called "Man of God." So, please don't call me "Man of God" for now, I'm still waiting for the results from the South African Council of Churches.

Hon Speaker, allow me to take this opportunity to pass my greetings to yourself, as well as the Premier in absentia; Executive Members, referring to our MECs who are here in this august House; MEC for Provincial Treasury, Dr K Mahoai; Members of the African National Congress; Members from other political parties; members of the public in the gallery; members of the media; and the entire Limpopo citizens.

Let me continue from where Hon Mnisi left off yesterday when she quoted former President Nelson Mandela, saying, "South Africa will never be free until the people of Palestine, as well as the people of Western Sahara, are free."

I don't think the world will rest until the lives of the people of Palestine, who are being massacred and butchered by Israel, are saved.

The MEC for Provincial Treasury in the province has tabled an Adjustment Budget in terms of section 31 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 in the Provincial Legislature to provide for the following:

- Unforeseen and unavoidable expenditures, as recommended by the Provincial Executive Council within the framework determined by the Minister of Finance.
- Expenditure in terms of section 25 of the Public Finance Management Act pertaining to the use of funds during times of emergency and structural situations,
- Money to be appropriated for expenditure already announced by the MEC for Provincial Treasury during the tabling of the Annual Budget
- The shifting of funds between and within Votes, following transfers and functions informed by section 42 of the PFMA
- The utilisation of savings under one main division within a Vote to defray excess expenditure under another main division within the same Vote, in terms of section 43 of the Public Finance Management Act, and
- The rollover of unspent funds from the preceding financial year.

Therefore, the proposed adjustments for provincial departments and allocations are as follows: As I said to you, if you were not coming to this podium, Limpopo would be catching a cold. Treasury must come and release funds so that Limpopo can move on.

- The Limpopo Legislature's Budget adjustments are upward by R98,9 million, from R549,5 million to R648,4 million. This will be used, among other things, for transfers and subsidies, including compensation of employees due to the increase in the number of Members in the Legislature, as Hon Nkakareng Rakgoale said; the number has increased from 49 to 64.
- The Department of Education's Budget has increased by R30,7 million, which will be prioritised for scholar transport, procurement and distribution of ICT devices to schools to enable the smooth running of e-Learning, as you correctly said. I'm referring to Hon Rakgoale.
- The Department of Agriculture will receive additional funding of R63,4 million, upon which it will surrender R9,6 million for the compensation of employees. From the adjusted budget, the department will reprioritise and reallocate funds for: security services, disaster awareness, procurement of animal feed, provisions for foot-and-mouth-disease control, animal vaccines, and other related costs, as well as the refurbishment of broiler houses.
- The Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism's Budget was adjusted downward by R55, 9 million. The decrease is mainly as a result of the surrender of earmarked funding for the SEZ of R360 million, which will be reallocated for the 2025/26 financial year. The department will, however, receive additional funding amounting to R312,6 million, to be shared as follows: R250 million for the Limpopo Economic Development Agency for operational costs, R5 million for Limpopo Tourism Agency to ease spending pressure on contractual obligations and collaborative marketing, R13 million for Limpopo Gambling Board as retention of revenue surpluses, as well as R12 million for the 2024/25 Marula Event and Tourism Career Expo.

About R10 million is for liquor and consumer affairs implementation costs. About R4 million is to operationalise Masebe Nature Reserve, and R18,5 million is for other contractual obligations. The Department of Health's Budget increased by R117, 5 million. The department will reprioritise and reallocate an amount of R645 million within the department, and an additional R100 million Equitable Share is allocated to the department to ease budget pressures on operational items such as medical and food supplies in hospitals, departmental fleet services, property payments and contractual obligations.

The Department of Transport received an additional increase of R31,4 million, from R2,6 billion to R2,64 billion. The department plans to use the additional budget for the following:

- The construction of Seshego and Thohoyandou K53 testing stations,
- The construction costs of the traffic training college,
- The procurement of land for the Bandelierkop Weighbridge,
- Servicing their fleet,
- Payment for property maintenance; and
- Some money for contractual obligations.

The department will surrender a total of R62,2 million from earmarked funds, which include funding for the training college, kitchen and canteen, traffic facilities' refurbishment, Thohoyandou taxi facilities, Gateway Airports Authority Limited infrastructure projects and the COE.

These funds will be allocated in the 2025/26 financial year.

Again, the Department of Public Works will receive an increase of R402,9 million, which will be distributed as follows:

- Completion of the Letaba A Hospital Project including supplementation of procurement costs for an official building;
- Refurbishment of the Tshamavhunga and Unigaza buildings
- Replacement of Executive Authority vehicles
- Professional services for constructing 15 houses for additional Members of the Legislature
- Infrastructure projects at Parliamentary Village and the Premier's guest house
- Replenishment and replacement of furniture at Parliamentary Village, and
- Payment of municipal rates and taxes, fulfilment of service contractual obligations and coverage of operational costs.

The department will prioritise and reallocate an amount of R99,3 million within the department. An additional R431 million in Equitable Share is allocated to the department, of which R372,2 million will be transferred to Road Agency Limpopo to fund road projects and supplement the construction costs of the Steelpoort steel bridge project; and R158, 1 million will be allocated to the department to ease budget pressures on operational items.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture's Budget decreases by R73 million, from R827 million to R754 million. This follows a R100 million surrender to the Provincial Revenue Fund of earmarked funding for the construction of the provincial theatre, which will be reallocated in the 2025/26 financial year. The department will receive additional Equitable Share funds of R15,6 million for contractual obligations, including R10 million for the Autumn and Summer Games; R2 million for the maintenance of the Schoemansdal Museum; and R2,8 million for other operational costs.

The department also receives conditional grant rollover approvals of R11,3 million for community library grants.

CoGHSTA's Budget increased by R230,5 million from R2,4 billion to R2,687 billion. The additional equitable share includes: R50 million for human settlement infrastructure projects; and R50 million to support section 139 intervention in Thabazimbi Municipality, (a once-off allocation for legal fees and contractual obligations), as the municipality is heading for its by-elections on 04 December 2024. The department also received Equitable Share rollovers from the 2023/24 to the 2024/25 financial year: R52,8 million for payments of accruals from motor vehicles purchased for traditional leaders to the value of R35,5 million; R12,5 million to fund the construction of traditional council offices; and R4,9 million for ICT equipment.

The department will also receive conditional grant rollovers to the value of R59,7 million for the Informal Settlement Partnership Grant and Human Settlement Development Grant. The Department of Social Development's Budget has increased by R27 million from R2 billion to R2,1 billion, mainly to ease spending pressures on contractual obligations. We draw our aspirations from the words of wisdom and hope from former President Thabo Mbeki, when he said, "Together, we have travelled a long road to be where we are today. This has been a road of struggle against colonialism and the apartheid system."

As the ANC-led government, we are now engaging in another struggle, the struggle against poverty, inequality and unemployment. Furthermore, we are fighting against the scourge of gender-based violence in our country. It shows that the journey is still very long. This is a long walk to freedom indeed.

On the long journey, we sing the song "Yinde Lendlela Esiyihambayo". As the late, Ray Phiri correctly said, "Singa Jindi Majita (Don't Give Up)".

In conclusion, the portfolio committee notes, supports and recommends the approval of the 2024/25 Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill as follows:

- Conditional Grant rollovers of R132,2 billion [sic] from 2023/24 to 2024/25 financial year
- An increase of own revenue by R410,2 billion [sic] as well as Equitable Share rollovers of R172,7 billion from the 2023/24 to the 2024/25 financial year.
- The recommended allocations per department, as prescribed in the proposal, increase the provincial allocation adjustments from R83,1 billion to R83,9 billion...Let me repeat: the recommended allocations per department and per

entity, as prescribed in the proposal, increase the provincial allocation adjustments from R83,1 billion to R83,9 billion.

On behalf of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial Treasury, we therefore request the House to consider and adopt the report on the Limpopo Adjustments Appropriation Bill, 2024, as a report of the House. I so move, Hon Speaker. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Man of God. I heard that the name “Man of God” ga se lentšwe le šomišwa; I will be the only one, in the meantime, using it. Thank you so much, honourable chair. We shall now call upon the MEC for Provincial Treasury, Hon Kgabo Mahoi, to respond to the debates made by honourable Members.

7.1.2 Response by the MEC for Provincial Treasury

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Hon Speaker; Hon Chief Whip; Deputy Chair of Chairs; honourable Members of the Legislature in your various statuses and what I can call ... It is my humble pleasure, indeed, that it is the first time I see the passing of the Budget in a unanimous manner, reflecting a multi-partisan spirit. This emanates from the fact that this is a concurrent function and, therefore, it takes more from the Government of National Unity. So, I don't have words.

There is nothing I can say other than to acknowledge, appreciate and really take into consideration all the views expressed by various Members who have debated this. I would not repeat what they said, but I will pick up on few things that I believe should be considered.

The concern over governance and efficiency is a concern for all. We believe that going forward, we shouldn't need to rely on surrenders, particularly. If we plan well, we will be able to do our work in a manner that allows us to spend in accordance with our plans and, therefore, deliver services. At the end of the day, the Budget is not for us, but for the people.

I must emphasise: the Budget only gains authority when approved by the Legislature. Until such approval, the principal force or authority is the Legislature. Once passed by this House, it becomes our responsibility to ensure that we monitor implementation, in accordance with all your considerations, ensuring efficiency, cost-effectiveness and economy, because what matters is the triple-E: Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness.

Indeed, the fact that this Budget has been supported forces us to say that we, as Treasury, will ensure that we implement what has been agreed upon unanimously, and we will really play our role by ensuring that the users, which are the departments, carry out their responsibilities and ensure that we achieve the goals of our government. The priorities will remain the way they are, and ours is to ensure that, at the end of the day, we can account to the citizenry that we have done everything possible to achieve that.

Without any waste of time, indeed we want to confirm that the total adjustment has grown by R825 million, from R83,1 billion to R83,9 billion. This is a very important thing to mention: it is without any additional equitable share provided by the National Treasury. So, when we spoke of self-funding, we meant that we are able to have upward adjustments without having to rely on further provisions. Of course, these additions were sourced from our own revenue and rollovers, as indicated, especially the increased revenue collection to the tune of R410 million.

Therefore, in my closing, in short, I just have to thank this august House in its entirety for the support you have provided and for encouraging us as we try to make sure that Limpopo becomes a winner when it comes to public financial management and that funds are spent in accordance with all the facts and points raised by honourable Members. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Re a leboga, Hon Mahoai for your response; you were straight to the point. We will now move to item 7.2. Over to you, Chief Whip.

It is the same thing I'm checking with ...

MR MARX

On a point of order, Hon Speaker. It seems you need to go for Christmas; it's holiday time.

THE SPEAKER

This occurred because item 7.2 appears twice on my Order Paper. If it was an error, it originated from the Table as a typographical mistake. As a result, we will now skip item 7.2 and proceed to 7.3. I request the MEC for Provincial Treasury to move the Motion for the Third Reading of the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill, 2024. Over to you, honourable MEC.

7.3.1 Motion for the Third Reading of the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill, 2024

THE MEC FOR PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Hon Speaker, once more, now that the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B03-2024] has gone through all the relevant stages of the legislative processes of the House, I now move that the Bill be read for the third time in terms of the provision of House Rule 170. I move accordingly, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Can we get a seconder. Hon Nkonyana. You are recognised. I can only see your hand.

