

**State of the Province Address (SOPA) by the
Premier of the Northern Cape, Mrs Sylvia Lucas, on
the occasion of the Fourth session of the Fifth
Legislature**

**23 February 2017 at the Mittah Seperepere
Convention Centre in Kimberley**

**The Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Northern
Cape Provincial Legislature;**

Members of the Executive Council;

**Members of the National Assembly and National
Council of Provinces;**

**Members of the Northern Cape Provincial
Legislature;**

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Chairperson of the Karas Region, Mr Jan Scholtz

**Our Esteemed Judge Williams and Members of the
Judiciary;**

Heads of State Security Services;

**Chairperson of the South African Local Government
Association (SALGA), Mayors and Leaders in our
system of Local Government;**

**Our Honoured Traditional Leaders and Veterans of
our Liberation Struggle;
Heads of State institutions supporting our
constitutional democracy;
The Director General, Heads of Department and
Leaders of the Public Service;
Goodwill Ambassadors of the Northern Cape
Province;
Government Officials;
Distinguished Guests;
Fellow citizens of the Northern Cape;
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen**

The State of the Province address is dedicated to the memory of Oliver Reginald Kaizana Tambo, an extraordinary human being, freedom fighter, leader and a source of inspiration in the struggle for freedom. The year of Oliver Tambo's birth coincided with the great event in the history of humanity and that is the sinking of the SS Mendi, when 600 Black, South African soldiers lost their lives. These soldiers true to their tradition demonstrated bravery in the face of death. Bravery, that

even shocked the captain of the ship. My address to the people of the Northern Cape is also dedicated to the departed Souls of the SS Mendi.

No chapter will ever be written without reference to OR Tambo. We owe our democracy, freedom and liberation to the likes of the great Oliver Tambo and others. This is the year of Reginald Oliver Tambo and the African National Congress has dedicated October, the birth month of President Oliver Reginald Tambo, to celebrate a life of one of the greatest amongst that generation of great freedom fighters.

Oliver Reginald Kaizana Tambo and his generation fought a noble battle and lived their lives in pursuit of a better life for all. The democracy which we enjoy is the sweet fruit of their lives of struggle and an unwavering commitment to serve the people of South Africa with no expectation of any personal benefit.

His greatness as a leader, derived from his humility and his ingrained belief in and respect for collective leadership. He knew and taught us that wisdom comes

from sharing insights and listening to and learning from each other. He was always the unifier, never a divider where others of us would speak a hasty word or act in anger, he was the patient one, seeking to heal and bring together.

In his lifetime, he neither sought nor wielded his authority by virtue of office. He was ever ready to draw others into leadership. And he never asked of others what he was not prepared to do himself. South Africa owes you a great debt. You have fought the fight for all of us and we wish and grant you an everlasting peaceful rest.

Agbare Speaker

Ons het vandag ook in ons midde, 'n baie spesiale gas wat verteenwoordig word deur sy moeder, Me Sikgomotso Evelyn Garesape en broer, Karabo Garesape.

Alhoewel nie sigbaar, is hy wel tussen ons vandag en sal die nagedagtenis van die klein maar dapper vegter Kutlwano Garesape verewig met ons wees. My Openingsrede word ook opgedra aan hierdie dapper seun wat tenspyte van sy ouderdom heldhaftig opgestaan het teen 'n vermeende verkragter om sy ma ten alle koste te beskerm. In die proses het hy sy lewe verloor- 'n lewe wat soveel potensiaal ingehou het.

Die bravado van klein Kutlwano moet vir die samelewing 'n opskudding wees. Hierdie kind het probeer keer wat wrede mans aan vroue doen. Sonder om te dink, het hy reageer om 'n onreg te verhoed. Die dood van Kutlwano moet nie net as nog 'n statistiek afgemaak word nie, maar moet dien as die dryfkrag agter ons inspanning om die wrede praktyk van geweld teenoor vrouens en kinders teen te staan en tot 'n einde te bring. Ons skuld dit aan Kutlwano en dit is 'n skuld wat ons moet vereffen.

