

Premier Chupu Mathabatha: Limpopo 2015 State of the Province Address

24 Feb 2015

State of the Province Address (SoPA) delivered by the Premier of Limpopo Province Honourable Chupu Mathabatha to the fifth Limpopo Provincial Legislature in Lebowakgomo

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker,
Honourable members of the legislature and the NCOP; Members of the Executive Council, Executive Mayors and Mayors of our local municipalities; Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Acting Director General and Heads of Departments; Provincial Commissioner of the Police, The leadership of the ruling party, the African National Congress, Leaders of opposition parties, Chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders; Our esteemed Majesties, Kings and Royal Highnesses, Khosi-khulu ya Vhavenda, Vho Toni Mphephu Ramabulana; Leadership of CONTRALESA, President in particular, Kgoši Setlamorago Thobejane, Ngwato wa Bauba; Former MPs and MPLs, Stalwarts and veterans of our struggle, Heads of our Chapter nine and chapter ten institutions; Leadership of religious communities, His Grace, the Right Reverend, Dr. Bishop BE Lekganyane; Leadership of organised business and labour, Youth, women, community leaders and media representatives; Distinguished guests, Comrades, Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning! Thobela! Goeie more! Ndi matsheloni! Avuxeni!

It is indeed a humbling experience to stand before you, to deliver the second State of the Province Address to this fifth Legislature of Limpopo Province.

It is for the first time, since I assumed this responsibility, that I am addressing this august House without the section 100 Administrators looking over our heads. We are indeed appreciative of the work they have done, and I will expand on this later in my address.

Madam Speaker,

Our uninterrupted march towards a united, democratic, non- sexist, non-racial and prosperous society is, indeed, on course.

Following the fearless battles waged by our warrior kings, against land dispossession, the journey started, in earnest, with the formation of the oldest liberation movement, the African National Congress 103 years ago.

The historic milestone of this journey was the 1955 Congress of the People held in Kliptown. United in their diversity, the oppressed Black people, toiling African majority and White compatriots declared to the world:

- that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people

- that our people had been robbed of their birth right to land, liberty and peace by forms of government founded on injustice and inequality
- that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and equal opportunities
- that only a democratic state, based on the will of the people, can secure their birth -right without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

We stand here today, 60 years down the line, as proud descendants and heirs to a great legacy of unity, freedom and democracy. A legacy inherited from generations of great warrior men and women who never retreated from battle even in the face of detention, persecution and death itself.

Madam Speaker,

As we celebrate the 60 years anniversary of the adoption of this Charter, we are inspired by the significant inroads that we have made over the past 21 years of democracy in our country.

We can say without fear of contradiction that, we have built a South Africa that truly belongs to all who live in it, Black and White;

Through institutions such as democratically elected parliament, provincial legislatures, local government councils and ward committees, the people are indeed governing. Public Participation is at the centre of our policy and law making processes.

The democratic government has without doubt improved access to quality education and healthcare services.

Together, we have managed to expand access to housing and other basic services such as electricity, water and sanitation to millions of our people. The struggle to share in the country's wealth is being intensified at all fronts.

We can now proudly proclaim that the society envisaged in the Freedom Charter is within reach. The people shall share in the country's wealth: Limpopo Development Plan, LDP.

Madam Speaker,

During the last State of the Province, we indicated that we have begun a process of developing the Provincial Development Plan.

Since then we engaged in rigorous consultative process with various stakeholders to establish a common ground on how to move Limpopo forward. The stakeholders included public entities, private sector, organized labour and civil society.

The process culminated into an all-inclusive Provincial Development Summit towards the end of last year. We are therefore happy to report here today that the Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) has been finalised.

We now have a blue print to guide and put our province on a higher trajectory of economic growth and development.

Worth noting is that in the development of this Plan, we were guided by the precepts of the National Development Plan when it says: "Active citizenry and social activism is necessary for democracy and

development to flourish. The state cannot merely act on behalf of the people, it has to act with the people, working together with other institutions to provide opportunities for the advancement of all communities”

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in this process and made sure that it becomes a success that it is.