MR NKONYANA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the motion as moved by the honourable MEC. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

7.4 Third Reading of the Limpopo Adjustments Appropriation Bill, 2024 [B03- 2024]

We shall now adopt the Bill Schedule by Schedule. Those who agree will say “Yeah”, and those who disagree will say “Nay”. I will now request the Secretary to go through Schedule 1 to Schedule 4. Please read Schedule 1 to 3 first and Schedule 4, (the Short Title) last, after voting.

MS MAKGATO [ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARY]

Thanks, Hon Speaker.

- Schedule 1: Definitions.
- Schedule 2: Appropriation of the adjusted amount of money requirements for the province.
- Schedule 3: Appropriations listed as specifically and exclusively appropriated.
- Schedule 4: Short Title.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Honourable Members, we shall now adopt the Votes of the Bill. Those who agree, as I have already said, shall say “Yeah”, and those who disagree shall say “Nay”. I am going Vote by Vote.

Vote 1: Office of the Premier?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

I don't see the left properly due to the screen. In case you have ...[INTERJECTION]

MR SMALLE

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Okay. Vote 2?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 3?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 4. Agriculture?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 5. Department of Provincial Treasury?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 6. Economic Development, Environment and Tourism?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 7. Department of Health?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 8. Department of Transport and Community Safety?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 9. Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 10. Department of Sport, Arts and Culture?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 11. Department of CoGHSTA?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

Vote 12. Department of Social Development?

BACKGROUND

Yeah.

THE SPEAKER

We shall now call upon the Secretary to read the Short Title.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE

Hon Speaker, the Short Title reads as follows: "This Act is the Limpopo Adjustment Appropriation Act, 2024." I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Le phasišitše kabo. Ipetheleng matsogo. Thank you so much. We now have our Appropriation Bill adopted. We will now proceed with the Orders of the Day.

7.5. Consideration and Adoption of the Reports of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure.

Over to you, committee chairperson. I would suggest that you come and present all the reports, both 7.5 and 7.6, at the same time.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Greetings to you honourable Members of the Legislature including the Executive. I, Netshifhefhe Khathutshelo, rise to table the 2022/23 Annual Report for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure for consideration and adoption. I therefore move, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Is there any seconder? Hon Nempumbuluni, you are recognised.

MR NEMPUMBULUNI

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My name is Nempumbuluni Thembeleni Colbert. I rise to second the 2022/23 Annual Report for the Department for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure as presented by Hon John Netshifhefhe.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Item 6.1.2. Over to you, committee chair. The 2023/24 Third Quarter Report.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Madam Speaker, I rise once more ... [INTERJECTION]

MR SMALLE

On a point of order, Hon Speaker!

THE SPEAKER

Hon Smalle, what is your point of order?

MR SMALLE

Just earlier, in the Whippy forum, we agreed that item 7.5 would be dealt with on its own, and item 7.6 and 7.7 will be clustered together. So, I just want to put that forward, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

I did realise that you have three ... Okay, its fine. We can proceed, committee chair to item 7.5.2.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

There is still a hand, Hon Speaker. The Chief Whip is still raising a hand.

THE SPEAKER

Over to you, Chief Whip.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I just raised my hand to second what Hon Smalle was saying: that item 7.5 be dealt with on its own, and we combine item 7.6 and 7.7. Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. No one in the programming committee have decided on that. These are things that are difficult to change. Thank you very much. We are on item 7.5.2. Over to you, chair.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise to table the 2022/23 Annual Report for Road Agency Limpopo for consideration and adoption by this House.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, chair. You will come back to deal with item 7.6 and 7.7 at the same time. We now have these separate debates. Thank you. Is there any seconder? Hon Mnisi, you are recognised.

MS MNISI

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Gloria Dzunisani wakaMnisi, rise to second the 2022/23 Annual Report for Road Agency Limpopo for consideration and adoption by the House. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. We will now refer to the Speakers' List. The honourable Member to open the debate is Hon Phetole Percy Machete. He is allowed to present from where he is, if it's by his choice.

MR MACHETE

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. I thought the prescribed procedure still stands today, but we will deal with that at a later stage.

THE SPEAKER

It does. You are welcome.

MR MACHETE

Let me take this opportunity to greet the Speakership; Whippers; Members of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature; Hon Premier in absentia; Members of the Executive Council present here; ladies and gentlemen.

The period that we are in now presents a moment for all of us, men in particular, to stand back and reflect on our actions in pursuit of women's emancipation and empowerment. The revolution cannot thrive without the emancipation of women.

On Monday, 25 November 2024, the Deputy President, Paul Mashatile, launched the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children under the theme, "30 Years of Advancing Collective Action to End Violence Against Women and Children." This campaign will culminate in the International Human Rights Day on 10 December.

Other important days that we will observe during this campaign are the International Women Human Rights Defenders Day on 29 November; World Aids Day on 01 December and the International Day for Persons with Disability on 03 December.

As you are aware, this august House had a snap debate about this pandemic. I take this opportunity to commend all Members of this House, especially men, for their united actions to end this national crisis and defeat it. We thank you for standing up and being counted among the defenders of women's human rights.

As the Deputy President indicated, we have been united in a shared vision to create a world free from violence and discrimination. This is not the time to lower our guard. We must intensify the struggle to defeat this scourge, and I must indicate that the struggle is nothing else but a normal condition for all living creatures in the world.

It's only through collective efforts that we can succeed. We need collective efforts to rid our society and our women of all impediments to equality. Such impediments include inadequate water, healthcare, roads, sanitation, joblessness, lack of education, electricity and other basic needs.

Access to these amenities will allow women and other vulnerable sectors of our society to lead lives on their own, away from their abusers, with whom they often live. The ANC 2024 Election Manifesto places women and other vulnerable groups at the centre of development. Noting that we must increase support for small enterprises, entrepreneurs and cooperatives, especially in townships and villages, providing 1 million work opportunities which are set aside for women, youth and persons with disability. We shall continue to promote and monitor employment equity to ensure that black people, women and people with disability are represented in the public and private sectors. We must also ensure that small businesses, cooperatives and enterprises owned by women, young people and persons with disability are included across all value chains through set-asides in public and private sectors.

The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and Road Agency Limpopo are in a good state to help us achieve these objectives. With 65% of its budget being allocated to road infrastructure, the department can do a lot to alleviate poverty and joblessness among our people. While we commend the department for achieving 97% of its allocated budget during the 2022/23 financial year, we believe that more could

have been done to attain 100%. Related to this is the performance of Road Agency Limpopo, which during the period under review, spent 90% of its allocated budget.

We are in the rainy season, which is accompanied by extreme weather conditions because of climate change. Most of our roads and bridges will be washed away by heavy rains.

This will make most of these infrastructures unusable. The work that was completed to rehabilitate surfaced roads, conduct black-top patching, re-gravel roads and improve surface conditions. We call upon the department and Road Agency Limpopo to tap into opportunities brought about by climate change and introduce new methods and technologies for road and infrastructure construction. We must transform the construction industry and start implementing climate-resilient road infrastructure planning and development.

Through the Thiba Mekoti Ditseleng Project, 318,317 km² of potholes were patched, which is an achievement that we must applaud. However, we have noted the concerns by the Auditor-General about the lack of verifiable information on this project and suggest that similar projects initiated in the future must have clear means of verification to promote accountability and enhance oversight by relevant bodies.

It is, however, worth mentioning that the department has exceeded its targets for road infrastructure during the period under review. A sore point has been the inability of Road Agency Limpopo to complete its planned 40 km of gravel road upgrading. The agency only managed to complete 8 km in this regard. Also concerning is the lack of clear means of verification for households' contracts and failure by Road Agency Limpopo to create the much-needed jobs, spending less on labourers than expected.

The ANC 2024 Election Manifesto makes it clear that all public and private entities must create and sustain over 2,5 million jobs. No department or entity is immune from making this noble goal realisable. We welcome the efforts by the department to create approximately 6,500 jobs during various road infrastructure projects.

Even in this regard, women were the majority of beneficiaries, with more than 3,500 of them getting jobs of various kinds during the period. The Expanded Public Works Programme is government's flagship programme designed to alleviate poverty through the creation of work opportunities for the unemployed, using public sector expenditure. Commendably, the department managed to achieve over 75% of its planned targets for the programme. This translates into 1,400 work opportunities as opposed to the 1,100 planned targets.

The number of public bodies reported on the programme also increased. We call upon the non-state sectors to deliberately optimise job creation for the unemployed and poor people through the delivery of public and community services. Taken in totality, the Expanded Public Works Programme created approximately 55,000 jobs in the entire province, with women constituting 69% of the beneficiaries. This is an affirmation of the ANC government's resolve to empower this important sector of our society through all means at the disposal of the democratic government.

At a corporate level, we applaud the department for successfully filling over 90% of the 295 positions that were advertised during the 2022/23 financial year. It is our firm belief that most of the incumbents in these positions are women. Even at SMS level, gender equity is being achieved, as I have already said.

In the coming year, we will step up efforts to ensure that the department, and by extension Road Agency Limpopo, achieves 100% expenditure in Conditional Grant utilisation; that there is robust project oversight and management for earmarked funding; that irregular expenditure is reduced or eliminated; that internal control weaknesses are addressed, and that the department complies with financial regulations, supply chain management practices, and implements consequence management, amongst others.

The condition of women and children is, therefore, at the heart of humanity itself; here, there, and everywhere. The struggle of women cannot be granted; it must be conquered. Thanks very much, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thanks very much, Hon Machete. We will now go to the next speaker, Hon Maria Helm.

MS HELM

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker, honourable MECs, Whippery, Executive Members of the House, honourable Members of the House, officials and our guests.

During the financial year under review, the total Budget of the department was R4,4 billion, and 96,75% was spent. The result was an under-expenditure of R144 million. The Infrastructure Operations programme spent 96% of its 2022/23 budget. The underspending was due to non-responsive bidders, administrative issues and readvertisements of bids, along with some delays and poor contractual performance, which further impacted project completion timelines.

The Road Infrastructure programme spent 97% of its 2022/23 budget. The underspending was due to the programme facing the non-implementation of five steel bridge projects and other issues. As far as Conditional Grants are concerned, only 90% of the Provincial Road Maintenance Grants was spent. Both the department and RAL were equally guilty of irregular expenditure. The department experienced irregular spending of R35 million while irregular expenditure at RAL was a little bit more, amounting to about R6 billion.

The Shelve Plan project for the Department of Health caused serious delays at hospitals. Six laundry projects at hospitals, one clinic and the construction of the Modimolle EMS were halted. The total amount involved was R223 million, and this must be one of the biggest failures of this financial year. Regrettably, the Auditor-General's audit outcome for the 2023/24 financial year was a regression from an unqualified report over the past four years to a qualified report. Mismanagement was stated. The AG found that irregular expenditure was not being properly recorded. The

primary cause for this irregular expenditure was the department's failure to comply with supply chain management requirements.

Under the emphasis of matter, the AG raised five key issues, and I will quickly run through them:

- **Ongoing Litigation:** The department faces significant uncertainty due to ongoing litigation. This is a really an issue that needs urgent attention because it's not something that can be fixed easily, like building a road. We have to assist so that we can find a way around this, and the litigation register will be the first step.
- **Property Disposal:** the department disposed of nine properties, exceeding its annual target of three. However, the AG found no evidence to verify these property disposals and that is concerning.
- **Debt Write-Offs:** The department wrote off debts without adhering to the right of policy as required by Treasury Regulation, (11)(4)(2).
- **Pothole Patching Claims:** The department reported exceeding its targets for black top pothole patching but no evidence was provided to the AG to verify this claim. It is important that we must note down when we do work because our department and RAL is doing its work, but it is equally important that we must report it so that we can state that it is done because we know it is done.
- **Consequence Management:** The AG raised concerns about the absence of consequence management. This year, the HOD was moved to the Department of CoGHSTA, which caused mass instability in the department. However, it was not all bad news. The department did achieve 105% in road rehabilitation and did exceptionally well in road resurfacing through RAL. That is good. It is clear that during the financial year 2022/23, the Six Administrative Cycle was not very good for the department. We hope that the Seventh Administration will learn from these obvious mistakes and improve on them.