Honourable Speaker

We must use this year, as this august house and the Northern Cape Provincial Government to accelerate economic growth as we place more emphasis on the radical transformation of the commanding heights of our provincial economy. We need to take decisive action to overcome the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty, which pose a threat to our political stability as a country.

Political power without meaningful participation and ownership of the economy can only serve to perpetuate the misery of our people. The ownership, control and leadership of our economy have thus become key to the transformation we seek to achieve in our Province. If left unchanged, this could lead to a disaster which will be scavenged upon by political vultures that do not care about our people but masquerade as their saviours

As stated by the State President, Hon Jacob Zuma, on 8th January this year, “As the governing party, the ANC must use the levers of state power to transform the economy and improve the lives of our people. It has a duty to use government incentives, procurement, infrastructure and other measures to create new industries and expand existing industries.

Honourable Speaker

The ANC led Northern Cape Government has been at the forefront and has been actively engaged in establishing the building blocks needed to engineer the economic fortunes of our province. Our government is committed to expedite the radical transformation of our economy in order to enhance the participation of the masses of our people in the mainstream of the economy. This has a specific bearing on the black majority and Women, the Youth and People Living with Disabilities.

The National Development Plan aims to alleviate and reduce inequality by 2030 through drawing on the energy of our people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state and promoting leadership and partnerships within society. Radical economic transformation is aimed at changing the economic landscape in a rapid, focused and innovative way with maximum impact on the socio economic conditions of our people. This would require that we focus on four key elements in order to achieve this, job creation, localization, manufacturing and the active participation of the rural motive forces for change through rural development.

We are cognisant of the challenges we are faced with as we are about to traverse the journey of radical economic transformation. These include the legislative and regulatory environment, skills shortages vis a vis sector and industry demands, capacity within the public and private sectors, financial resource constraints, localization with a particular emphasis on the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework and in some instances inadequate infrastructure.

These challenges are not insurmountable and we have already addressing some of these. We have established the Provincial Planning Forum which will act as a think tank to guide the development and finalization of the Provincial Growth and Development Plan. This will be followed by the increase in planning capacity within the Office of the Premier with the appointment of scarce skills in the town planning environment.

We will therefore continue to focus our energies on labour intensive sectors as the need to create employment for our people is paramount. In order to address the said economic challenges in our Province we ardently commit to the implementation of the nine point plan.

The purpose of the nine point plan is to grow the South African economy and at the same time support the NDP. This will be achieved by transforming the economy and increasing investments, among other things. Three interventions have been designed to work together to grow the economy i.e. Job drivers, enablers and cross-cutting interventions. These interventions will be crucial in addressing the unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Honourable Speaker

The fifth Administration remains an accountable Government that can be trusted with the taxpayers' monies. As a result we recorded remarkable improvements in the 2015/16 tax year and a further significant achievement was seen in the fact that the northern Cape was the only Province where all three oversight departments namely the Office of The Premier, Provincial Treasury, and Provincial Legislature achieved "clean audits" which bodes well for the role that they have to exercise over the entire administration.

As the Provincial Government along with National Government we are hard at work with Local Government to help achieve the Back to Basics objectives. This Back to Basics approach is basically our response to the audit outcomes and as a result we are already starting to see improvement in the local sphere of government. We encourage the new councillors to take their oversight responsibilities on the financial management and performance of the municipalities serious.

Honourable Speaker

The Northern Cape Province has a tremendous resources base distributed over a vast landmass. This resource base provides tremendous potential in terms of agriculture, mineral resources and nature's heat and wind sources of energy. This we must use to ensure economic growth that will create local employment and ownership to address the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

The Northern Cape is currently a prime destination for Foreign Direct Investment in the mining and energy sector. As Province we are open and grateful for all investments. Procurement by the large mining houses exceeds a total of R 18 billion per year. The concern however is, that besides the actual investment; the Northern Cape requires far more local benefit through local beneficiation, procurement, local empowerment, corporate social investment and the required regulatory mandated community socio-economic development funding. With the Reviewed Mining Charter to be released next month, the new mining regulation will also place emphasis on localisation of parts, consumables

and services by suppliers to the mines, targets for buying from black owned and black women companies and Qualifying Smaller Enterprise (QSE) suppliers and an increased social investment by the mines in their communities for skills upliftment and their workforce profile.