Bagologo ba opile kgomo lenaka ge bare tau tša hloka seboka di šitwa ke nare e hlotša. Ke nnete gore sedikwa ga se na bogolo.

Madam Speaker,

We are convinced that the Limpopo Development Plan reflects our shared vision and strategic imperatives towards poverty reduction, elimination of social inequality and a creation of sustainable jobs in our province.

We aim to achieve this through sustainable socio-economic, infrastructural and institutional development. We will do this with a view to achieve radical economic and social transformation.

With regard to economic development and transformation, we identified strategic programmes across the mining, agriculture and tourism sectors. Our fundamental goal is to ensure an industrialization programme through mineral beneficiation, development of agro-processing cluster and logistics.

In addition, we have re-affirmed the role of SMME's and Cooperatives in the productive sectors as a critical component towards radical economic transformation.

Honorable Members,

The Limpopo Development Plan has also identified specific economic regions that have a significant potential to accelerate the industrialisation process in the province. These include, but not limited to Polokwane, Lephalale, Tubatse, Tzaneen and Makhado-Musina corridor as the areas of priority in terms of integrated human settlements and economic development.

Madam Speaker,

We are happy to note that there is already a significant number of economic projects and infrastructure investments that are being implemented in some of these economic regions.

They include the Presidential Strategic Infrastructure Programme targeting both Waterberg and Sekhukhune District Municipalities, and the envisaged Special Economic Zones earmarked for implementation in both Greater Tubatse and Musina Local Municipalities.

Madam Speaker,

Limpopo Development Plan also acknowledges that a critical condition for job creation is improved levels of education and skills development. Human Resource Development is therefore identified as one of the key priorities. In this regard, we have identified the required skills to support both social and economic development in the province.

We have since developed strategic partnerships between government, the private sector and educational institutions to ensure a strategic coordination of human resource development in the province.

In the same vein, preparations for the launching of the Limpopo Human Resource Development Council are at an advanced stage. This Council will be advising the Provincial Government on matters related to skills development.

Madam Speaker,

Underpinning the Limpopo Development Plan is 10 High-Level Development Targets to be attained by 2020. These targets are:

- the achievement of economic growth rate of 3% revised in the light of the current performance of the global economy
- the creation of 429 000 jobs
- Increased access to basic water from 83% in 2014 to 90%
- Increased access to electricity supply from 83% in 2014 to 90%
- Increased access to sanitation from 43% in 2014 to 50%
- Increased Matric Pass Rate from 72% in 2014 to at least 80%
- Increased Geographic Gross Product contribution to the national GDP from 7.15% in 2014 to 9%;
- Reduction of the unemployment rate from 16.9% in 2014 to 14%
- Increased average life expectancy from 58.3 in males in 2014 to 60, and 62.5 in females in 2014 to 65, and above all
- Reduction of inequality in terms of Gini-Coefficient from 0.61 in 2014 to 0.50.

Madam Speaker,

We believe that these 10 High-level Development targets require a detailed programme of action and appropriate resource allocations for their successful implementation. When we leave this Legislature today, sector departments, Municipalities and other State Institutions must go review and align their strategic plans and budget with this Limpopo Development Plan.

The Limpopo Development Summit directed government to provide an annual feedback to the people of our province on the implementation of this Plan. We therefore commit ourselves to fulfill this mandate.

Madam Speaker,

It is also worth mentioning that in crafting this plan, we were alive to the visionary words of one of the African organic intellectuals, Ben Oгри. I quote “All great cultures renew themselves by accepting the challenges of their times, forge their vision and perfect their character. We must transform ourselves, or perish”.

We must make this Plan a living document, for as Amilcar Cabral said “...the people are not fighting for ideas, for things in anyone’s head. They are fighting to win the material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children”.

It is also in this context that we call upon all the people of Limpopo, public servants, workers and business alike, to support and promote the Limpopo Development Plan.