In conclusion, it is important to recognise that funding remains a significant barrier to meeting to province's extensive demand for tarred and well-maintained roads. May I remind the House that, for example, the Mopani District Municipality's budget is R2,5 billion, and when compared to our department's budget, you can see the big discrepancies. Other good news is that kilometres of surfaced roads visually assessed, the target. was 3,000 km, but more than 6,000 km were actually assessed. That is very good.

Irregular expenditure seems to be the most important issue during the 2022/23 financial year, and we can only hope that the department and RAL will make a serious effort to stop irregular expenditure. With the determined assistance of the portfolio committee, both the department and RAL can improve. We are really looking forward to a better outcome. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much, Hon Helm. We will now go to the chairperson of the committee, Hon Khathutshelo Netshifhefhe to close the debate.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Hon Speaker, for the opportunity and greetings to the Chief Whip; honourable Members of the Legislature; honourable MECs present here; and our esteemed guests. Receive my sincere greetings on behalf of the Members of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure as we consider and adopt the 2022/23 Annual Report.

All efforts to continue the delivery and the realisation of the universal quality basic services, such as education, housing, transportation, roads, water, sanitation, healthcare and electricity to our people, are predicated on the availability of a capable and developmental public service.

Such a public service must be professional and firmly rooted in the Batho Pele principles, and not aloof from the people that it is meant to serve. It must be a public service that possesses intellectual capacity and enhance moral and ethical orientation, to show exemplary conduct and uphold the core values and principles of selfless public service, discipline and integrity.

This is the public service that we seek to build and that we must have in our institutions. To have such a platoon of public servants requires that we strengthen our human resource functions, such as organisational design, recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and employee wellness. The Road Agency Limpopo is commended for exceeding its targets in providing training to its employees. During the period under review, more than 213 employees were trained in various fields, more importantly, in the field of supply chain management.

We all know that this area is responsible for many adverse audit findings that many institutions face. It is our hope that training provided will assist in taking RAL out of undesirable audit outcomes. The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure has had to contend with many challenges as far as human resources are concerned. Key among those is the high vacancy rate, which stood at 24,4% for senior management services as of 31 March 2023.

Other challenges include the inability to replace employees when they exit the system. By the end of the period under review, approximately 56% of employees have exited the system due to retirement, and the posts have not been filled. This situation paints a bleak future for the department regarding service delivery. No entity can function with half of its employees on retirement. This is an opportunity to create more job opportunities for the youth. The recruitment requirement for entry level jobs in the public sector had been scrapped. Therefore, there is no excuse why we can't contribute towards the goal of reducing the high number of young people entering the labour market every year by filling these positions. Factors such as the high vacancy rate contribute adversely to the attainment of the department's goals and objectives.

It is our hope that this matter is receiving attention from the leadership of the department. We need a capable, developmental and ethical public service that is

capable of intervening on the side of the poor to attain sustainable development, address unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment, and transform the economy to serve the interests of our people. The economy that we inherited is characterised by entrenched features of structural fragmentation and inequality. It will be impossible to transform without the leadership and desperate intervention of an ethical, capable and developmental public service.

The ANC, in its 2024 Election Manifesto, has identified infrastructure development and maintenance, procurement policies, skills development, and innovation as enablers for small enterprises and cooperatives in townships and rural areas to thrive. It has, therefore, put measures in place to support them. Some of these include the set aside of designated groups and payment of eligible invoices within 30 days.

We are satisfied that both the department and RAL are doing well in this regard. For example, during the period under review, Road Agency Limpopo managed to pay all eligible invoices from contracted SMMEs within 30 days. RAL has contracted 351 SMMEs during the period under review, and a total of R207,822 million was paid to these SMMEs. During the same period, the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure attained its target of paying its suppliers within the 30-day period. We welcome these efforts.

We are of the strong conviction that these measures will assist the sector to increase ownership and participation in the economy, thereby, contributing to the national effort to create employment and put South Africa to work. The ANC has committed itself to accelerate land reform and redistribution of various purposes, including promoting urban and rural development and enabling greater access to housing. In this regard, we welcome the successes by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure to dispose of nine properties following resolutions of outstanding land claims during the period under review.

We must, therefore, accelerate the process of releasing more land that is in state hands for the development of housing and other basic amenities. Through this, we will eliminate spatial disparities and integrate our communities into the mainstream of the economy.

Investments in roads and bridges are critical for economic development. The ANC advocates for public-private partnerships to build technical planning and project management capacity, to maintain existing infrastructure and expand and rollout new infrastructure. We commend Road Agency Limpopo for its efforts to secure R242 million from private entities through the Premier's Economic Growth Advisory Council technical working groups for road maintenance and upgrades. It is our hope that through other initiatives, such as the recently held Limpopo Province Investment Conference, we will secure more partnerships for the advancement and development of our province. Our province is endowed with natural resources. Creating an enabling environment in the form of road infrastructure will contribute to the growth of our economy and ultimately, the wellbeing of our people.

Having said all the above, I, therefore, urge that this august House adopt the report as presented. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much chairperson, Hon Khathutshelo Netshifhefhe. We were supposed to allow the MEC to respond now, but I suggest that MEC, if you have taken note, allow the next debate to proceed so that you can respond to all at once. Do we agree, MEC? Thank you. We will now proceed to item 7.6. Chair, you have to come back, unfortunately, to deal with item 7.6 and 7.7 at the same time.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, once more, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I rise to table the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure for consideration and adoption by the House.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Is there any seconder? Hon Mdaka, you are recognised.

MR MDAKA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Falaza Mdaka, rise to second the motion as raised by Hon Khathutshelo Netshifhefhe. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

I thank you so much. Let's move to item 7.6.2.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

I rise to present the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure for consideration and adoption by the House.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder? Hon Mmetle, you are recognised.

MS MMETLE-RAMOHLOLA

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I, Hon Mmetle, hereby second the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure for consideration and adoption. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Item 7.6.3, over to you, honourable chair.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I rise again to table the 2023/24 Fourth Quarter Report for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure for consideration and adoption by the House.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you. Is there any seconder? Hon Manthata-Mahasela, you are recognised.

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker. I, Mahlodi Caroline Manthata-Mahasela, rise to second the report as presented by Hon Netshifhefhe. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you, item 7.6.4. Over to you, committee chair.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

I rise once more to present the 2023/24 Second Quarter Report for Road Agency Limpopo for consideration and adoption. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder, honourable Members? Hon Matjomane, you are recognised.

MS MATJOMANE

Thank you very much, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the presentation made by the chairperson. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Item 7.6.5, over to you committee chairperson.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise, once more, to table the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report for Road Agency Limpopo for consideration and adoption by this House.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you very much. Is there any seconder? Hon Shai, you are recognised

MR SHAI

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 Third Quarter Report for Road Agency Limpopo. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Item 7.6.6, honourable chair, over to you.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to table the 2023/24 Fourth Quarter Report for Road Agency Limpopo for consideration and adoption by this august House.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder? Hon Nkonyana, you are recognised.

MR NKONYANA

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. I second the motion as moved by the honourable chair. Thank you, Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. Because we are combining the two debates, we will not call the Speaker's List now.

7.7 Consideration and adoption of the Report of the Portfolio Committee for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure.

We will allow the chairperson to proceed with item 7.7.1.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity once more. I rise to table the 2023/24 Annual Report for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder? Hon Phokane, you are recognised.

MR PHOKANE

Thanks, Hon Speaker. I rise to second the consideration and adoption of the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure as presented by the chairperson. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thanks, Hon Phokane. We are on item 7.7.2. Over to you, chair.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, once more, Hon Speaker. I rise to table the 2023/24 Annual Report for Road Agency Limpopo for consideration and adoption by this august House.

THE SPEAKER

Is there any seconder? Hon Rakgoale, you are recognised.

MS RAKGOALE

Thanks, Hon Speaker. I, Nkakareng Rakgoale, stand to second the presentation made by the chairperson. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

I have seen Hon Mokwele very late. I apologise. It is because of this screen. Maybe we need to put it in a manner that I'm able to see all Members.

Honourable Members, we are going to combine the debates for items 7.6 and 7.7. Members are going to debate once. We are not going to call them to come back, and the MEC will debate once. Hon Maudu Johannes Phokane will open the debate, followed by Hon Maria Helm.

She was supposed to debate two items. You can come in the meantime. After that, Hon Mmakgabo Champ Sepuru will follow, then the chair will close the debate. In that order, Hon Johannes Phokane is opening the debate.

MR PHOKANE

Thanks, Hon Speaker. E re ke letamiša, ke tamiše le Sefepi Segolo; ke tamiše le Molekgotlaphethiši, Deputy Chair of Chairs, ke tamiše; Members of the Legislature; ladies and gentlemen.

This Sitting of the Limpopo Legislature takes place at a time when the world observes the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, a campaign that aims to raise awareness and mobilise action to end all forms of violence against women and girls.

The prevalence of this scourge in the country has led the government, led by President Ramaphosa, to declare it as an epidemic, and indeed, it is an epidemic. Just yesterday, there was a media statement by the Executive Mayor of the Sekhukhune District Municipality decrying the brutal killing of Moyagabo Madisha, who was stabbed to death by her partner on 26 November in the Ntwane area of Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality. These kinds of incidents have become a norm in our communities across the province.

It is crucial that men commit themselves to a life free of abuse to women and take up the cudgels in defence of women in our society. They must further commit to the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence and femicide against women and children. As we do this as men, we will also be implementing the ANC 2024 Election Manifesto, which enjoins us to stand up and fight against this phenomenon of gender-based violence as we defend democracy and advance freedom. There is no complete freedom if our women are not free from all forms of abuse, violence and femicide.

Infrastructure development and maintenance have serious economic and social benefits for our country and province. These services contribute to the improvement of the lives of our people. Road infrastructure development and maintenance help our people by increasing access to jobs, schools, stores and other recreational activities that improve the quality of life of our people. By ensuring quality road infrastructure, we are one step closer to addressing the problem of accidents on our roads.

The lack of adequate road infrastructure affects mobility for everyone, including medical staff, doctors and patients seeking medical attention in remote rural areas. We must leverage public works, roads and infrastructure development and maintenance efforts to support micro, small and medium enterprise development and create jobs. During the period under review, as part of this support, the Road Agency Limpopo paid over R73,4 million to over 170 small and medium enterprises and subcontractors appointed to different projects. It should be noted that despite this contribution by RAL, there was an under-expenditure on SMMEs and labour in the fourth quarter, which is a worrying factor for the portfolio committee.

A sore point in this regard, sadly, is that there is no fair allocation of contracts to companies registered on the panel of contractors for Road Agency Limpopo. There are even instances where one contractor is allocated more than two or three projects. As the portfolio committee, we discourage such practices, as it is in stark contrast with the government's resolve to leverage and use our public procurement policies and systems to increase and spread ownership and participation by the black majority, inclusive of some designated groups, in the economy.