To this end, we appreciate and note the cordial engagements we are beginning to have with our mining sector and their contributions and investments towards education and health are acknowledged however we are looking to forward to making real on the discussions at a recent meeting between Provincial Government and Mine Managers to formalise a social pact between the private sector and government. We want to ensure that investment from the mining sector is directed towards bulk infrastructure development which will ensure that long term impact is felt by the people of the Province. To this end, a Mining Indaba will be hosted in 2017-2018 to formalise the partnership between the Mining Houses and the people of the Northern Cape.

The Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) also remains a

priority programme for us as the Northern Cape and has proven to be a game changer. This is a sector that can assist Government to radically transform the economy. The Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) attracted an estimated amount of R35.4 Billion Rand (total foreign equity and financing) to the Province from 2013. This programme has proven a success for the province through employment creation in the construction phase and related industries emerging. A total of 17 801 job years has been created during November 2013 and September 2016. A job year being the equivalent of a full time employment opportunity for one person for one year.

Honourable Speaker

The Namakwaland District has enormous potential in areas like agriculture, mining, tourism and natural gas extraction off the Kleinzee Coast and ideal for growing the oceans economy. It is for this reason that we held a high level review of progress linked to Operation Phakisa in January and an interdepartmental team was

established to iron out blockages linked to the establishment of the two aquaculture projects in Hondeklipbaai and the land based on-shore abalone farm near Kleinzee. An Environmental Impact Assessment application for the harvesting and farming with 100 tons and more has already been submitted.

Lease negotiations are underway for a pilot abalone ranching project site south of Port Nolloth which is in possession of a permit. We are going to place the requisite importance to the oceans economy and Operation Phakisa.

In an effort to stimulate business tourism with a focus on meetings, incentives, conferences and events the past year, the province hosted three national business events. It is estimated that these contributed approximately R19.3 million to the provincial economy. Our events portfolio has contributed in the region of R30 million to the provincial economy and this indicates the significance of this sector in the context of our provincial economy.

Honourable Speaker

In order to maintain and strengthen relations with our brother and sister countries in the SADC region, we have entered, as a start, a mutually beneficial twinning agreement with Namibia //Kharas region to enhance mutual relations that are aimed at benefiting the wellbeing of the citizens of the two countries since the signing of the twinning agreement in 1999. To this end, a Joint Technical Committee meeting between a delegation of //Kharas Region and the Northern Cape Province was convened in August last year to develop a local government framework, that focuses on Small Town Regeneration and Tourism issues.

The task of the economic work-stream within the twinning agreement is to develop an economic blue print between //Kharas region and the Northern Cape Province. Educational and cultural exchange programmes are continuing on a regular basis between //Kharas region and the Northern Cape Province. It is our hope that this will be extended to other countries within the SADC region.

Honourable Speaker

In order to ensure that the Northern Cape's economy makes progress that equals the growth of the national economy, we will enhance our cooperation with national government. As a result, we retain our focus on the Upington Special Economic Zone as a critical enabler for growth in the province and will drive the process of this designation to its successful completion. The project has the potential to create some 3 500 permanent employment opportunities in Upington and a further 7 500 - 10 000 indirect employment opportunities in the Province and rest of South Africa.

Agbare Speaker

Ons is bewus daarvan dat genoegsame elektrisiteits opwelding en verspreiding noodsaaklik is vir meeste ekonomiese aktiwiteite en dit waarborg ook 'n goeie lewens gehalte vir ons mense. Gedurende die afgelope jaar het ons daadwerlike pogings aangewend om die energie krisis wat ons in die gesig staar aan te spreek. Hierdie sluit onder meer in dat Eskom ses projekte in die John Taolo Gaetsewe Distrik implimenteer het. Addisioneel hiertoe het hulle ook die kapasiteit by Paulputs en Gromis verhoog, die transmisielyne in

Kuruman opgradeer, die aansluitings vir die Onafhanklike Energie Voorsieners in Kronos prioritiseer en ook twee elektrifiserings projekte by twee Hidroelektriese aanlegte by Vanderkloof en Gariepdamme onderskeidelik.