Madam Speaker,

Limpopo has become a destination of choice for international investors. During our trade and investment mission to the People's Republic of China in October 2014, we signed memorandums of Agreement with biggest investors.

The first memorandum of Agreement was signed with Hong Kong Mining Exchange Company (Hoi Mor) for the establishment of South Africa Energy Metallurgical Base Project.

This Project whose investment value is estimated at R38.8 billion, will be based in the Musina Special Economic Zone, and will create 19 000 direct jobs over a period of three years. The Hoi Mor investment will result in beneficiation that integrates various resources and reduce the export of raw materials in favour for exporting beneficiated goods.

In the same vein, the South Africa's Women Investment Holdings has entered into a joint venture agreement with Jidong Development Group and China Africa Development Fund for a R1.65 billion investment into cement manufacturing which will be based in Thabazimbi. The construction started in 2014 and is due to be completed next month.

I have no doubts, whatsoever in my mind, that these investments will add value to our efforts of expanding the productive capacity of our economy.

Honorable Members,

The recent Labour Force Survey by Statistics South Africa indicates that employment in the province has increased by 67 000 more permanent jobs. In the last quarter alone, the province has created 29 000 permanent jobs.

In essence, we have reduced the unemployment rate by a percentage point from 16.9 to 15.9 in the intervening period. The expanded unemployment rate declined on a quarterly basis by 1.2 percentage points to 37.2%.

There is therefore no doubt that we are faring better, in creating more decent and sustainable jobs for our people. Nevertheless, more work still needs to be done.

The land shall be shared amongst those who work it.

Madam Speaker,

Agriculture remains one of the key drivers for the development and growth of our economy. It is in this context that we are putting in place deliberate measures and focused investment in the sector.

As we promised last year, we opened Madzivhandila and Tompi Seleka Agricultural Colleges at the beginning of this year. The colleges are now fully functional and operational. They have a student enrolment of no less than 140.

The curriculum content has been restructured and developed to produce agricultural economists, extension officers, pasture and soil scientists, agronomists and horticulturalists.

The curriculum is also integrated with other disciplines offered by the University of Limpopo and the University of Venda. This will also create a platform for the sharing of information and skills. The farmers, who are already practicing, will be able to go to these colleges to increase their knowledge and skills base.

Madam Speaker,

The Fetša Tlala program is one measure we have introduced in agriculture to ensure food security and sustainable livelihoods. Nevertheless, the implementation of this programme has seen some challenges in terms of management, coordination and monitoring.

I have since instructed the MEC for agriculture to appoint a task team to help deal with these challenges. In this regard, we call upon all our social partners, traditional leaders, community leaders and subsistent farmers alike to work with the MEC and her team.

In the next Financial Year, the focus will be on the revitalization of irrigation schemes, construction of pack houses and revival of existing Fresh Markets.

Honourable Members,

Road infrastructure is a strategic stimulant for economic growth and development. It is in this context that we are investing more resources to roads infrastructure development and maintenance. In the past five years alone we have managed to construct about 21 bridges, upgraded from gravel to tar about 407 kms of road network. We have also rehabilitated over 173 kms of tarred road network.

We have put aside an amount of R3.187 billion to upgrade from gravel to tar 18 projects over the next three years. These projects will include the so-called “Bermuda” roads that were started in the past and were not concluded due to budgetary constraints. The distance to be covered will be no less than 344 kms.

The doors of learning and culture shall be opened for all.

Madam Speaker,

We started the year 2015 with a blend of good and sad news in the education sector. Whilst we were still celebrating an improvement in the performance of Grade 12, Class of 2014, we lost an outstanding educator and a selfless servant of the people, Mme Thembisile Nwedamutswu. May her Soul rest in peace!

Although for a shorter period, as an MEC for education, Mme Nwedamutswu, has without doubt, played a pivotal role in changing the landscape of education in our province. In her honor and memory, we urge Grade 12, Class of 2015, to settle for no less than 80% pass rate.