Another disturbing trend is the inability of client departments to pay eligible contractors within the prescribed 30-day period. This refers particularly to the Department of Health and the Department of Education. The inability to pay eligible contractors timeously is often a breeding ground for project delays and disruptions. Part of our efforts to bring an end to work stoppages at infrastructure projects should be to insist that we pay all our contractors within stipulated timeframes, in terms of the PFMA.

As the ANC, we also firmly advocate for fair equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective procurement of public goods and services. We welcome the provision of training to more than 280 locally sourced workers. While the numbers are relatively low, they are a step in the right direction. We urge the department and RAL to continue their efforts to align training programmes with communities and TVET colleges. This will help in ensuring that young people given those opportunities not only gain work experience but are also in a position to receive certificates of competence, which they could use to secure permanent jobs for themselves.

With the unemployment rate in Limpopo at 31,4%, it behooves every government department or entity in the province to ensure that the task of creating jobs and contributing towards the attainment of the goal of creating and sustaining more than 2,5 million work opportunities, as incapsulated in the ANC's manifesto is realised. This can be achieved through the provision of public goods and services. It is encouraging that the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, through RAL, has during the period under review created over 1,100 job opportunities benefitting 671 women, 509 youth, and 19 people living with disability.

The department and its entity are strategically positioned to help the province deal with challenges of unemployment because of their labour-intensive maintenance and construction projects. Such projects range from road construction, bridge construction, and building construction to road maintenance, road blading, road re-gravelling, resurfacing, and upgrading. It is through these projects and others that we can indeed put South Africa to work, as directed by the ANC's 2024 Election Manifesto. Putting South Africa to work means that we invest in infrastructure development and maintenance and create more business and job opportunities for the youth, women, disabled persons and military veterans.

In conclusion, it is of importance to indicate that RAL needs to refine its planning to better match resources with expected outcomes. Of critical importance, RAL should ensure that they do everything possible to avoid overcommitment. I thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you very much, Hon Phokane. I now take this opportunity to invite Hon Helm.

DR SELANE

Hon Speaker!

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Dr Selane, you are recognised.

DR SELANE

I thought you would wear that gown (phuraphura). We understand that today is a special day, and we declared that we could wear whatever we want to wear. However, I think it is advisable that as the Speaker you should wear that particular gown. Probably, it might be for the first time, but let's allow you to wear it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

I forgive you, Hon Selane. If you were here yesterday, I think that point would have been avoided. Over to you, Hon Helm.

MR MATHE

Sorry, acting honourable what, what ... [INTERJECTION]

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

I am not an acting what, what, Hon Mathe. I'm Hon Ngobeni. You can proceed, Hon Helm.

MR MATHE

Hon Ngobeni, Acting Speaker, I want to correct something. The decision made yesterday was for honourable Members to temporarily suspend the decorum in terms of the dress code, but the role of the Speaker is guided by certain rules and laws. For you to preside without a gown, it effectively means that this House is technically adjourned. That is the implication, and I know you are not going to agree with me, but we must also ask ourselves: If we have resolved that we wear casual attire and the Speaker wears casual attire without the gown, what does it mean?

However, I know that nobody is going to agree with me, not even the table staff would agree with me, but legally, even if it means we disagree, we can test this matter through the High Court. I will get an advocate who will do it pro bono. You have technically adjourned this House. So, we are simply asking you to wear your casual clothes along with your gown as the Speaker, reconvene the Sitting, and provide us with written notice.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you very much, Hon Mathe. I know you're throwing me into the lion's den just to prepare me for the responsibility of this chair. However, I must refer you to Rule 7 on convention and practices.

MR MATHE

[INAUDIBLE]

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Can you allow me, Hon Mathe? In terms of convention and practice, after today's function, we may appear as I am now. May I ask that the House proceeds in perfect order. You may proceed, Hon Helm.

MS HELM

Thank you very much, Hon speaker. Roads are indeed the arteries of the economy, and it is as vital for each citizen as oxygen is for each living cell. Infrastructure is the bones of our economic body. It is therefore of utmost importance that the department must make sure that they deliver quality services to enable investments, economic activities of citizens and movement of people. We note the findings of the portfolio committee and that of the Auditor-General, and we thank them for their valuable inputs.

In order for the portfolio committee to do proper oversight, it is of utmost importance that we access adequate information. For example, when can the DA and the committee receive the list of the roads under the control of the department, RAL, SANRAL, and the municipalities to prevent duplication of services and to avoid negative AG opinions, as it will influence different asset registers. Regular updates on the progress of projects are essential, not only for the committee to do oversight but also for the department. Although the DA understands the massive pressure on RAL

from communities that desperately need well-maintained roads, it is really important to use evidence-based information to prioritise roads and make decisions.

If we look at areas where improvements are necessary, we want to put enabling infrastructure in place to break the cycle of poverty and create jobs. Then the department must look at the following: The AG mentioned proper record keeping. Proper record keeping is the absolute basis of every structure in any sphere of life, whether it is in business or a department. Without sound record-keeping evidence-based decisions will stay a dream.

If record keeping is weak, strategic planning and performance monitoring cannot be accurate. The question is: How can we manage the budget if there is no proper record of transactions? For example, the road transferred from RAL to SANRAL: Was the change promulgated? Did SANRAL actually accept the road? What about the budget to maintain these roads? Will these roads now fall through the cracks? What is the impact on the budget of both RAL and SANRAL? One of the worst preventable losses occurs when a project's budget is allocated, and its completion date exceeds the original plan. In such cases, prices often increase, and less money becomes available for other projects. A perfect example is the R522 road, which has experienced stoppages for some time now, and now the contractor has been removed. The question is: How much more money will be thrown at this road before it is completed?

Another money-waster is the duplication of road designs. Before any road construction begins, a design plan is created to outline how the road will be developed, which is a very good thing. However, when a project is delayed and later resumed, the entity often starts by redoing the design. This is unnecessary duplication of work which results in additional financial losses and material irregularities. An example of this is the R530 road from Mica to the R36.

On the issue of procurement and contract management, the AG highlighted a serious problem in the supply chain management of the entity. RAL has established a panel of service providers, and certain service providers have received a disproportionate share of work, leaving others underutilised. The question is: Can such a contractor actually deliver on all the different projects?

This raises critical questions about the effectiveness of the service provider panel and calls into question the rationale behind relying heavily on a limited number of providers, particularly when a vast network of potential service providers exists. The DA have repeatedly requested a list of these preferred service providers, and the projects allocated to each, but it is still outstanding. RAL has not improved its audit outcomes for eight years in a row. The main reason is recurring irregular expenditure and inadequate internal control systems.

Currently, the total amount of irregular expenditure stands at R8,2 billion at the end of the 2023/24 financial year. While RAL has successfully exceeded its targets in infrastructure and maintenance, job creation, and community engagements, challenges such as cash flow management, community resistance to certain projects and delays in securing private-sector partnerships have hindered optimum performance.

Just before I conclude, I would like to thank the MEC and RAL for their kind assistance whenever we call on them. I believe we are making progress and seeing improvements. Indeed, we have seen many improvements made by RAL. However, with all these challenges negatively affecting RAL, I wonder if it can continue improving. It is not impossible; it simply requires good governance. Imagine the staggering difference RAL could make in Limpopo and in the lives of ordinary citizens if these improvements continue. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you very much, Hon Helm. Honourable Members, you will recall that items 7.6 and 7.7 have been combined. Hon Mathe, you have the floor.

MR MATHE

Chair, I raised a point earlier, and you referred us to Rule 7. Now I want to refer you back to Rule 7. The interpretation of rules is another matter entirely. I want to refer you to the very same rule: Conventions and practices, particularly chapter 3 or section 3, which says: "Presiding Officers may request Members to comply with established conventions and practices."

The established practice in this Chamber is that the Speaker must wear a gown. That is the established convention.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Hon Mathe, please begin from section 1.

MR MATHE

No, no. I'm referring you to this one that speaks about established practices. Section 1 has nothing to do with established practices, but because I want to redeem myself, it is fine. Let us leave it there.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Let me allow the Chief Whip of the majority party, Hon Essob Mokgonyana, to give his input on the matter.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Thanks very much, Hon Speaker. Let us not play with English. The Speaker wearing a gown is not a practice, it is a rule. Now we are talking about practices here. The House agreed that we will be informal today, hence, the Speaker is informal. In fact, it is an agreed arrangement for today only. By law, the Speaker must wear a gown; that's not a practice.

Therefore, what Hon Mathe is quoting is out of context because there is no one who has broken the rule; so why must the Speaker come into the discussion? We agreed that today we will be informal, like we are. The Speaker is informal, and all of us are

also informal. It is a practice that we have been doing here. The Speaker wearing a gown is not a practice; it is a rule. Thank you very much. Can we continue, Hon Speaker.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Thank you very much, Chief Whip of the majority party, for the decisive intervention. As I was indicating, honourable Members, you would recall that we have already agreed that items 7.6 and 7.7 have been combined. To that extent, I want to proceed and invite Hon Champ Sepuru to come and make his contributions.

MR SEPURU

Thank you, Hon Speaker. My full name is David Mmakgabo Champ Sepuru. I have three names, and it must appear as such from today onwards. I no longer want to see Mmakgabo Champ alone, because I'm David the king.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Your two minutes are gone, honourable Member. [LAUGHTER]

MR SEPURU

Thank you, Hon Speaker; Chief Whip and Members of the Whippery; esteemed Members of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature; Hon Premier in absentia; Members of the Executive Council present here today; ladies and gentlemen.

The 2024 ANC Election Manifesto, the manifesto of the oldest liberation movement in Africa, implores us to ensure that the manifesto's commitment and priorities are integrated and translated into the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), and ensure that the budget to implement those priorities is provided for through the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (METF). This injunction is at the centre of the government planning cycle, and it has always permeated all past democratic administrations. During this Seventh Administration, the ANC has committed itself to move with speed and do better, do more and do it faster to transform and improve the lives of our people, building on the accomplishments of the previous administration. The Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure has adopted a zero-tolerance approach to underspending on allocated funds. Therefore, it is no longer time for the department to underspend on its budget, citing delays in filling critical and vacant positions, procurement of goods and services, and capital assets. This was the situation that prevailed during the period under review, when the department spent 97% of its budget.

The shortcomings within the human resource management and supply chain management system affected the provision of quality road infrastructure and the provision and management of provincial government land and buildings. This trend started in the previous financial year, when the department underspent its budget on the same two programmes, namely: Infrastructure Operations and Road Infrastructure. At that time, the department cited non-responsive bidders and the re-advertising of bids as the reasons for the delays in infrastructure operations.

Regarding road infrastructure, the main cause cited was the non-implementation of five steel bridge projects and delays in fuel and road material delivery. There are always excuses for poor delivery of services. This can no longer be allowed to continue unabated. It must be borne in mind that these programmes received the largest budget allocation of the departmental budget, therefore, they are at the centre of service delivery. This trend of underspending is not only affecting the department, but also Road Agency Limpopo (RAL), which underspent the conditional allocation amounting to a staggering R90 million. This occurred despite the escalating need for maintenance due to the ageing of the infrastructure network.

Similar to its mother department, the underspending in RAL started some years ago. The entity underspent on its Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant, totaling R126 million in the 2021/22 financial year and R90 million in the 2022/23 financial year. It must be emphasised that this is a mockery for the department and its agency to underspend their budget while the people of Limpopo are day in day out, in the streets protesting about the lack of proper road infrastructure and other related services.

