

**BUDGET SPEECH ON VOTE 13 PRESENTED AT
THE BOKONE BOPHIRIMA PROVINCIAL
LEGISLATURE**

MEC MANKETSI TLHAPE (MPL)

**MEC FOR RURAL, ENVIRONMENT AND
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (READ)**

03 MAY 2016



read

Department:

**Rural, Environment and Agricultural
Development**

North West Provincial Government

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Legislature,
Tonakgolo ya porofense ya Bokone Bophirima, Rre Supra Obakeng
Ramoeletsi Mahumapelo,
Honourable Members of the House and Colleagues in the Executive Council,
Leaders of the ruling party and other political parties,
Magosi a rona a a tlotlegang,
Esteemed Executive Mayors, Speakers and Councillors,
Representatives of our entity, the North West Parks Board,
Organised Agriculture, Wildlife industry Formations and Unions,
Our Farm Workers & Farm Dwellers Forums, Labour and Sectoral unions,
Respective Councils of Stakeholders in our rural communities,
Community and Faith Based Organisations,
Fellow Comrades and Friends,
Esteemed Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Baagi botlhe ba Porofense ya Bokone Bophirima,
Bagaetsho dumelang

Madam Speaker, the Budget Vote Speech we table today in this house, heralds a manifestation of the future we have come to define when we first ushered in, a democratic government which continues to shape our value proposition in what we endeavour as a collective within the department. Gompieno re lefapha le le theilweng ka tsepamo le ngangatelelo ya go tliša ditirelo tša tšhabololo ya magae, tškolologo le temothuo mme e bile tšholofelo e le go tokafatsa matshelo a baagi ba rona ba Bokone Bophirima ka go natlafatsa moruo.

Premier Supra Ramoetsi Mahumapelo distinctly pronounced through the 2016 State of the Province Address that 2016 is the **"Year of Advancing People's power"**. This means that our efforts as government should be pivotal on deliverables that rise to bait on the people's aspirations.

As team READ aside from the above, we are immeasurably put to the test by the Minister in the Presidency during his Budget Vote Speech this year, that as we celebrate our 22 years of Democracy and 20 years of the signing of our Constitution, we should ask ourselves whether the programs that we adopt and implement truly improve the quality of life of the citizens. It goes without saying that we need to work hard and set our eyes on rebuilding confidence in the economy as well as re-igniting dynamic, responsive and inclusive economic growth.

Madam Speaker, I will provide an overview of the strategic approach by the department in response to Premier Supra Mahumapelo on food security in the province. Statistics South Africa 2015 report stated that at least 14 million poverty stricken families do not know where their next meal is going to come from.

The year 2015 was declared the driest year in South Africa over a century and this has adversely affected the state of food security. The National Crop Estimates Committee bears out an anticipated harvest of just over 7 million tons this season which is 29% lower than the previous year.

It will be folly on our part to overlook the devastating effects of drought hence we responded to this challenge in our province. A total of 21 717 farmers were assessed following the declaration of the disaster by Hon Premier. R25 million was appropriated for this program through funds reprioritisation process. As we speak Madam Speaker, 15 915 qualifying farmers emergency received fodder relief assistance across the all affected areas, 23 boreholes were sighted, drilled and equipped, over 500 000 litres of water was tankered to distress farms for livestock. Besides this, 221 households were bolstered up on food security programs and 96 awareness events were conducted on drought mitigation to our farmers.

Furthermore, we recently marshalled a rewarding Provincial Dialogue with the financial institutions. I am gratified to make public that key decisions were taken during that conversation to establish a Provincial Task Team on Financing Agriculture. The team will examine and advance concrete remedial options that will have our farmers ready for the next planting system. This, madam speaker paints a picture that reaffirms that immense work is at hand for the department in sustaining food security.

Motlotlegi Mmusakgotla, I would like to mirror, President Jacob Zuma's sentiments to say *"A resilient and fast growing economy is at the heart of our radical economic transformation agenda and our National Development Plan (NDP)"*.

Now, in forging ahead the delivery of the NDP, the 5th Provincial Administration has developed a vision towards Repositioning, Rebranding, Renewal of Bokone Bophirima anchored on five concretes which include: ACT (Agriculture, Culture and Tourism) VTSD (Villages, Townships and Small Dorpies), RHR (Reconciliation, Healing and Renewal), Setsokotsane as well as Saamwerk-saamtrek philosophy. Our role as the spear-header of the ACT strategy is to ensure that we bring in reforms in addressing food and nutrition security, market access and development that will lead towards the desired economic growth.