Hierdie ingrypings sal verseker dat die provinsiale ekonomie 'n goeie hupstoot kry en sodoende sal dit lei tot die skep van vele noodsaaklike wersgeleenthede in die provinsie. Ons wil hiermee dus ons waardering uitspreek teenoor die Energie Verskaffer vir hul bydrae en bemagtigings inisiatiewe.

Honourable Speaker

In line with the overarching need for both economic and social transformation, our provincial infrastructure budget focuses on the provision and maintenance of infrastructure to promote equitable economic development, particularly in the less developed areas of the Province.

In this current financial year, the total Provincial Infrastructure expenditure incurred as at the end of January 2017 amounts to R2.005 billion for 652 projects.

It is important to highlight that Infrastructure development will remain a priority for the Province and the provincial infrastructure budget allocated for the 2017/18 MTEF, amounts to R 7.743 billion of which R 2.440 billion is allocated in the 2017/18.

Governance is also central to development outcomes in infrastructure, therefore provincial steering committee led by the Office of the Premier has been established to take responsibility for the consolidation of key infrastructure projects in the province, In addition a co-ordinating committee was formed with the national department of Public Enterprises to synchronise planning and embark on partnership with public enterprises to foster growth and development in the province. One of the focus areas is the Transport sector with the Buchberg Port Development and Port Nolloth Port operations and maintenance projects identified as key catalytic projects in this sector.

We are happy to announce that the commodity mix study for the Buchberg Port has been completed and submitted to the National Steering Committee on Ports for further processing and final decision making.

Honourable Speaker

To radically transform the Northern Cape economy we need to optimise localization to achieve rapid socio-economic transformation. As the Northern Cape we will continue to give our full support to enable our local population and local entrepreneurs to be able to compete, own and be allocated work. Local procurement and supply will always remain our top priority. We are therefore continuing our efforts to unlock the potential of SMMEs, cooperatives and township and rural enterprises.

Numerous SMMEs received support from the provincial government and other state entities over the period under review. This support was in the form of grant funding and related business development support services. A number of referrals were made to the larger funding institutions such as Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), National Empowerment Fund (NEF), the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and other institutions supporting SMMEs. To this end SMMEs or Cooperatives across the province will be

assisted with grant funding through the Economic Growth and Development Fund.

The Department will be moving forward in collaboration with SEDA and other stakeholders in implementing sector-specific incubators. Starting in the new financial year, we will commence with the implementation of the renewable energy virtual, mining and agriculture incubators. We are also exploring the feasibility of the establishment of an automotive incubator for the township economy.

We would also be working with SEDA to expand the CADET Programme which would mean that a CADET would be placed in 7 additional municipalities throughout the Province. This would ensure that SMME's can access services offered by the Department of Economic Development, SEDA and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA). This process would be preceded by intensive business management, financial management and other capacity building initiatives. Last year we hosted a successful Northern Cape SMME and Procurement Indaba as per our 2016 commitment. This platform enabled us to share important information on

youth empowerment, women empowerment and how we can bring the disabled to play a meaningful role in the mainstream of the provincial economy.

Honourable Members

The national broadband rollout plan aims to provide internet access to all South Africans, Pixley ka Seme in the Northern Cape district has been identified as a pilot site. It is anticipated that the rollout will begin this year.

Honourable Speaker

Water and sanitation forms the backdrop of the dignity we seek to provide to our people and we have, in conjunction with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), implemented a number of water and sanitation projects. A total of 704 young people have been recruited and are receiving training under the “Leaks Programme” of the DWS. The bulk water infrastructure projects were completed in Heuningsvlei, Norvalspont and the Kalahari East Pipeline. We have commenced with the bulk water supply projects for Phase 1 of the

Vaal Gamagara Bulk Water Supply, Loeriesfontein Bulk Water Supply, Winsorton to Holpan Bulk Water Supply and the Ritchie Bulk Water Treatment Works. These interventions are critical in eradicating the water supply backlogs to our communities and in unlocking economic potential in our Province. This should also be able to assist us in mitigating the effects of climate change and drought.