Underspent Conditional Grants revert to National Treasury. Our province cannot afford this. It is disturbing that Road Agency Limpopo could not pay all eligible invoices from its suppliers, the majority of whom are small, micro, and medium enterprises run and owned by designated groups, citing cash flow challenges Road Agency Limpopo is, in many instances, found wanting when it comes to the construction of new roads. During the periods under review, it could only complete 33 km of the planned 55 km road construction. This happens while the department and its agency are returning money to National Treasury due to poor spending. This is unacceptable.

We are of the firm view that some of the failures are because of a lack of proper leadership in the department. The department has been without a permanent head of department (HOD) since April 2023, following the placement of the department under professional assessment and the secondment of then HOD to a sister department whilst the assessment was unfolding. As things stand, the department is managed by the acting head of department. This situation may spiral out of hand if not attended to speedily.

As I've said, this situation may spiral out of hand if not attended to speedily. We humbly request the department to impress upon the relevant authorities, I must emphasise this, we humbly request the department to impress upon the relevant authorities to fast-track the appointment of the HOD in this department.

The Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure is at the centre of the ANC 2024 Election Manifesto's commitment to fix current constraints in transport and logistics that are critical to industrialisation, growth, and development. It is at the coalface of building maintenance capacity to implement and complete complex infrastructure projects. Therefore, it is critical that we move with speed to improve governance and leadership at the department to maintain and build new infrastructure.

The department is confronted with the challenge of hijacking of government-owned properties by unscrupulous individuals. In addition, government officials deliberately fail to pay rent on government-owned houses. Lack of maintenance of government-owned houses doesn't help the precarious situation that the department finds itself in

either, as the occupants argue that they cannot pay for houses that they continue to maintain out of their own coffers. This is exacerbated by a policy that allows for the scraping of arrears every two years. Further, the department is paying rates and taxes on houses that are not occupied. The department must investigate this anomaly and adopt measures to address this challenge.

We spoke a lot about things that are not going well in the department, but there is another side to the coin. While concerned about the above, it does not mean that there are no milestones recorded by the department and the agency during the period under review. We note that Road Agency Limpopo managed to rehabilitate 1,250,000 m² of surfaced roads, surpassing its target of resurfacing 1, 229,211 m² of surfaced roads. It also achieved its target of completing three bridges. Small as this is, more than R60,6 million was spent on the employment of local labourers for various road construction and maintenance projects. In addition to this, 3,900 job opportunities were created for youth, 1 850 for women and 771 for persons living with disability. More than 600...[INTERJECTION]

THE SPEAKER

Hon Sepuru, can we request that Hon Mathe and the people he's speaking with step outside so that they do not disrupt the Sitting? You can proceed honourable Member.

MR SEPURU

Thank you, Hon Speaker. More than 600 SSMEs were contracted for various business opportunities during this period. An amount of R190,26 million was paid to these entities. More than 3,086 km of surfaced roads were visually assessed. This was done to determine and clarify the actual ownership of each road, distinguishing between municipal, national and provincial roads. We must welcome this endeavour. It will help rectify the misstatements in accounting for the provincial road asset network in the financial statements. Road Agency Limpopo is highly commended for this achievement.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. There are other good things that the department and Road Agency Limpopo are doing that often go unnoticed. It is our task to unearth those and bring them to the fore and speak about them. This will help to boost and raise staff morale and help us to regain the trust deficit that we have experienced in the not-so-distant past. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Re a leboga, Mmakgabo David Champ Sepuru. We will now request Vho-John Netshifhefhe to come and close the debate. As we are debating, we must remember that someone promised us a cake.

MR NETSHIFHEFHE

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. The honourable Members of the Legislature; Members of the Executive Council who are present; Chief Whip and Whippers, thank you very much.

As we conclude the debate on the reports presented; the 2022/23 Annual Report, the quarterly reports, and eventually the 2023/24 Annual Report, I should indicate that a lot has been said about the performance and non-performance of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and its entity, Road Agency Limpopo. I would like to thank you for your patience and audience during this important occasion as we consider these reports for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure.

We need to applaud the department and its entity in the way they are implementing their programmes. The debate, as it was advanced, gives the indication that there is much work being done by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and RAL. That is why, to my left, the opposition side, are appreciating the good work, although more work still needs to be done. Of course, we are aware of the liar paddlers and doomsayers and prophets of doom among us who would like to point fingers and accuse public servants of poor service, poor leadership and incompetency, and a culture of rampant corruption.

These are the people described in the ANC 2024 Election Manifesto as the forces that seek to undo the progress of democracy. We, on our part, know that there many men and women within our institutions who have transcended and embraced the call to serve and have given it their all. We are humbled by all this and wish to take this opportunity to recognise and applaud our public servants for their modest yet supper human efforts.

The challenges were enormous, and the task daunting, yet they endured and persevered. They are shining beacons of our fervour, and we look up to them for inspiration. These are the kind of public servants whose dedication, strength and resilience continue to provide hope for our people who yearn for an improvement in the quality of their lives.

The task of creating work opportunities for our people through the public and private sector intervention, increasing support for small, medium and micro enterprises and cooperatives, promoting employment equity to ensure the representation of women, and people with disability in all echelons of power; in both the public and the private sectors; fixing transport and logistics, accelerating land reform and distribution to promote rural and urban development, and enabling greater access to housing cannot be achieved without the commitment of these public servants who are imbued with the spirit of servant leadership; a leadership that is professional, ethical and developmental.

Madam Speaker, it is because of the efforts of our employees in both the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and RAL that we managed to install 556 prepaid meters on rental properties, purchase an office building in Polokwane (saving rental costs), pay rates and taxes totaling R150 million, and purchase 25 graders, one excavator and 17 light duty vehicles. Regarding capital projects, the department managed to complete the design of an interchange on the R71 to alleviate traffic congestion. Regarding infrastructure operations, 17 projects for the Department of Education and four projects for the Department of Health were successfully delivered.

Over 8,000 work opportunities were created in the process by the department during the period under review, mainly through building maintenance and the National Youth Service Artisan Development Programme. The department managed to construct seven new bridges through its agency RAL. More work opportunities totalling 13 000 (which includes youth, women and 197 people living with disability) were created through various infrastructure projects that the department and its agency implemented.

Similar achievements were recorded in revenue collection with the department exceeding its target and collecting over R151 million against the planned R39 million, due to a successful auction of obsolete goods. Regarding payment of eligible invoices, both the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure and RAL managed to pay the illegible invoices within the prescribed 30 days. This needs to be appreciated and should become a consistent culture, as it is in compliance with policy.

There were other notable achievements in other areas that constitute the core of the department, such as rehabilitation, blacktop patching, re-graveling and resurfacing of roads. The department also exceeded its planned targets in these areas. In the coming year, we will conduct joint oversight visits with the Portfolio Committees on Education and Health to inspect all the projects that have been successfully delivered. We welcome the transfer of 10 ha of land from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development towards the relocation of the Sekhukhune District offices.

Road Agency Limpopo (RAL) also recorded several achievements during the period under review. Notable among these were the agency's successful conclusion of agreements with strategic partners, which saw RAL securing over R144 million towards road construction and maintenance. Additionally, the agency managed to rehabilitate 1,256,19 m² of surfaced roads, resurfaced 1,229,214 m² of surfaced roads, regavelled. 132 km of gravel roads, and bladed 50 000 km of gravel road.

Regarding the support of SMMEs, R190,2 million was spent on SMME contractors, and 3,959 employment opportunities were created for youth, women and people living with disability. Here I should indicate that, in terms of all the reports; the 2022/23 Annual Report and the 2023/24 Annual Report, inclusive of all the quarterly reports; the similarity is that they all talk to the most critical issues of job creation, which include targeting the youth, women and people living with disability through infrastructure projects.

This narration of achievements by the department and RAL does not negate the prevalence of examples of substandard service delivery. In the coming months and years, we will step up our oversight role as the portfolio committee and ensure that the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, as well as RAL, address the issues of vacancy rates and gender equity across all levels of management, particularly at senior management levels.

This is a very critical matter. In all our successive meetings with the department; I'm happy the Acting HOD is here; we have raised this matter regarding the high rate of vacancies and positions at senior management level. There should be no disparity, because the issue of gender equity is a policy compliance matter, so this needs to be

attended to. We have agreed with the department that it will be work in progress. They will continue to brief us on how far they have gone to address this matter.

As I indicated earlier, all the achievements that the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructures and RAL attained during the period under review were made possible by our employees, many of whom continue to hold on to the belief and conviction that public service is a calling, which requires people of strict discipline and unwavering commitment to serve our people.

These are the people who persevere through adversity and carry themselves admirably and with dignity. They are true agents of the developmental state that we seek to build and strengthen. We depend on them to help the department and RAL turn the tide and contribute meaningfully to the attainment of the six developmental priorities, as pronounced in the ANC 2024 Election Manifesto.

As I conclude, during the debate, there was a critical matter that was raised. As much as we appreciate the good work done by the department and RAL, the challenge that we have is the position at the higher echelon, the position of HOD, which is still acting. We have been briefed that recruitment is underway to fast-track the process of filling this critical position. We hope that very soon we will have a permanent HOD in the department.

One last matter, as I conclude, that we should appreciate is the zero-tolerance approach that has been taken by the department and RAL on underspending. Underspending undermines all our efforts to fast-track service delivery. Our people need services, and if we are underspending, especially on the conditional grants, this means there will be more money returned to the national fiscus when it was meant to address service delivery in the province.

We should appreciate the way the department and RAL are executing their responsibilities. Lastly, the issue which is critical is the non-payment of contractors, as raised by other Members of the portfolio committee. The non-payment of contractors and subcontractors may cause project delays and disruptions and that is a matter that needs to be followed up and attended to. As I've alluded, Madam Speaker, I thank you very much for this opportunity that you've afforded me. Thank you

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, chair. I understand that the debate had to be delayed a bit because we combined the debates into one. We shall now call upon the honourable MEC for Public Works, Mr Sebataolo Ernest Rachoene, MEC wa dikgerekgere to respond to the debates by the honourable Members. So, dilo ditšhentše, MEC.

Response by the MEC for Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure

MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ke a leboga. Ke thome ka go tamiša lena mosepediši wa modiro, Hon Speaker, Ms Makoma Makhurupetje; Hon Chief Whip; honourable MECs that are present here; and all honourable Members of this august House.

Ke re kgotsong. Le kae? Re gona. Maybe let me start by responding to my chair of the portfolio committee, on the issue of the appointment of the HOD. Next week, Friday, 13 December 2024, we will be having those interviews, and we promise that the following week we will appoint the new HOD for the department. I can also, here, assure you that we are seriously dealing with the issue of unemployment. This Monday, we will be welcoming the new cohort of people who we have appointed permanently in the department. Those that will start working on 01 December. So, we are taking the issue of unemployment very seriously, as it is one of the priorities of the Seventh Administration.

I am proud to also say to this august House that we have managed to hire a new cohort in a period of less than two months. Since we have advertised those posts, I, as the MEC, took a decision that every Friday at 06:00, we will be meeting just to take stock of how colleagues are working on the issue of interviews and shortlisting. This week will be the 12th week, if I'm not mistaken, that we are meeting at 06:00. That is why we managed to hire close to 200 people in two months. So, it is possible.

I stand before this esteemed House today to respond to the portfolio committee's consideration and adoption of the Annual Report for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years for both RAL and the department, respectively. Specifically, as it pertains to the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure.

Firstly, I would like to express my appreciation to the portfolio committee for their diligent oversight, as well as for the thorough examination and constructive feedback on our department's performance. The role of the committee is crucial in ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective governance. We recognise the responsibility placed on us as we continue to serve the people of our province. The annual reports for both financial years provided a comprehensive overview of the department and its entity, Roads Agency Limpopo, including its activities, challenges and achievements.