Motlotlegi Mmusakgotla in consonance with the "Food and Nutrition Security Strategy", we are hard at work to ensure that we create ways for our people to feed themselves and that our province is food and nutrition secure. We have once more established 48 vegetable tunnels in Ngaka Modiri Molema District through this programme.

As team READ, our visibility in the Tswaing Local Municipality during March to extend food security efforts and launch the Community Seedbank Project as part of our Annual Extension and Advisory Services Conference did not go unnoticed. Work has been done to erect food garden tunnels for the 67 households who are mainly elderly people, orphans and child headed families and 11 institutions. The programme will be extended to supply an additional 126 households with vegetable seed packets in order for food security efforts to bear fruits. A total of R3 million was spent on this project.

Bangwe ba kile ba ipotsa gore tota seedbank e ke eng. Ka boripana fela, re le lefapha re busetsa mokgwa ole wa bagolo ba rona wa go boloka sata mo magaeng. Re eletsa go bona baagi ba rona ba ka kgona go refosanya ka sata magareng ga bona le go boloka ka kakaretso gore re seka ra iphitlhela ka letsatsi lengwe re na le kgwetlho ya go tlhoka disata tse di botlhokwa. Mo kgolong ya yona, polokelo eno ya sata ya merafe e tla dirisana le di Agriparks tsa rona jaaka Springbokpan go bolokela sata go ya pele. We will in this financial year ensure that many of our communities benefit from these food garden projects as well as community seedbanks.

During the month of May we will set in motion the Mazista Food Security Project in the Kgetleng Local municipality. The project will in the main comprise of a communal vegetable garden and an indigenous chickens initiative which will benefit 20 households. The program will be further rolled out further to the rest of the province where 200 of these tunnels will be established. Amongst the beneficiaries is the MKVA where 19 of their members will benefit in the Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality from Jagersfontein farm. This will go a long way in addressing the food and nutrition security needs of the identified households as well as attending to the Premier's "Poverty Eradication Bowl" through in a "Biekie Biekie Maak Meer" approach.

Honourable Speaker, one renowned writer Joseph Joubert once said: *"Agriculture for an honourable and high-minded man is the best of all occupations or arts by which men procure the means of living"*. Seno, Mmusakgotla, se totobatsa botlhokwa ba temothuo mo matshelong a baagi le batho ba Bokone Bophirima ka kakaretso. Our business as a department is exigent.

Over the financial year our work in government will centre on several game-changing projects and these include the following:

I. Crop Production

Our commitment to put into production 20 000 hectares of the unused communal land still remains on course although not short of challenges. To date, R14 million was spent on the 10 060ha of cropping lands in areas of Tswaing, Mahikeng and Ditsobotla. The impact of drought limited our progress, and we salute our farmers for their remarkable persistence to plant crop that suits the weather conditions as well as rain patterns. As a sector, we welcome the ground-breaking discovery made by the Agricultural Research Council on the drought resistant maize cultivar as announced during the Minister's budget speech (DAFF), this will also go a long way in mitigating the effects of drought.

This year alone, we will cultivate 12 000 hectares for food production in communal and land reform areas. The department has set aside R17 million to roll out the Crop Massification Programme and a total amount of R16 million is allocated for the refurbishment of Vryhof and Kraaipan Silos.

In the expansion of irrigation schemes across the province, an amount of R11 million is set aside for development of the provincial comprehensive strategy and irrigation infrastructure development for maintenance and expansion of the Taung, Molatedi and Disaneng Irrigation Schemes.

In another Saamtrek and Saamwerk initiative, the department will investigate possible partnership with Noord-Wes Koporasie through consultation with the Provincial Treasury in order to strengthen the work that we do on grain value chain in the province.

Agri-Parks

Motlotlegi Mmusakgotla, the presidential National AgriParks initiative has gained momentum in our province. Four sites have been identified to establish AgriParks. These areas include Springbokpan, Vryburg, Moretele and Maquassi Hills (Klerksdorp).

The infrastructural and mechanical refurbishment of the Springbokpan Grain Value Chain AgriPark, have been accomplished and the facility will be operational during this harvest period. In Dr. Ruth Segomotsi Mompati, stakeholder mobilization has taken place, and a site for the establishment of the AgriPark has been identified. For the Bojanala AgriPark, a business plan has been developed as well as identifying of key anchor projects to support it, while Maquassie Hills consultations with key stakeholders is ensuing.