Honourable Speaker

We have established ourselves as an international destination for adventure seekers and extreme sport lovers. This status will be further amplified by our hosting of the worlds most talked about event for the next two years, Bloodhound Supersonic Car land speed attempt of 1607 kilometres per hour. This opportunity and the legacy of the Bloodhound Project hold the promise of unrivalled destination awareness, employment and SMME benefit including skills and infrastructure development. Government will support this initiative and ensure that it benefits the people of Mier. The top performing learners in Mathematics, Science, Tourism and English will be afforded the opportunity to

visit the Bloodhound Project in the United Kingdom as part of our stimulation for academic excellence.

Honourable Speaker

We are awaiting the finalisation of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) procurement and related phases to be finalised in order to develop opportunities for SMMEs in the SKA business model. We are grateful for the partnership established between our Province and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in the implementation of the MeerKAT initiative. We will continue to engage the DST and the SKA Project Office to ensure that opportunities for Northern Cape companies and SMMEs are truly explored and benefit the broader business community of the Northern Cape during the 2017/18 financial year.

Honourable Speaker

Comrade OR Tambo said that, **“The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future.”**

The majority of citizens in our Province are young people and therefore youth development must always be at the centre of our initiatives. We are in the process of finalizing the Youth Strategy for the Province subsequent to us hosting the 2016 Provincial Youth Summit. This plan seeks to develop young people in an integrated and holistic manner. Amongst other things, we will elevate the sanitary towel campaign to ensure that no girl child misses school because they cannot afford sanitary towels.

In responding to the skills deficit and unemployment challenges, we are exploring the feasibility of a centralized and single application point for bursaries, internships and learnerships.

Government will commit approximately R30 million towards youth development to provide young people with skills that will assist them to secure employment and establish their small businesses. This programme will provide skills to over 1000 young people across the province.

In addition, we will also lead a pilot initiative aimed at ensuring youth transition to employment, especially in

the Green Economy. The project is aimed at young women disenfranchised from economic opportunities that have matric or lower.

The Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform is placing unemployed agricultural graduates at land reform farms in the province. The aim of the programme is to ensure that the farms remain functional while allowing the graduates to grow into successful farm managers and farmers. These graduates mainly assist with project management, enterprise development and economics.

Honourable Speaker

We are aware of the economic and social plight of the people of Northern Cape and will not be side tracked from our task of expanding our social contract as guided by the Freedom Charter. We therefore strive continuously in delivering housing units to the most vulnerable and destitute people of the province. For the coming year; 21 885 planned sites will be delivered, and 1587 households will be provided with basic services. A

further 1 320 Breaking New Ground houses will be constructed.

As part of our empowerment programme, we will this year be accelerating the programme of handing over housing title deeds to beneficiaries. In the past the transfer of property was a challenge but we will accelerate it and transfer nine thousand three hundred (9300) properties in the 2017/18 financial year to their rightful owners.

In our commitment to restoring dignity to our military veterans through human settlements, a total of thirty eight (38) houses have been constructed in the Sol Plaatje Municipality and this is just the first of many more veterans that stand to benefit from this programme.

Honourable Speaker

The State President, Mr. Jacob Zuma in his state of the Nation Address (**SONA**) in February 2013, announced the Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme

(FLISP) that provides down payment assistance to qualifying households who have either secured mortgage finance or who wish to access mortgage finance in order to acquire a new house, an existing house (secondary market) or a vacant residential

For this reason, the department of COGHSTA will conduct road shows in the five districts in the new financial year aimed at sensitising the missing middle about the importance of FLISP so that they are encouraged to apply for. We encourage all citizens eligible for FLISP assistance that includes public servants, to make use of the programme in order to promote home ownership.

Honourable Speaker, friends and comrades

In our endeavour to address radical economic transformation and revitalise our rural economy, we need to build on the gains that we are making in our agricultural sector. The number of jobs in agriculture in the Northern Cape has stabilised around 45 000 over the last two years. The agricultural sector remains an

important employment sector by providing around 16% of total employment in the Province in comparison to the contribution of around 5.5% of agriculture on a national basis.

The recent good rains will assist in normalising the production of field- and horticultural crops and will bring alleviation in these commodity prices, but restocking of the livestock sector will lead to lower animal slaughtering and might lead to continued moderate to high increases in meat prices. However we are still concerned about the drought in the Hantam area and some parts of the Nama Khoi. Our Government has committed R 25 million to provide relief to those farmers.