It highlights the substantial progress we have made, despite the many challenges we face, including fiscal constraints, delayed project timelines, and other external factors. I will address some of the key aspects highlighted by the committee and provide further clarity on our response to their observations. On financial management and budget performance: We are pleased to report that our department has worked hard to ensure that the allocated budget is spent efficiently and effectively.

While we acknowledge the concerns raised regarding the underspending on certain programmes and the overcommitments at the entity, particularly on capital projects, the main reason for underspending is largely due to delays in procurement processes and unforeseen project scope changes, rather than inefficiencies in budget management.

The department is working tirelessly to improve the audit outcome. Strides have been made in addressing both the AGSA and internal audit findings. We are also attending to the high irregular expenditure at Roads Agency Limpopo, which is now above R9 billion. We are working very closely with RAL to institutionalise the procurement process at the entity. In correcting this going forward, management of the department

and RAL have been instructed to redouble their efforts in ensuring planning towards new infrastructure projects are done well before the new financial year.

If infrastructure projects are planned on time and in line with the infrastructure delivery management system, procurement will also be done on time, before the new financial year. This will ensure that projects are implemented on time and within the financial year for which the budget has been allocated. A directive has been issued to management to ensure that the procurement for infrastructure, goods, and services is done before we go on recess in this current financial year.

Therefore, as we move forward, we are committed to improving our internal systems, ensuring faster procurement processes, and minimising delays in project implementation. I am confident that the corrective measures we have put in place will result in better budget utilisation in the coming financial year. On infrastructure development and maintenance: Our department has made significant strides in ensuring the delivery of quality public infrastructure including roads, schools, hospitals, and government buildings. We also understand the importance of maintaining and expanding our infrastructure, especially as it directly impacts economic growth and the well-being of our citizens.

However, we also acknowledge that there have been delays in some major projects, due in part to challenges related to contractor performance and the impact of global supply chain disruptions. It is common knowledge that we had to put a radar on RAL to reshape it and ensure that it goes back to its former glory. We have already taken decisive actions to resolve the issues at RAL by ensuring that we appoint an accounting authority to act on behalf of the board of directors and an Acting CEO as a way of putting corrective measures in place. It is work in progress.

Another important issue raised by the committee pertains to the ongoing maintenance backlogs for both roads and other built infrastructure. The reality is that a growing infrastructure deficit, compounded by limited resources, continues to place pressure on our ability to meet all maintenance needs. However, I want to assure this House that addressing this backlog remains a priority for our department. The department will be finalising the infrastructure maintenance strategy before the end of December 2024. The main aim of this strategy is to ensure that government buildings are maintained and well looked after, and that there is a budget allocated towards that.

The partnership with local municipalities is crucial. We are working to better prioritise and allocate resources to address the critical maintenance needs of our immovable assets, which include rental houses, as well as budgeting enough towards rates and taxes. Furthermore, we are exploring alternative funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships with mines, farmers' organisations and other strategic partners, to ensure that we can tackle the backlog more efficiently.

On capacity building and transformation: We have taken a decision to launch the Dikgerekgere Wednesday service delivery initiative. This initiative, in the meantime, aims to make our 13 000 km of gravel roads drivable. The Dikgerekgere Wednesday programme is continuing to change the shape of our economy and better the lives of our people. In this regard, we are showcasing over 500 yellow fleet and the internal capacity of our department in responding directly to the clarion call of the President

when he said: “We must continue to build the capacity of the State.” The department will also unveil 15 new graders in two weeks’ time to further strengthen and accelerate service delivery to our people. In order to sustain this, we are appointing new staff members. On Monday, as I’ve said, we are going to welcome about 200 newly appointed employees on a permanent basis. Manana Xipikara mitirho ya vulavula. [APPLAUSE]

One of the key recommendations from the portfolio committee has been the need to improve capacity and skills development within the department. This is an issue we take very seriously. We recognise that the success of our projects is directly tied to the skills and expertise of our workforce. Honourable Members, as we consider and adopt the recommendations of the portfolio committee on the Annual Reports for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years, respectively, I want to reiterate our commitment to improving the delivery of public works, roads, and infrastructure in the province. We have made significant progress, but we also acknowledge that there are areas where we must do better. We will continue to engage with all stakeholders, including this House, to ensure that we deliver on our mandate efficiently and effectively.

In closing, I once again thank the portfolio committee, as chaired by Hon Khathu Netshifhefhe, for their valuable insights and look forward to working together to address the challenges ahead. Let us continue to serve the people of this province with dedication and integrity. We welcome the appreciation from our colleagues on our left, although, as they say, you can’t praise fish for swimming, but we are humbled and appreciate your accolades, Thank you very much. Ke a leboga.

THE SPEAKER

Va ri mitirho ya vulavula, hi khensile Tatana Rachuene. Hi swi twile leswi mi nga swi vulavula, hi khensile. We now proceed to the Snap Debate on World Aids day. As we know, 01 December is World Aids Day, where we commemorate and remember those who passed on due to this pandemic, but we also continue to campaign and remind all of us about the importance of prevention. We must make sure that we live long, even when we might be affected or infected, or even when some of our family members and colleagues are affected.

8. SNAP DEBATE ON WORLD AIDS DAY

On that note we are moving to the Snap Debate, where all Members will be giving messages to the community of Limpopo on why we should commemorate World Aids Day. We will start by going directly to the Speakers’ List, where Hon Dikeledi Ramohlale will be opening the debate.

MS MMETLE-RAMOHLOLA

Plans are very important. Thank you, Hon Speaker, Ms Makoma Grace Makhurupetje; Members of the Executive Council present here; Chief Whip and all Whippers; Deputy Chair of Chairs; chairpersons of portfolio committees, in particular the chairperson of the Committee on Quality of Life; and all honourable Members in this august House.

Greetings to the House at large and all members of the Limpopo Legislature. As we approach World Aids Day, we need to remind one another about the fight against HIV/Aids. This is not just a fight for people living with Aids, but it is also a collective fight as a society. World Aids Day is a day that calls for action against the stigmatisation of people living with HIV/Aids. On World Aids Day, we stand together in solidarity with people who are living with HIV/Aids as well as those who have succumbed to Aids. One thing for sure is that in South Africa, and globally, if you are not infected you are definitely affected.

The 2024 World Aids Day theme in South Africa is: "Equal Rights, Equal Access to Quality Healthcare for All." This theme means emphasising the importance of ensuring that everyone, regardless of their HIV status, has equal rights to human and healthcare rights. The global theme is: "Take the right path", which entails that one should take the right path by knowing their status and using protection to protect oneself and others.

I would like to emphasise that people living with HIV/Aids can live a healthy and normal life. They can also become undetectable, making it impossible to transmit the virus to their sexual partners by taking their medication consistently and living a healthy lifestyle. HIV/Aids-positive patients can have an undetectable viral load, and this means that they are unable to transmit HIV/Aids to their sexual partners.

Madam Speaker, honourable Members, however, it is crucial to practice safe sex, regardless of one's HIV status, as being undetectable doesn't mean or prevent the transmission of other STIs (sexually transmitted infections) or unwanted pregnancies.

As the Standing Committee on Quality Life, we advocate for educating family members on HIV/Aids. It is also essential to dispel the stigmas around the disease and emphasise that people living with HIV/Aids can live a normal and healthy life, just like people who are HIV negative. We also need to address the issue of traditional healers and prophets who advise HIV-positive patients to stop taking their medication. We should also acknowledge that, as Africans, we believe in different religions, but at the same time, we would like to make an appeal to our counterparts to join hands in fighting this pandemic.

HIV/Aids still has no cure, but it is manageable. This is very devastating and has profound consequences. South Africa has the largest population of children living with HIV globally, and the treatment coverage is alarmingly low. We must strengthen our health services to make quality healthcare affordable. In his remarks about Nkosi Johnson, the former President Nelson Mandela said, "The deterioration in Nkosi Johnson's health over the past few months has been a source of great concern to us, and it is an immense human tragedy that Aids is so cruel, ravaging the lives of people, particularly children." As highlighted by Madiba, children such as Nkosi Johnson have been deprived of the opportunity to continue a life filled with joy, laughter and happiness.

Regrettably, the reality is that Aids severely threatens all that is beautiful about children and humanity in general. On a frightening scale, HIV/Aids is replacing joy, laughter and happiness with paralysing pain and trauma.

The African National Congress in its election manifesto vowed to strengthen health services to make quality healthcare affordable and accessible to all. In response to the manifesto, the Department of Health has embarked on several campaigns, such as “Know Your Status”, which seeks to encourage people to get tested and know their status.

We also need to make sure that HIV/Aids-positive pregnant women are encouraged to visit clinics early to prevent mother-to-child transmission. For those who may not be aware, an HIV/Aids-positive mother can still give birth to a HIV/Aids-negative child. Furthermore, there are proven measures that pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) can help prevent HIV transmission.

In one of the research reports that the Human Science Research Council published, it was revealed that in 2022, Limpopo had one of the lowest HIV prevalence rates in the country, at 8,9%, down from 10,1% in 2017. This translates to an estimation of 570,000 people living with HIV in Limpopo. That is a very great improvement.

As I perorate, it would be suicidal if we do not over emphasise and condemn the GBVF calamity that continues to happen in the country. Hence, we would want to support the ANC Women’s League and all its progressive forces in the country who marched to the Union Buildings today, 29 November 2024, for advancing decisive action towards full liberation and women’s emancipation. We are saying: “Working together, we can achieve more.” Thank you very much, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Re a leboga, Mmago Kholo. Thank you very much, Hon Mmetle-Ramohlola. I’m not seeing Hon Andrie Moss. Is he here? If he’s not here, we will move on, because Hon Wilson is also not here. We will allow... oh, you are here, sorry ma’am. We replaced you when we didn’t see you. Now that you are here, let us give you the opportunity to come and debate on World Aids Day. You know, there’s something that surprises me. Hon Wilson was using a stick, Hon Mathe was using a stick. I’m not sure whether this debate is about a stick or not. Maybe someone has taken another’s stick; I am not sure.

MR MARX

On a point of order, Hon Speaker, maybe you should take out the stick sometime.

MR MATHE

Hon Speaker, on a point of order.

THE SPEAKER

On a point of order, Hon Mathe.

MR MATHE

We want to take this opportunity to assure Hon Wilson that today there's no mangamanga business. We have accepted her apology, and we are living in peace now.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, I really appreciate it because I really wanted to bring the MEC for Health into the picture to give us two professional sticks. Over to you, Hon Wilson

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker, and to Hon Mathe, ah you see...

DR SELANE

Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Dr Selane, you are recognised.

DR SELANE

Thank you very much. Before Hon Wilson can speak, is she prepared to take a question?

THE SPEAKER

Hon Wilson, unfortunately, I'm no longer sure because Dr Selane doesn't have a stick. Hon Wilson, are you ready to take a question?

MS WILSON

Hon Speaker, the honourable Member is welcome to question me after the Sitting.

DR SELANE

Hon Speaker, I wanted to ask her if she has tested because this is an important debate which she is going to engage in. But I agree with her; maybe after this, I will ask her. I thought you would respond before you continue, but after this, I'll engage you. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much Dr. You can proceed, Hon Wilson.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Yes, I've tested several times. I have to test every time I take insurance. I have tested after I assisted injured people on the side of the road involved in a car accident...[INTERJECTION]

DR SELANE

Point of order, order Hon Speaker...

THE SPEAKER

I am taking the order of Dr Selane.