Honourable Members,

Last year we committed ourselves to ensuring that we have more well-qualified teachers for our children, proper educational facilities and timely delivery of text books. We are therefore pleased to report to our people that we have covered much ground in this regard.

In order to capacitate and equip Educators and Curriculum Advisors with a deeper knowledge of both content and teaching methodology, particularly in Mathematics, Science, Technology, Commerce and Language subjects, we have trained over 1060 Educators through the Continuous Professional Development Programme.

Our plans for this year is to place a further 300 Educators and 80 Curriculum Advisors on the same training programme. Our commitment to early childhood development has seen us increase Public Primary Schools that offer Grade R to 2 340, and we intend increasing this number to 2 485 in the next Financial Year.

Honorable Members,

As a measure of promoting effective learning, we have made a provision to expand Scholar Transport to cover no less than 21 000 learners.

Madam Speaker,

We will continue to provide all no-fee paying schools with nutritional meals. Besides isolated incidents of food poisoning, we have experienced last year, leaner attendance continues to improve as a result of this programme.

In the light of the recent challenges experienced in the implementation of this programme, I have since instructed the Acting MEC for education to review the current model of supplying food to schools in order to ensure safety, efficiency and effectiveness.

This review must also ensure the participation of as many capable suppliers and other relevant social partners as possible.

Madam Speaker,

The government will also ensure the eradication of inappropriate sanitation facilities and unsafe school infrastructure. This will also include repairs to storm damaged schools and provision of new schools, new classrooms, laboratories, libraries and more importantly, water.

I have got do doubt that this will go a long way in ensuring that our children learn in a more conducive environment.

Honorable Members,

We have completely closed the chapter of delays in the delivery of textbooks. 1.7 million Learners have already been provided with textbooks for this current academic year.

Once more, we are making a clarion call to school principals, educators, learners, parents, and other relevant stakeholders to help us with the retrieval of text books at the end of every academic year. Let us continue to make the education of our children a societal issue.

Universal access to primary healthcare Madam Speaker,

Last year we reported that we had adopted a Health Turnaround Strategy which is aimed at addressing the many challenges that had become characteristic of our primary healthcare system in the province.

In line with this Turnaround Strategy, I have also undertaken a number of unannounced visits to some of our hospitals in order to get a better picture of services and conditions that our people are exposed to.

What I found during these unannounced visits, confirms that we were right in coming up with a strategy that will help us have a focused attention to this important sector. As we promised, we have since purchased and handed over 50 state-of-the-art ambulances to our healthcare facilities across the province.

Without doubt, these ambulances have brought much relief to Emergency Medical Services in the province. We plan to buy 50 more ambulances in the next financial year so that more lives could be saved.

We have also spent no less than R145 million to purchase and repair critical equipment's for the hospitals in need.

These include boilers, autoclave machines, laundry machines, theater equipment, mortuary and kitchen refrigerators, and so on. In September last year, we managed to send 110 students to Cuba to study medicine.

We are currently running an advertisement, inviting interested young people for another opportunity to study medicine in Cuba. The closing date is this Friday.

Madam Speaker,

The fight against HIV/AIDS is well on track. The Provincial AIDS Council, chaired by the Premier himself, has since been revived. We have also established a dedicated unit in the Office of the Premier to support the work of the Council.

The directorate will obviously go a long way towards enhancing the work of the Council, and more importantly, add value to our fight against the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

In the same vein, we implore on all Mayors of our municipalities to consider this measure to intensify the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Honourable Members,

In collaboration with the national Department for Social Development, we are making inroads in the fostering sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation. We have thus far empowered 12 Community Nutrition Development Centres to manage and distribute food to needy individuals across the province.

This initiative will benefit no less than 2 400 people. In the next financial year, we will increase Community Development Centres from 12 to 17 in the province. This will obviously go a long way toward improving conditions of those living below the poverty line.

The people shall govern.