Furthermore the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has therefore identified 5 mega-projects namely the Namakwa Irrigation Development with Onseepkans as the anchor, the Rooibos development and extract/aroma as a key value addition project, the Vanderkloof Fisheries and Cape trout farming, the Vaalharts Revitalisation with Ganspan as the anchor and the Vineyards development scheme.

The combined worth of these projects is R10 billion over the next 10-15 years and government requires strategic partners and investors to assist in the development of these mega-projects.

We must indicate that as part of revitalising Agriculture and the Agro-processing Value Chain; the successful implementation of the Agri Parks initiative is critical for improving inclusivity in the agricultural economy.

Agbare Speaker

Onderwys word aanvaar as die hoeksteen van elke ontwikkelende en welvaarende gemeenskap, samelewing en nasie. Dit is op hierdie voorafgaande bepaling dat die Noordkaapse Provinsiale Regering verbind is daaraan, en met die hulpbronne en middels tot ons beskikking, om te belê in die opvoeding en ontwikkeling van ons jong mense, beide in die skool en daarna.

Our congratulations are extended to the Grade 12 Class of 2016, which achieved a pass rate of 78.7%. The pass

rate indicates a considerable increase of 9.3% from 69.4% to a staggering 78.7%, which is the highest percentage increase in the country.

On behalf of the Provincial Executive, I wish to commend the class of 2016 for their hard work and dedication. The Northern Cape 2016 National Senior Certificate results has recorded the highest improvement nationally, and provincially, the highest pass percentage compared to the last 10 years.

An in-depth analysis of the performance of the 2016 Class has been completed and the department will implement programs to ensure that we improve overall learner performance across all grades. Regression in the National Senior Certificate overall performance is not an option. We therefore call on all stakeholders, especially organised labour and school governance formations to work with the department in both our individual and collective quest for continual improvement of quality public education.

We also thank all the parents, teachers, lecturers and administrators on the successful start of this academic

school year. Education is one of our key priorities and central to achieving Vision 2030 of the national Development Plan.

We also wish the learners well that are sitting for the supplementary matric examination that is currently underway. Your perseverance will be rewarded.

Honourable Speaker

If education is to be a success, children need to enter school with the ability to learn. Investment in early childhood development is the most powerful investment in human capital that a country can make, with compounding returns as skills beget skills. For this reason increased access of children in villages, rural areas and areas where community based ECD services are not available will be provided in Pixley ka Seme, John Taolo Gaetsewe, ZF Mgcawu through mobile facilities with a planned target of 1380 children in 2017/18.

Honourable Members

The process to resolve the challenge of the 80 schools currently on the asbestos belt is extensively being consulted with all key stakeholders and this is coordinated by the Office of the Premier. A comprehensive long term solution to this challenge will be formulated.

We remain fully aligned with the Infrastructure Norms and Standards Programme of the National Department of Basic Education and can report that all our schools have access to water, sanitation and electricity. The rehabilitation of school hostels continues and we remain devoted in ensuring that we provide a safe, clean and secure environment for learners living in these hostels.

Honourable Speaker

Our Sol Plaatjie University continues to do us proud. In 2016 the University produced its first group of around 65 graduates in the IT Diploma and Retail Management Diploma Programmes. They have managed to sustain the very good student performance in 2016 where students achieved just over 90% course-pass rate.

Added to this success; the university has this year enrolled a total of 1 030 students, which is a remarkable increase in student numbers admissions from a mere 124 in 2014.

Whilst student protest action did affect the academic year in 2016, there was only minor infrastructure damage to the campus facilities and the University managed to complete the academic year before the Christmas break. Whilst we recognise students' rights to raise issues of concern, however this remains unacceptable and we must condemn it in the strongest possible terms. We wish the university well with their academic programme.

Honourable Speaker

Our Government continues to explore various models in finding sustainable solutions to funding an opening up opportunities for the poor and middle class to embark on post school education and training. This is seen in our provision of apprenticeships, learnerships as well as bursaries. More and more of our young people in the Northern Cape have access to TVET colleges and

universities. **To his end we** can report that as this ANC led provincial administration, we have spent over **R69.5 million** on bursaries and study loans in the previous financial year and we envisage spending over **R 73.1 million** in this current financial year.