Tshimo ya Kgosi

Mmusakgotla, lenaneo la rona la go busetsa serodumo sa Magosi a rona la Tshimo ya Kgosi le bone katlego e kgolo. Re motlotlo go begela ntlo eno gore go fitlha ga jaana Magosi a le someamabedi le borobedi (28) a rona mo Bokone Bophirima a setse ba bone matlafatso ya ona ya leruo, mangwe didiriswa tsa temo le mangwe go lemelwa. Bokana ka R11.2 million, di dirisitswe mo ngwageng o fetileng jaaka karolo ya matlafatso eno.

Magosi a rona a setse a re naya dikgang tse di monate tsa gore leruo le a ata mme temo le yona e a tshepisa. Mo ngwageng ono re tlike go atolosa matlafatso eno go Magosi a mangwe a le somelebongwe. Bone batla iponela leruo mme bangwe re tlike go ba neela didiriswa tsa temothuo. R5 million e beetswe thoko go diragatsa seno.

Livestock Production and Improvement

For the North West Nguni Cattle Development Program, 13 applications benefitting five projects were approved for the past year. To date we have 89 project sites with 196 beneficiaries and these include 64 women and 34 young people. Since its inception, an estimated amount of R24 million has been invested into the project.

Honourable Speaker, we treasure some beneficiaries who stood out amongst the rest and these include a family of Medupe in Ventersdorp as well Moeketsi in Driehoek. Both Families have long returned their loans but are still striving as Nguni Breeders. This has paid off handsomely, when they prestigiously won the ARC Nguni Beef cattle Improvements Awards during 2015. We greatly congratulate the two for their farming excellence.

As part of Departmental Livestock Improvement Plan anchored by quality tested genetic material in partnership the Agricultural Research Council, a total of 52 bulls and 142 cows and heifers were distributed to farmers in Bojanala District, 41 bucks & 23 ewes for Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District.

Marketing

The department successfully embarked on a third farmers' Market in Mogwase, Bojanala Platinum District as an effort to facilitate the survival of the small holder producers, who might, when well-organised, share the envisaged market infrastructure and transport, resulting in some economies of scale to their advantage.

Furthermore the efforts of the Hon. Premier who signed a MOU with the Hon. Minister for SANDF last year will come into fruition this year as we implement the program for smallholder producers to have market access opportunity for agricultural products through rigorous supply and support.

Madam Speaker, READ has in the past year brought about the Driefontein Livestock Auction at a cost of R1, 5 million. This is a first auction initiative in the rural communities and came as result of continuous enormous challenges faced by communities in relation to market access. The turnover in the very first auction was R1 548 365.00 (One million, five hundred and forty eight thousand, three hundred and sixty five Rands). We appreciate the role played by communities of Morokweng, Bona-Bona as well as Tseoge. Our plans are in place to embark on a similar livestock auction pens in Greater Taung Local Municipality.

The year under review witnessed a very triumphant Bokone Bophirima Annual Agricultural Show that was held at Kgora Farmer Training Centre with a total cost of R6 million. The momentous event provided a golden opportunity for smallholder producers to exhibit their products, knowledge and technologies.

In branding the show, an Agribusiness Legacy Development Project was launched to catalyse partnerships with the private sector on the establishment of various Agricultural Business Enterprises for Women and Youth. The show is geared to expand and diversify into a world class Agricultural Growth and Investment Initiative for the coming season. An amount of R6.6 million is budgeted for this wonderful initiative.

Agro Processing

A call by our Premier during the SOPA 2016 address on the reviving of the VTSD economies remains one of our priorities. Out of the 60% procurement target towards these sites, we proudly report that 74% was achieved through goods and services provision, key departmental events capital projects. The department has for the current financial year identified a myriad of projects to deliver on as part of our VTSD economic contribution as we set a new target for 70%.

We have in the past financial year initiated several agro-processing projects, these include abattoirs, milling and feedlots in line with the Agripark approach and the Provincial Agro-processing Strategy. Of the total amount of R58 million that was budgeted for the projects, most of the funds were redirected to the drought relief initiative. Despite the drought challenges, excellent progress was registered in the implementation of the Bokone Meats and Monontsha Agro Projects in Klerksdorp and near Magaliesberg in Bokone Bophirima respectively. These agro business enterprises are meant to become game changers and catalysts in the area of commercial primary livestock production and processing in the Province. A partnership project with Indian investor for establishment of hub on herbal production and processing as part of Monontsha project will be undertaken this year.