DR SELANE

Hon Speaker, I want to raise a point of order. The agreement and understanding of the House was that Hon Wilson would engage with me outside the Sitting. The question was asked whether she would agree to answer or not, and she said no. Now she is responding, and I don't understand what that means. Can Hon Wilson agree that we will engage outside this Sitting, as there's no need to respond or to clarify to this House? She had committed that she would not respond here and that she would respond outside. Thank you very much

THE SPEAKER

I'm tempted to agree with Dr Selane that Hon Wilson was out of order to respond. Can you focus on your speech Madam? Over to you.

MS WILSON

Thank you, Hon Speaker. As South Africa commemorates World Aids Day, let us remember that HIV is a societal problem that we will not defeat until we take a holistic approach on a societal level and provide equitable, adequate healthcare to everyone in every corner of Limpopo, regardless of gender, race, sexuality and economic status. While the Limpopo Department of Health has many challenges in delivering acceptable healthcare standards to our people in the province, they must be commended for their commitment to the 90-90-90 strategy and their efforts.

Unfortunately, in the 2023/24 financial year, Limpopo failed to meet its annual target with regard to the Compressive HIV/Aids Conditional Grant. The department enrolled only 30,648 new patients on antiretroviral therapy (ART) out of the targeted 40,500. Unfortunately, only 449,345 patients on antiretroviral therapy remained in care, out of the target of 480, 000 million patients. The department, unfortunately, has failed to meet those targets, but we do understand too, that we cannot hold a gun to the head of an HIV patient and force them to take antiretroviral medicine.

However, the department needs to enhance its efforts to reach more people in this province and meet its target with regard to antiretroviral treatment, having patients on antiretroviral therapy remain in care and increase the number of people testing for HIV. The department should increase the distribution of male and female condoms and

encourage male medical circumcision, which needs to be prioritised. Innovative ways to reach targets must be pursued in order to curb the spread of HIV/Aids.

As the DA, let us be clear: Everyone deserves access to HIV/Aids testing, treatment and care. The department should be at the forefront of addressing the stigma and discrimination around Aids. However, we in this House have a part to play, as well as to ensure that this is addressed, and universal HIV healthcare is achievable. Reaching and prioritising certain important yet marginalised and vulnerable populations is key in our fight against Aids. For example, people who use drugs, sex workers, people in prisons who are at risk or may be affected by HIV/Aids must also receive all the health services available.

As a province, we must remain steadfast in our effort to prevent the spread of HIV, ensuring access to life-saving antiretroviral treatment, and achieving HIV viral suppression to protect all our communities. As we commemorate World Aids Day, we must encourage equitable access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care services. Furthermore, we must encourage our citizens to get screened and tested for HIV and TB, always use condoms, avoid sexual risk behaviour, and maintain a healthy lifestyle. In the event of an HIV diagnoses, we encourage people to start treatment immediately and stay on their ARV treatment. We need to be united as a province to achieve this, but the Limpopo Department of Health must be at the coalface of this fight against Aids. Together, we can do more. Thank you, Hon Speaker

THE SPEAKER

I like this peace between Hon Wilson and Hon Mathe. Thank you very much. The peace: I love it so much. We now call upon the honourable chairperson of the Standing Committee of Quality of Life, who is going to close the debate, Hon Mahlodi Caroline Manthata-Mahasela.

MS MANTHATA-MAHASELA

Thank you, Hon Speaker, Ms Makoma Makhurupetje; Hon Chief Whip of the majority party; honourable MECs and Deputy Chair of Chairs; honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature; official and guests, I greet you.

Let me start by emphasising this: HIV/Aids is not a killer disease. As long as you take your medication, you are going to live longer. The culprit, which is a killer disease is sugar diabetes and...ke eng yela ye nngwe? Those are very dangerous because they'll kill you slowly, but this one; I think if you keep on taking your medication, you are going to survive. So, don't be threatened by that.

I was happy because Hon Sbu was showing me his results now. He keeps on going to do his tests. His results are non-reactive; they are negative. That is encouraging. It shows that as people we need to go and test at all times.

World Aids is marked every year on 01 December to remind us that we cannot become complacent about HIV. HIV continues to be a major global public health issue, having claimed millions of lives across the globe. However, with increasing access to effective HIV prevention, diagnoses, treatment and care, including for opportunistic infections,

HIV infection has become a manageable chronic health condition, enabling people living with HIV to live long and healthy lives. So, that is what I was emphasising.

The Human Sciences Research Council released the key findings of the sixth South African HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey for Limpopo province on Tuesday, 27 August 2024, at a Provincial Dialogue held at Meropa Casino Hotel in Polokwane. The survey found that Limpopo had one of the lowest HIV prevalence levels amongst all provinces in 2022, at 8,9%, down from 10,1% in 2017. This translates to an estimated 570,000 people living with HIV in Limpopo; a 2,0% decrease from the 580,000 reported in 2017. While significant progress has been made in the battle against HIV in Limpopo, the number of new HIV infections is expanding among young people, particularly among key populations.

As the global goal of ending Aids as a public health threat by 2030 nears we still have much to do. In 2023, nearly 40 million people were living with HIV around the world, from which 630,000 people died, and 1,3 million became newly infected. Since the beginning of the epidemic, an estimated 88 million people have become infected. People may be unaware of their risk and lack the knowledge on how to protect themselves and where to seek testing and treatment for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

They may experience stigma and discrimination, which stops them from accessing the services they need to stay healthy and uninfected. Former President Nelson Mandela said, "Many people suffering from AIDS and not killed by the disease itself are killed by the stigma surrounding everybody who has HIV/AIDS." South Africa has been relentless in its mission to turn the HIV/Aids and TB epidemics around. There are notable achievements to celebrate. A review of our efforts in addressing the HIV/Aids epidemic over the past 23 years paints a mixed picture.

There have been many scientific advances in HIV treatment, and we now have a much better understanding of the virus. More people are receiving antiretroviral treatment, which means the HIV infection rate is decreasing.

There's also scientific optimism around the benefits of treatment as prevention and progress toward a cure and vaccine. However, despite these advances, stigma and discrimination still persist for many people living with or affected by HIV.

World Aids 2024 is an opportunity for all South Africans to remind themselves that HIV is still a reality and that it is incumbent upon all of us to continue fighting prejudice, stigma and discrimination. Let me explain the word discrimination. Stigma and discrimination can be as devastating as the illness itself and may mean abandonment by a partner or family, social exclusion, job and property loss, school expulsion, denial of medical services, lack of care and support, and violence for those affected by them.

The consequences of fear of stigma and discrimination mean that people are less likely to come forward for HIV testing, disclose their HIV status to others, adopt HIV preventive behaviour, or access treatment, care and support. Every sexually active South African is at risk of contracting HIV. We call on all South Africans to recognise that HIV/Aids are chronic diseases and that people living with these diseases can have full and happy lives.

We all have a responsibility to treat those who are struggling with a HIV-positive diagnosis with compassion, treat those struggling with Aids with care, and treat ourselves and our sexual partners with respect. Addressing stigma and discrimination is important in mitigating the impact of HIV.

In closing, South Africa has moved tantalisingly close to the 2025 treatment target but still has a long way to go to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for Aids. It has six years to achieve the SDG goal of ending Aids as a public health threat. It will need a concerted effort to reduce new infections in young women and to prepare for the rollout of long-acting HIV prevention therapies alongside a well-functioning Aids treatment programme to set the country on the path to achieving the 2030 goal. On that note, let me say I would like to urge every one of you to take care of yourselves during this festive season. Thank you, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Re a leboga, Ro livhua, ndi zwone, Vho-Ms Caroline Manthata-Mahasela for closing this debate. This debate just came in as we were moving to item 9. It really relates to the debate coming under item 9.

Honourable Members, you will remember that when we came here in June, it was very hectic. We did everything under pressure. Members were even angry with us, but we needed to push certain things in terms of the legislation, the Constitution and our own Rules. Now we realise that it has been hectic, and we need to give honourable Members the opportunity to go back to their constituencies and do political work, consult their constituencies, and allow the Executive to focus on the work they are responsible for as Executive Members.

So, you are not going home to do nothing. We are going back to our constituencies, portfolio committees, and other work outside the Sittings of the Legislature. By the time the Legislature opens next year, the reports will be ready for presentation. Remember: you process the initial work, and we come back to sit and review the work that has been processed.

So, we are not just closing for you to go home and do nothing. I am saying people might think gore re se ke ra le founela. We will call you, and the portfolio meetings must be quorate, and other work must be processed as expected.

9. CLOSING REMARKS BY POLITICAL PARTIES

On that note, because it has been hectic, and now you will focus on work outside the Legislature; we ask you, through your party leaders, to share parting shots for the year. What message do you give us? I'll go directly to the Speakers' List. We will start with Hon André Moss, but unfortunately, he is not here. We did not include MK Party members on the list due to their unavailability. Had they been present, they would have been included. The Freedom Front Plus is also unavailable. We will now allow Hon Kobodi Diens Maila, re tlo laelana gore le reng go molaetša wa lena wa ngwaga go Maloko a lena le setšhaba sa Limpopo. Hon Maila.

MR MAILA

Ke a leboga Mospikara yo a Hlomphegago, Mme Makhuruptje le Maloko ka moka a Lekgotlatheramelao la Limpopo. Ke leboga Balekgotlaphethiši le baetapele ba mekgatlo ya kganetšo le ge ba bangwe ba bona ba se gona. Ke lebogile kudu ka tše re di kwelego go tloga mola re thomago ka kgwedi ya June go fihla gona bjale . Ka ge e be e sa le la mathomo re tsena ka mo go Lekgotlatheramelao, re ithutile dilo tše ntšhi ka lena, e bile re sa tlile go ithuta tše dingwe gape tše re sa di tsebego. Re lebogile kudu tšohle tše di boletšwego le tše di dirilwego ka gare ga Limpopo. Ebile ke re a re yeng go khutša.

Le ge go le bjalo, Mohlomphegi Mospikara a boletše gore ga re ye go khutša ka ge re swanetše ke go šomela setšhaba. Ke nnete a re šomeleng setšhaba sa rena sa Limpopo. Molekgotlaphethiši wa Dikgerekgere o šetše a tlogile. Ke be ke re ke tlile go mo kgopela, ke mmotše gore re nyaka go bona profense ya Limpopo e le ye botse, e na le ditsela tše botse. Re se ke ra bona fela ditsela tše botse go diswantšho tša mafase a go swana le China. Re nyaka go bona go na le tsela ye e tlogago Polokwane e lebile Venda, gomme dikoloi di sepela kua godimo. Ye nngwe e tloga mo e lebile Motetema, le yona dikoloi di sepela kua godimo. Ke kgopela gore le mmotše go re, ke re, dikoloi a di sepele kua godimo gore re se ke ra šomiša tsela e tee.

Se sengwe gape, ke lebogela le papadi ya kgwele ya maoto. Re leboga ge sehlopha sa rena sa Limpopo se sepetše gabotse. Ke rata go re ke re go Molekgotlaphethiši wa Dipapadi, Bokgabo le Setšo; go na le boitemogelo le bokgoni bjo bontšhi bja kgwele ya maoto mo Limpopo. Agang mapatlalo kagare ga dilete tša rena ka moka, moo bana ba Limpopo ba tla go go kgona go bapala kgwele ya maoto. Mapatlalo a go swana le Peter Mokaba a se be seleteng sa Capricorn fela; ga a be gona Sekhukhune, Mopani, Vhembe le Waterberg. Boitemogelo bjo re na go le bjona mo Limpopo ke bjo bo golo, eupša bo nyaka rena re šomelago setšhaba go re re kgothale. Ke a leboga gomme go bana ba bannyane, let us encourage them to abstain from sexual intercourse.