Government however needs the support from its industry partners to advance the lives of our youth and help grow this Province. We are therefore grateful to Independent Power Producers for their investment of almost R 6.1 million in bursaries thus assisting us to allow our rural youth to engage in tertiary studies. Through this initiative 250 learners benefitted to acquire a post-school matric qualification. Our gratitude also goes out to Minister Joemat-Pettersson, who continues with our development partners to elevate the needs of our youth by bringing these opportunities to them.

Honourable Speaker

The founding father of the New South Africa, President Mandela said **“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”**. We acknowledge the need to improve educational

outcomes and improve skills development programmes and we are glad to report that after consultation with key stakeholders, the draft of the Northern Cape Human Resource Strategy has been finalized and this will address industry specific needs and identify skills gaps. To this end, the Human Resource Development Governance structures including the Human Resource Development Council and the Provincial Skills Development Forum are functional and co-ordinate HRD activities in the Province. We have seen an increase in the number of Sectoral Education and Training Authorities establishing their footprint in the Province and to date there are 14 which are actively participating in skills development in the Province.

During the coming year we envisage to finalise agreements between the Sol Plaatje University, Department of Education and Hunan Universities from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Hunan Education Department relating to student-teacher exchange programmes and a scholarship program linked to scarce skills.

Honourable Members

Chapter 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa enjoins this democratic government to recognise and support the institution of traditional leadership. We therefore welcome in anticipation the finalization of the Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Bill during 2017. This Act will make provision for the following:

- the recognition of the Khoisan leaders, which is 22 years overdue,
- language, the San language did not receive the same attention as other African languages, and
- Collective Rights.

This piece of legislation will recognize the indigenous leaders and their communities.

Honorable Speaker, Honourable members

The Climate Change Risk, Vulnerability and Response Strategies of the Northern Cape districts as well as Air

Quality Management Plans are being developed and will be finalized during 2017.

In addition, it is intended that environmental aspects will be integrated into strategic and annual planning guidelines for provincial departments. The conservation of the environment will be a key factor when developing plans which stimulate job creation so as to prevent over utilization of natural resources in the province and thus sustaining ecosystems services for future generations.

Honourable Speaker

In a vast province such as the Northern Cape a well-run road building and maintenance programme is essential. I am pleased to report that the provincial government has made significant strides in addressing the daunting challenges presented by inadequate roads, as well as the lack of maintenance of infrastructure and public facilities. We will allocate resources, both financial and human, to address road infrastructure challenges in the following areas that include the upgrading of the MR950

between Heiso and Dithakong, phase 2 of the road between Garies and Hondeklipbaai, phase 2 of the Laxey to Rusfontein, Hotazel to Tsineng as well as Phase 5 of the Gatseledi to Maipeng road. The Department will also continue with the resealing projects on various roads in the Pixley Ka Seme and Namakwa Districts.

The Province is now in phase three of the Expanded Public Works Programme and has targeted to create one hundred one hundred and fifteen thousand five hundred and eighteen (115 518) work opportunities for a period of 5 years, which commenced during the 2014/2015 financial years already.

Overall the province created 34 773 work opportunities after two and a half years of which provincial departments stand at 29% and municipalities at 32%.

In this current financial year the provincial government has targeted sixteen thousand five hundred and nine (16 509) work opportunities for the infrastructure, environment and social sector and 5903 for municipalities. Environment, culture and social sectors continue to be the best performers in creation of work

opportunities. All municipalities qualified for incentive grant the previous financial year.

The province is required to create 24 077 work opportunities for the 2017/18 financial years

Honourable Speaker

Our success in achieving better health outcomes as a province depends on our collective ability to build strong and lasting relationships with all stakeholders across sectors to create cohesive communities and enabling environments that promote health.

Honourable Members

While there is progress being made in improving our health care provision in the province, there are still serious challenges that the Department is confronted with, that resulted in an initiative undertaken by EXCO under the stewardship of the Office of the Premier to assemble a team including the Provincial Treasury with the aim of improving the performance of the department and uprooting fraud and corruption within the department.