The projects affected by drought will continue into the new financial year and an amount of R43 million has been aside for their implementation.

Landcare

Madame Speaker, this year our Junior Land-carers will be attending the 7th Biennial Landcare Conference in Kimberley, Northern Cape. This conference takes place from the 03 to 06 October 2016 to showcase developments in line with natural resource conservation. We wish our participating schools all the luck to come emerge victorious. A total of R7.3 million was spent on three landcare projects for the year under review in Ramotshere Moiloa, Kagisano Molopo and Greater Taung Local Municipalities. In addition, five landcare projects to the value of R7.6 million will be implemented in Ratlou, Tswaing and Moretele Local Municipalities.

Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) Sites

Work is still ongoing at the CRDP sites with the cooperation of sister Departments and other stakeholders. An amount of R7 million has been set aside to continue developing our people in all 8 declared CRDP sites to address basket of service needs identified by communities.

Women and Youth

Madam Speaker, we take with solemn spirit, government efforts to ensure inclusion of women and youth in mainstream economy through skills development, enterprise development as well as entrepreneurship projects.

This is a befitting honour and gesture from our department as we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Women's march and 40th anniversary of the Class of 1976. It is our belief that all these efforts were not in vain as we continue to recognise the gallant contribution made by these groups. We have as part of these sectors transformation re-launched Women in Agriculture and Rural Development (WARD) as well as Youth in Agriculture and Rural Development (YARD) structures.

In the spirit of Saamtrek and Saamwerk it is our intention to build the capacity of these institutions to allow constructive advocacy for designated groups to assume their rightful role and contribute to the mainstream commercial agriculture, food security and rural development.

We will in June this year, host the very first Youth in Agriculture Awards. Through the Awards, the department will honour young people who have played a significant role in food security as well as combating the triple challenges of job creation, economic growth and poverty.

Agricultural Training and capacity building

Taung and Potchefstroom Colleges of Agriculture as well as Kgora Farmer Training Centre are strategically placed to enhance the performance of our Province on the ideals of the National Development Plan.

We have committed to the development of Youth in the Province, particularly through the resuscitation and strengthening of youth-run agricultural cooperatives. This can best be achieved through partnership between these Colleges, the North West University and Kgora Farmer Training Centre. Madam Speaker, as part of our expansion of farmer agricultural training, we have established a Satellite Farmer Training Centre at Moretele.

The Taung Agricultural College and the Kgora Farmer Training Centre continues to enjoy its accreditation status. Through the Danish Haldor Topsoe donation to Taung Agricultural College towards it being a centre of excellence in irrigation agriculture, work on the soil and water laboratory and the water reticulation system is at an advanced stage.

An amount of R15 million has been spent on the upgrades and these include Grand Stand Construction, Construction of ablution and office block horticulture section, paving around engineering parking bay and paving around bus and outreach parking bay Construction of staff lounge parking and tennis, netball and basketball courts, Installation of 4 high mast lights and Construction of a new boardroom and construction of new lecture hall. As part of maintaining our accreditation status we will continue with infrastructural and other developments to the three sites which ensured that 50 students graduated at Potchefstroom Agricultural College on mixed farming and 750 farmers were trained during 2015/16. Further the first graduation ceremony for Taung Agricultural College will take place in the month of May following the new accreditation curriculum on irrigation agriculture.

Aquaculture and Fisheries

As spelled out during the President's State of the Nation's address on Phakisa, the province has made its mark through continued development of aquaculture and inland fisheries. A provincial hatchery has been established in Disaneng. The facility will be strengthened to meet the needs of the province. Emerging farmers and extension officers will be trained to ensure creation of economically viable rural aquaculture systems.

On inland fisheries, small-scale fishers will be provided with the necessary support and resources to ensure that they can reduce post-harvest losses in the value chain.

The Aquaculture and Fisheries programme will be funded to the tune of R4 million for this coming year. The department undertakes to leverage Malaysian partnership for technical exchange, research, capacity building and in seeking international donor funding for the aquaculture and fisheries programs in the province. This will be developed in the context of also forging partnership with the SADC community through areas of training, research and development.

Veterinary Services

As announced by the National Minister during the budget speech, the department has signed into law the Compulsory Community Service throughout the rural areas for newly qualified veterinarians. This saw a total of 11 newly qualified Veterinarians deployed with the intention in increasing access of Veterinary Services to the villages, townships and small Dorpies.