Madam Speaker,

As we have always said, local government is the strategic centre of gravity in terms of direct delivery of basic services to our people. It is in this context that last year we made a commitment to identify and support struggling municipalities to be able to respond to identified challenges.

If the recent local government audit outcomes is anything to go by, our interventions have begun to bear fruits. We have reduced the number of disclaimers from 9 in 2012/13 to 6 in 2013/2014. We have also reduced the number of qualified audit opinions from 18 in 2012/13 to 10 in 2013/14.

Even more pleasing is the fact that we have seen an increase in the unqualified audit opinions from 0 in 2012/13 to 12 in 2013/14. Nevertheless, we believe that we can do much better.

Madam Speaker,

Despite our interventions, we are still faced with the challenge of municipalities which are unable to spend their Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG).

By December last year we had only managed to spend a mere 26.2% of the allocated MIG budget. This is obviously unacceptable. The Department of CoGHSTA and the Provincial Infrastructure Development Hub that we have established in the Provincial Treasury last year are working on a mechanism to help municipalities to improve in this regard.

I must however congratulate Bela-Bela Local Municipality and Greater Giyani Local Municipality which are doing relatively well on their MIG spending.

By December last year, Bela-Bela Local Municipality had spent 55% of its MIG budget whilst Greater Giyani Local Municipality had spent 78% of its MIG budget. You have indeed done us proud!

The implementation of the Back-to-Basics Programme as launched by the president must also be implemented without delay

There shall be housing for all.

Madam Speaker,

Our programme to provide shelter to our people remains on track. Over the past 21 years of democracy, in Limpopo alone, we have built no less than three hundred thousand houses, benefitting about 1.4 million households.

In an effort to ensure that where one lives, is where one works, recreates, go to church, go school and do everything relating to life, the long-awaited Bendor Extension 100 project has finally commenced. The project is poised to benefit 756 households and business people.

The people, who ordinarily would not qualify for housing loans from commercial banks will finally benefit and have houses of their own - here I am referring to those people who are too rich for an RDP house, yet poor for a mortgage bond.

In the same spirit, we will be handing over the Seshego Community Residential Units project to the deserving beneficiaries in the next two months. This is a paradigm shift from the single sex hostel to family units which will assist in our social cohesion agenda.

There is no doubt that the concept of integrated human settlement has indeed begun to take shape.

Madam Speaker,

Notwithstanding these milestone achievements, we regret the late appointment of contractors for the houses which were to be built in this current financial year. This was due to the introduction a procurement pilot project that the section 100 Administrators wanted to implement in Limpopo, a decision which has since been reconsidered.

In this regard, we have agreed with the National Department of Human Settlements that the money should be redirected. However, this will not affect the 10 500 units allocated in this current financial year.

These units which could not be completed before the end of the financial year will be added to the 8 500 units targeted for the 2015/2016 financial year. In essence, by the end of the next financial year we would have built 19 000 housing units, for we cannot deprive our people of an opportunity to have a roof over their heads.

I have since established a task team composed of CoGHSTA, Provincial Treasury and LEDA. This team will work together with the national task team appointed by the Minister to help fast-track procurement, and ensure enhancement of project management and implementation in CoGHSTA.

Madam Speaker,

The provision of water is an integral part of our strategy to ensure economic development and poverty eradication. Although we have provided no less than 86% of our people with access to basic water, a lot more still needs to be done.

To this end, I have appointed a Provincial Multi-Stakeholder Task Team to help develop a medium-term Water Resources and Services Strategy. This strategy will help with the planning, management and allocation of water to support both economic social and environmental needs of our province.

Underpinning this Strategy will be a mechanism for bulk infrastructure projects that support mining and commercial agriculture, provision of water to households, management of waste water treatment works and a sustainable availability of water.

We have completed and launched De Hoop Dam in Sekhukhune last year, the dam will provide Sekhukhune district, Polokwane and Mogalakwena municipalities with water.