Part of our commitments is to ensure inter alia the following:

- There must be no clinic or hospital without medication.
- We will ensure that we build the administrative capacity in the Department of health
- That we recruit adequately qualified health professionals
- Put in place sound financial and accounting systems
- Deal with wastage of resources
- Re-inculcate the principles of Batho Pele amongst all public servants

Honourable Members

Substance abuse remains one of our greatest social challenges, especially as it is almost always linked to irresponsible and reckless behaviour. With the establishment of the first of its kind in patient treatment centre we will bring not only relief, but also hope to those fighting the demon of substance and alcohol dependency. The construction of the 40 bed public

treatment centre in the province has commenced and the treatment centre will provide holistic treatment services to persons, 14yrs and older, with substance abuse problems from across the province.

One of the high level objectives of the National Development Plan is the reduction of chronic poverty by 2030. Accordingly, the Northern Cape has profiled and identified the no income households in the Province as part of the Balelapa - War on Poverty Programme. The objective of this programme is the delivery of an integrated basket of services to identified no income households throughout the Province, with the aim of contributing to more sustainability for these families.

For the financial year 2017/2018, a target of 2 667 no income households will receive a range of services according to their individual development plans and be linked to employment and development opportunities.

Honourable Speaker

The goal of fighting crime, through the integrated efforts of Government, non- governmental organizations, business and the public sector continues to be high on

the agenda of Government. This is evident in the reduction of crimes relating to murder, common assault and robbery with aggravating circumstances.

Unfortunately sexual offences remain a concern with an increase of 141 cases. Crime remains a serious socio-economic challenge, which requires joint effort by all stakeholders to tackle and minimize it. It is for this reason that crime fighting remains one of Government's priorities.

In an effort to build community police relations and solicit the assistance of the community in the fight against crime, the Department has continued with the assessment of Community Safety Forums in the areas of Ubuntu, Emthanjeni, Carnarvon and Port Nolloth. These assessments are yielding positive results. We are also of the view that we need to support crime prevention initiatives undertaken by communities within the framework of the law. This includes working with Wanya Tsotsi and other community initiatives

Honourable Members

Transport is an integral part of the daily lives of the people of the Northern Cape Province. The movement of people, goods and services, in time and space, defines influences and impacts on the economic activity of our Province.

It is for this reason that the Department of Safety is working vigorously to ensure that subsidized public transport is made available to all districts within the Province.

Honourable Members

The refurbishment of the Northern Cape Theatre has been completed and is being productively utilised by our people.

During the coming year Community Libraries with free public internet access will increase from 150 to 165.

The Twinning Agreement between the Northern Cape and Kharas Region in Namibia will be escalated to explore sport inter-action, culture and heritage as well as education enhancement through the development of indigenous languages such as !Nxu, Nama and !Khwe.

Honourable Speaker

I want to conclude by stating that the overarching strategic objective of the ANC led democratic government is to change the lives of all South Africans for the better. As we work to accelerate radical socio-economic transformation, we remember Nelson Mandela's words, when he says **“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity, it is an act of justice. It is the protection of fundamental human rights. Everyone, everywhere, has the right to live with dignity – free from fear and oppression, free from hunger and thirst, and free to express themselves and associate at will.”**

Ours is now to uphold these values by working together in a constructive manner and to unite as one people for the betterment of all people.

Lastly I want to thank all those who continue to dream and work hard to ensure that we build a society where all people can live meaningful lives, in peace and harmony.

I would like to thank my family for understanding my difficult choice of a life in service to the people of the

Northern Cape and beyond. Their support is what keeps me grounded and going.

I would to thank the team of dedicated MECs and Executive Mayors, for their commitment, collaboration and loyal service to the people of this wonderful Province.

I would like to thank the Director General, my Special Advisors and all the staff in the Office of the Premier for their hard work and support.

I would like to thank members of this legislature for holding us accountable.

We are not perfect. We value your guidance and criticism.

Setting our differences aside when necessary we can work together to transform our Province into a splendid example for the Country and our people. Working together we can do more.

I thank you

Kealoboga

Baie dankie

Enkosi