As part our veterinary interventions, we plan to visit 12920 epidemiological units throughout the province. This action will be achieved through conducting 145 000 tests in line with ISO 17025 standards. In facilitating exports, we will attend to 2815 clients and our target is that all food processing facilities should acquire 100% of compliance in line with the Meat Safety Act.

Environmental Management Services

Honourable Speaker, we concede that the role of environmental development and management is precarious in our province. It calls for a delicate balancing act as we ensure maximum and sustainable use of our already strained resources. It is through this responsibility that we aim to transform approaches on environmental protection while retaining the balance for socio-economic development.

One of our key achievements of note is the publication of the North West Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) 2015. Air quality is one of the pressures leading to climate change. In our attempt to make a meaningful contribution towards the mitigation initiatives, the department in partnership with the national Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), hosted a provincial stakeholder consultation workshop in September 2015 in preparation for South Africa's participation in the climate change negotiations at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 21 in Paris, France. Stakeholders were consulted on South Africa's Intended National Determined Contribution (INDC). To date, the department managed to develop the North West Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation strategies for the most vulnerable sectors in the province. This work will culminate into an overall North West Climate Change Response Strategy, which will be developed within the next 2 years.

Furthermore than that Madame Speaker, the NW Environmental Implementation Plan EIP 2015-2020 was finalized and gazetted in May 2015, as required by the National Environmental Management Act, 1998. It is worth noting that the North West province was the only province that managed to achieve this milestone within the required timeframe in the country.

This tool will assist the department in monitoring the implementation of the Environmental Outlook as well as other plans developed and implemented by other departments. This is another effort in contributing towards the Saamwerk Saamtrek approach.

Motlotlegi Mmusakgotla we have successfully launched one momentous game transformation project in partnership with the South African Rare Game Breeding Holdings in Kgetleng River Local Municipality. During current financial year, the focus will be on monitoring and implementation of the mentorship programme to ensure the success of this initiative. In the spirit of renewal, rebranding and repositioning, the department will host the first Wildlife Indaba to create a platform for all the nine provinces and other key stakeholders to participate in the robust discussion on matters affecting the trade, beneficiation as well as transformation of the sector.

Madam Speaker, the management of tuberculosis in buffaloes within the Madikwe Game Reserve has taken an absolute new turn through the approval of the plan by DAFF to pursue cleansing option rather than direct culling which has vast consequences. The plan is set to roll out from the 16th May 2016 through a team of experts for the next eighteen months.

Our work on the restoration of the Taung Skull World Heritage site is quite satisfactory. An amount of R33 million was spent on key deliverables including construction of the road to Thomeng, water works at Buxton, Draaihoek, Mokassa and Tamasikwa; protection of the core area to ensure that the open and sensitive caves that house historic information about the origins life are not destroyed by animals.

Contractors were appointed to start work on the following projects: Restoration of the Powerhouse, the Mine manager's office and Trail Paths and Signage. These projects are due for completion at the end of the second quarter. To ensure solid and compliant management of this site of international status, we have managed to review the Integrated Management Plan, conducted the site safety assessment to ensure safety of tourists once the site is fully operational, and conducted a heritage and visual impact assessment.

Moving forward, the department commits to begin with the designs and approval for the development of the Taung Skull Museum and exhibition as well as implementation of the necessary infrastructure for water and energy services for the site. R40 million is budgeted for this current year.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure, to inform this august house that Magaliesberg area has been declared a Biosphere Reserve by the United Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). This declaration means that we will have improved management of landscapes, ecosystems approaches for integrating the management of land, water and biodiversity for conservation for a fair and sustainable use. Institutions and landowners will be empowered on promoting sustainable development for socio-economic upliftment around Biosphere. The department will strive to have a functional board appointed, signing of implementation protocol with Gauteng province, business plan development in the new financial year. Like, the Taung Skull, the Magaliesberg Biosphere Reserve Project identified as part of the ACT projects to stimulate saamtrek and saamwerk in that regard.

We have also declared Molopo Oog and Rasoord as nature reserves and these areas will be monitored for compliance. I have the pleasure to announce that Groot Marico was declared as a protected environmental site. The application process for listing it as a biosphere is planned to commence this year.

Mmusakgotla, I must say the department has made strides in ensuring that the North West Biodiversity Bill is developed. In the current financial year, the focus will be in the development of the regulations and the enactment of the Bill. Further to this, we managed to develop and publish the NW Biodiversity Sector Plan 2015 which will be used to inform spatial planning and decision-making on developments in the province.