The focus for this year will be to speed up reticulation of water to households so that our people can enjoy clean water.

During the Siyahlola visit last year in Greater Giyani Local Municipality, the President launched water reticulation plant to the value of R77, 4 million. 55 villages will benefit from this programme, and Lepelle Northern Water has since been appointed as an implementing agent. This project should also help to respond to water supply challenges the people of Giyani have experienced for some time now.

Madam Speaker,

The MEC for CoGHSTA has, on the other hand been mandated, to coordinate an implementation plan to Wastewater Treatment Works in consultation with relevant stakeholders. This Plan should be concluded before May 2015.

We are also convening a Provincial Water and Sanitation Summit in the next two months to help find long lasting solutions to the problems of water.

Honourable Members,

Over the past 21 years, we have provided over 87% of our people with electricity. This has significantly improved the conditions of living of our people.

Nevertheless, in the recent past the country has experienced challenges in terms of electricity supply. This is largely attributed to the capacity of Eskom to meet the energy demands of our growing economy.

In response to this challenge, Eskom has reduced every consumer's supply as equitable as possible through load shedding programme. This has obviously affected the economy in many ways than one, and it is therefore critical that we should start looking at alternative energy generation means.

In this regard, we should invest lot of resources in research and development especially in the area renewable energy sources such as solar heating.

We are however encouraged by the announcement of the Minister of Energy that Eskom is expediting its programme of building the Medupi Power Station, which is scheduled to add additional megawatts to the grid starting from June this year.

In the same vein we call on our people to use electricity sparingly in their homes and businesses.

Honourable Members,

80% of our population is under traditional leadership. This institution plays a major role in the preservation of our culture, tradition as well as the development of our economy.

Given the challenges we are normally faced with, that require wise words of counsel from traditional leaders, I have requested the President to release Kgoši Mohlamme Mathebe, the former Ambassador of South Africa to Zambia, to come assist us in this regard.

He has since been appointed the special advisor to the Premier on traditional matters. I also call upon other senior traditional leaders to give him necessary support. As a measure of supporting the institution of traditional leadership, we will purchase vehicles for traditional leaders over the next medium term period.

The MECs of CoGHSTA and Provincial Treasury, in consultation with the House of Traditional Leaders will work-out a mechanism in terms of which these vehicles will be allocated to traditional leaders over this period.

Madam Speaker,

Of particular note, is the fact that our traditional leaders can finally have Medical Aid. We implore on all those who have not yet applied to take advantage of this opportunity. Other tools of trade to help traditional leaders perform their function, is work in progress.

There shall be peace, security and comfort for all.

Madam Speaker,

The fight against crime and corruption remain a top priority of our government. According to the recent South African Institute for Race Relations study which focused on murder, robbery and assault, Limpopo remains the safest province to live in.

Honourable Members,

As part of implementing our Provincial Crime Prevention Strategy, we have been engaged in various programmes that are aimed at squeezing crime and criminals out of our communities and institutions. These programmes include amongst others, community mobilization, crime awareness campaigns and community education.

Honorable Members,

The war against crime can only be won through effective partnerships between the police, the community and the government.

Communities must isolate and expose criminals and their criminal activities, the police must effectively and diligently investigate crimes and arrest criminals and the government must and will support both the community efforts and the work of the police.

The same partnership is required in dealing with corruption, both in the private and the public sector. While we commit to act harshly against corruption, we can only succeed if members of the public report corrupt activities. We have put in place sufficient legislative and institutional mechanisms for members of the public to report corruption.

Those who want to report corruption anonymously can make use of the Premier's Hotline and related facilities available at our various departments and municipalities.

Honourable Members,

As I have alluded to earlier on, the section 100 Administrators have since left the province. We are now in section 100 (1) (a) of the constitution until the end of next month. During this period, we are only required to report to national government on outstanding areas to be monitored on, whilst the affected MECs and HODs regain their original legislative powers.

As we meet here today, we can proudly say that Limpopo is a much better place than it was before December 2011. We are delighted that the financial position regarding cash, solvency and budget has been stabilised.