THE SPEAKER

Mohlomphegi Mathe, a re dumeleleng Ntate Maila go feleletša polelo ya bona. Mohlomphegi Maila, a re feleletšeng.

MR MAILA

A re hlomphaneng go re re kgone go tšwela pele ka go šomela setšhaba. A ke re re mo ka gore re šomela setšhaba. Mohlomphegi Mospikara, ke lebogile. Modimo a be le lena. Modimo a re nešetšeng dipula metseng ya rena. Ke a leboga.

THE SPEAKER

Ka pula gona le tla kwana le Molekgotlaphethiqi wa Temo, gore re kgone go lema. Ms Evelyn Rayne Wilson

MS WILSON

Thank you, Speaker, and indeed it was a long year. We have gone through hotly contested national elections, and the establishment of the Government of National Unity. In this House, we had a lot of new Members sworn in, and tragically, we had to bid farewell to Hon Chidi and Hon Maritz very unexpectedly. Let us not forget, just last week, the passing and loss of Wendy Khosa. We have all dealt with a string of bi-elections, and no doubt, we will all be heading straight to Thabazimbi after the Sitting.

It has been a long, but also rewarding year, and we have continued to do what we can to uplift the people of Limpopo and give them what they deserve. On behalf of the DA, I want to wish each and every Member of this House, along with the staff, a blessed break, protection over you and your families, particularly if you are travelling, and much joy. Family time is indeed quality time and must be treasured. While some of us will be celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, other faiths may be doing something different. Wherever you go and whatever you do, be blessed. We look forward to the next couple of weeks and returning after the new year to an invigorated and ready-to-serve Legislature. God be with you, God bless you. Have a wonderful break. The DA wishes you well. Thank you, Speaker

THE SPEAKER

Amen. Unfortunately, Hon Chief Whip, you will have to come now, because gantšhi o hwtšhe o rela motho o re, ke tla go hwetša ge sekolo se etšwa, yena a tšhaba ka boreiki. Bjalo ga ke tsebe gore o be o mmeile molatšša, o tla mo hwetša kae. I saw the energy today and said, yeah, our Hon Chief Whip Essob Manoko Mokgonyane, will close the debate.

THE CHIEF WHIP

Mohlomphegi Mospikara, ke a leboga. E re le nna ke hlabe fase ka khuru ke go dumedise, ke dumedise le Ntlo ye ya rena ke re, amogelang madume a rena a go hloka sehuba le se tee, a go tšwa go African National Congress.

Ke nnete Mospikara, go na le katsana ye nngwe ye re be re itše re tlo e kgamelela ka lesakeng mamohla, eupša ka gore mo gare ga rena o ka re go na le ditshebi tša go se romiwe, di e boditše gore mamohla o ya go kgamelelwa ka lesakeng o se ke wa iponagatša. Bjale, e re palediša go dira mošomo ka gore tšela re be re swanetše gore re di dire go ra gore re tla be ra di dira ngwaga wo o tlogo ka gore go dirwa gona go swanetše gore di dirwe. Katsana yeo e swanetše e kgamelelwe ka lesakeng. E ka no se be ngwaga wo. Go se be ga yona mamohla ga go re gore e phologile.

Mohlomphegi Mospikara, e re re tšee sebaka se re leboge Maloko a Ntlo ka moka ga wona re sa kgethe, ka mošomo wo mogolo wo re o dirilego ka nakwana ye nnyane. Le ka gopola gore re bile le nako ye ntšhi ye re be go re e tla mo, re ehlwa letšatši ka moka. Nna e sa le ke fihla mo go Lekgotlatheramelao nako ye ke e šomilego dikgwedi tše tlhano tša go feta e ka ba e lekana le mengwaga ye mebedi goba ye meraro ye ke e šomilego ge ke thoma go fihla mo. Seo se ra gore re swanetše re le leboge re be re le kgopele gore le ipethele matsogo ka seo le se dirilego. Eupša, re re, pele ke mo re sa ya go. Mošomo e sa le o montšhi wo re swanetšego gore re tle re o dire. Gape, ke bone gore le kgonne go o dira, eupša go na le tše re swanetšego go di swayaswaya.

Ke tšea nako ye Mospikara gore ke kgale tše pedi tše tharo ka polelo yona ye ke e šomišago. Bale ba bangwe ke no ipotša gore ba a nkwa naa, eupša ga ba nkwe gabotse; gore nke re re ge re yo fetša ngwaga wo bjalo ka Maloko a Ntlo ye, re ye re dule fase le ba malapa a rena le meloko ya rena, re ba tsebiše gore re Maloko a Lekgotlatheramelao. Dinama tše re tla be re di ja, re di bešitše, le tše re tla bego re dinwa, le ba botše gore di diragala ka lebaka la gore le šoma mo go Lekgotlatheramelao. Ke lemogile gore o ka re le na le go lebala gore le a šoma. O ka re le na le go gopola o ka re le a ithaopa mo go Lekgotlatheramelao. Ke bolela se Mospikara ka lebaka la gore, selo se se nnyane se se ka go diragala, go swana le gore ba re ka ga moagišane katse e hwile, Moleloko wa Lekgotlatheramelao ga a sa tla mošomong o na le mabaka o re katse e hwile ka ga moagišane. Ke ka moo re sa hlomphego Lekgotlatheramelao la rena ka gona. Ke gore motho ge a ka no re a tsoga a hwetša a tšwile sešwana mo mokokotlong a lomile ke monang, ga a tle mošomong.

Re ba bagolo. Maitshwaro a rena ga a tsamaišane le mengwaga ya rena. Ke taba ye tee ye ke nyakago gore le e gopole. Ge le ka re ngwaga wo o tlogo ge re bula la tseba gore le Maloko a Lekgotlatheramelao, le a šoma e bile le gola ka lebaka la go re le Maloko a Lekgotlatheramelao, re tšile go ipshina ka mo go Lekgotlatheramelao. Ke bone gore ke taba ye e lebetšwego. O ka re mo ke mo re tla go la mafelelo ge re sena se re ka se dirago. Le ipone mamohla go re go be go diragala eng ka mo. Tše dingwe ga re tsebe gore mohlomongwe le nyaka go bitšwa, goba le nyaka re dire eng. Re tsene ka malapeng a lena re le tsoše re re Tulo e thoma ka 10:00? E bile o ka re le dira ka boomo, kudu ka letšatši le le tsebago gore re le nyaka kudu ke moo le re laetšago gore gabotse le re swere.

Le be le le mo maabane. Le tšile ka nako. Le fihlile ka nako re le palo ya maleba. Re tletše ka mo. Lehono ge re re phasa Kabo, a le tle. Ke gore o ka re ge re ka bolela ra re Mohlomphegi Mospikara go na le se re naykago go se dira, ba re re tla ba bontšha. A le bontšhe rena. Nna ga senke ra le bitša gore le tle go nyaka mošomo. Ga senke ra le fa mangwalo a go re le thwetše mošomo. Go na le batho ba ba le romilego mo, ba re go le roma mo, ba kgetha rena ba re, rena re le hlokomele. Re tla boela kua go bona ra ba botša gore, ka mokgwa wola le be go le re re dire tlhokomelo ka gona, re re a e dira e a pala. Re thušeng.

Ke be ke re, ge go kgonega a re itlhahlobeng ka leswa. Let us do an introspection: we are Members of this Legislature, We have an obligation to come to this House and attend the Sittings when the House is sitting. You do not work anywhere else, unless you declare that you are doing work somewhere else. Le tle le re botše go re naa o thoma nako mang e bile o fela nako mang mošomo wa gona gore re tsebe. From where I am sitting, as the Chief Whip of this Legislature, no one works anywhere except here. Hence, you have never complained about your salaries because I know you must be paid, and the Speaker knows you must be paid. What we are requesting from you is just to do an introspection and start telling the people around you that you are employed. O ka re le ba boditše gore ga le šome le no ba le mphiwafela wo le o hwetšago go tšwa go gonwe. Go and rectify that thing. Tell them you are employed; tell your children, your cousins, your grandmothers, your in-laws and everybody. Go and tell them today that the Chief Whip said we must tell you that we are employed. We are getting paid on the 15th of each and every month. We wish you a happy Christmas and New Year. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much, Hon Chief Whip, ke Kgopela re mmetheleng matsogo a sa dula fase. Hon Chief Whip, that was a real message to take away; to re-energise, re-strengthen, and come back re-energised next year. We will now allow the Hon Chief Whip to present the motion. Re lokolwa ke Sefepi Kgolo. Le a kwa gore felo mo, re a lokollwa ra babitšwa ra bowa.

10. MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO GO ON RECESS**THE CHIEF WHIP**

Thank you, Hon Speaker. Harsh as I was, at least I'm coming with good news now. I hereby move that when this House rises today, it shall sit again on a date and time determined by the Hon Speaker in consultation with the Hon Premier. I move accordingly, Hon Speaker.

THE SPEAKER

Do we have a seconder of the motion? Hon Mabotja, you are recognised.

MR MABOTJA

Greetings Hon Speaker, greetings to honourable Members. I second the motion by the Hon Chief Whip.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hon Deputy Chair of Chairs, do we have any announcements?

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Hon Speaker, Ms Makoma Makhurupetje, ke tšee sebaka se ke tamiše Sefepi-SegoloKgolosa mokgatlo wo o bušago, Essob Mokgonyane le maloko ka moka ya Sefepi Kgolo. Ke dumedise Maloko a a Hlompegago a Balekgotlapheriqi, ke bona Mme Nakedi Grace; MEC for Agriculture Rural Development, ke bona gape le Molekgotlaphethiši wa Dinamelwa e le go yena Mme Susan Violet Mathye; Molekgotlaphethiqi wa Matlotlo a Profense yena Mohlomphegi Mahoai, ke tamiše Molekgotlaphethiši wa Dikgerekgere, Mohlomphegi Rachuene, honourable Members. I'm rising here to make an all-important announcement: go re ge re etšwa mo re tlo ya go kopana kua Polokwane, Bakone Malapa. From here, honourable Members, we are going to have lunch at Bakone Malapa in Polokwane. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER

Thank you so much. That is a farewell lunch for all of us. All Members are invited to the lunch. Before I close, I received a request to announce that there are MECs who want you to be part of oversight activities as honourable Members. The MEC for Transport is inviting all Members to join roadblocks through the portfolio committee chair, Ms Lebea.

The invitation will be extended to all of you to support the Department of Transport in conducting these roadblocks. Those who are available, please join. The MEC for Education will invite all of us during January to participate in a monitoring programme. All of us must be ready for school opening, where we will be assessing whether schools open on time, whether there are books, and so forth. The MEC for Health: We know there are Christmas babies. (I'm almost a Christmas baby myself; 24 December) and first-day-of-the-year babies. They will invite you, along with Mayors, to receive them in different hospitals. Members should be available to join. The last announcement: I want you all to know we have a baby boy in this House who is growing today; but this baby boy has a title. I have heard "Man of God." (people are creating their own titles!). He's Advocate, Marx Franco. Through the courtesy of the Chief Whip, there is a cake to be shared at Bakone Malapa. Hon Marx, I request all of you to stand and sing for him.

[SONG]

12. ADJOURNMENT

Honourable Members, we have now come to the last item. The House is adjourned until next year, Thursday, 27 February 2025, at this Lebowakgomo Legislative Chamber. Thank you.

[THE HOUSE IS ADJOURNED]