There is no doubt that there is a significant improvement in the administration and corporate governance of the province, especially the financial management systems.

In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to thank:

- the President for the leadership provided,
- the Cabinet Inter-Ministerial Committee on section 100 (1) (b) for vigilant monitoring,
- the NCOP for the oversight role they played, and more importantly
- the Administrators for the good work done.

As a province, we have also taken much valued lessons from the work of the Team. To that effect, we would like to once again commit to do everything in our power to ensure that the province does not return to the December 2011 situation.

The process of handing over all disciplinary cases to the provincial administration by the section 100 Administrators is well underway. This will enable the provincial administration to proceed with these disciplinary cases.

In respect of Accounting Officers, disciplinary hearings are being conducted accordingly.

I wish and hope with confidence that this matter will have to be finalized as soon as it is reasonably possible. This situation where we have had to suspend officials of government en masse is unprecedented and has had detrimental impact on the stability of government.

It is in this context that once more, we call on the private sector to desist from acts that could potentially corrupt public servants. Public Servants should equally resist the temptation to be corrupted. This is because in any act of corruption, there is a corrupter and a corruptee.

The message is, as a people we must avoid to live beyond our means. In the same vein, the public sector union who are signatories to the Public Service Charter, organs of civil society and the community at large must join government in our fight against this scourge.

Madam Speaker,

Former President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo correctly said that “a nation that does not nurture its youth does not deserve its future”.

It is for this reason that we are focusing much of our attention and resources on youth development programmes and initiatives.

Last year, following our commitment in this House, we hosted the Provincial Art and Culture Indaba to look into ways to support the creative industry, and more importantly, to unlock job and other opportunities for the young people of our province.

In the same vein we must continue to support our teams in various professional leagues. We appreciate those in the private sector who have heeded our call to support our teams; we urge them to continue doing so. We also call on other corporate entities to come on board.

The Department is hard at work with the young people in the creative industry to support and help them realise their goals.

Honourable Speaker,

Just last week we hosted the Draft National Youth Policy Consultative Summit. The Summit was aimed at sourcing stakeholder inputs into the draft National Youth Policy 2015/2020.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank young people of our province for their active participation during this summit. Your participation was not in vain, your efforts will amongst others; help assist us to integrate youth development into mainstream of government policies, programmes and budget.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members;

I wish to congratulate the people of Malamulele for taking a decision to suspend their action. However legitimate their complaints could be, we condemn in strongest possible terms disruption of schools and the education of children in the name of service delivery protests.

We also condemn the destruction of property and infringement of people’s rights to receive services as a way to protest. As the Provincial Government, we support the proposal by Minister Pravin Gordon to the Municipal Demarcation Board for the redetermination of municipal boundaries.

It is in this context that we urge and appeal to the people of Malamulele to support this process and to pursue their demands within the confines of the law.

Madam Speaker,

I wish to invite the House to join me in congratulating Mr. Serobi Maja for being elected the Chairperson of the University of Venda Council. We wish you good luck in your new assignment to help the University to become the Centre of excellence in research and knowledge production.

Madam Speaker,

It is in our hands to build a Limpopo of our dreams. The choices we make or avoid to make today will certainly determine our tomorrow and our collective destiny.

- We must today choose to work hard and harder so that we can all live a better tomorrow
- We must today choose healthy lifestyles so that tomorrow we do not spend our hard earned cash on avoidable healthcare expenses
- We must indeed chose to work together for the common good of our province and her people.

As Chairman Mao Tse-Tung says “Our duty is to hold ourselves responsible to the people. Every word, every act and every policy must conform to the people’s interest, and if mistakes occur, they must be corrected – that is what being responsible to the people means”.

Let us commit ourselves to working together, sparing neither strength nor effort, until a dream of a ‘better life for all’ is realised.

Mushumo kha u shavhe zwanda. Molete sekuba!

Province:

Limpopo

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