In addressing, directive alluded by Hon Premier during SOPA *"Long and Complicated EIA applications processes must be changed and will be changed"*, the department will continue implementing proactive approach through amongst others conducting workshops on EIA process, encouraging pre-consultation meetings and screening of applications being lodged, development and distribution of guideline material and implementation protocol to all organs of state. In addition, all Environmental Impact Assessment, Waste Management and Atmospheric Emission Licence applications received will be finalised within legislated timeframes.

Madam Speaker, we cannot have healthy and sound environment without monitoring compliance and enforcement to environmental legislation. In this regard, we commit to conduct 1300 inspections and 54 enforcement actions will be undertaken.

Motlotlegi Mmusakgotla, we are indeed all responsible for this beautiful inheritance as aptly summed up by Leonardo Dicaprio during his acceptance speech for the academy award for best actor in The Revenant and he had this to say: *"Making the Revenant was about man's relationship with the world, the world we collectively felt in 2015 as the hottest year in recorded history. Climate change is real and is happening right now, it is the most urgent threat facing our entire species and we need to work collectively together and stop procrastinating. We need to support leaders around the world who do not speak for big polluters but who speak for all of humanity for the indigenous people of the world for the billions and billions of underprivileged people who will be most affected by this."*

Job Creation

Madam Speaker, let me also mention that during the execution of their mandate, the department created a total of 484 EPWP Work opportunities and 416 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) through implementation of 16 projects during the 2015/16 financial year. Our target for the New Year is set at 800.

II. NORTH WEST PARKS BOARD

Madam Speaker, I now wish to address myself to our mandate of biodiversity Conservation Management through Protected Areas Management System as driven by our Conservation Agency the North West Parks Board, which was created by Act No.3 of 2015. The North West Parks Board Act No. 3 of 2015 is in process to be registered as a Schedule 3c entity in terms of the Public Finance Management Act.

The Board is charged with the responsibility of transforming the wildlife sector by ensuring that through their management of the protected areas, they robustly encourage black South Africans to be involved and benefit in matters of conservation and wildlife management. The North West Parks Board was officially established in May 2015 after the Bills were passed in the North West Provincial Legislature, the Board of Directors was appointed during August 2015.

Madam Speaker, The North West Parks Board still in its infancy stage, recently received the finalist certificate of excellence in the category of Top Empowered: Public Service Award, during the 15th Annual Oliver Empowerment Awards.

As part of giving back to our communities, our Community Development Programme drives an agenda that seeks to enable the local communities to extract value out of our natural resources, whilst at the same time ensuring adherence to Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) guidelines. Four communities adjacent to our protected areas will benefit from the development of community lodges.

Madam Speaker, Another achievement on this front, is the inclusion of the 4014ha of land into Madikwe Game Reserve in the last quarter of 2015-2016. In January this year, the Barokologadi-ba-ga Kgosi Maotse Communal Property Association, formalised their agreement with the North West Park Board. This agreement enhances the provincial pillar of "Agriculture, Culture and Tourism". We are looking forward to see this relationship working.

Going forward, the North West Parks Board will continue to work with communities, private land owners and other state departments to increase the size of land under formal conservation. It must be emphasised that these agreements should lead to the advancement of economic revival or rejuvenation of the affected communities and stakeholders.

We are finalising a land incorporation agreement for 958ha with Mooke Communal Property Association in Borakalalo national park. During the process of inclusion of this land, about twenty temporary jobs for local residents will be created for construction of 18km fence or part thereof.

Training of 40 youth for field ranging has started during March 2016 at South African Wildlife College, Mpumalanga. They are at the moment placed in Mafikeng Game Reserve, Botsalano Game Reserve, Pilanesberg National Park and Borakalalo National Park for workplace experience. The training is for a period of 12 months. The North West Parks Board has committed to employ all 40 youth after the completion of training.

Madam Speaker: The North West Parks Board will in this financial year 2016/2017 embark on the following projects:

- Upgrade of security services in all the big five hosting parks to mitigate poaching;
- Mmusakgotla, Infrastructure in our conservation estates have deteriorated mainly due to extended periods of drought and occasional flooding that we have experienced in the province in over the past 6 years. The current status has a negative bearing on the conservation of our fauna and flora conservation estates. as well as the target to grow the economy by 6% as per the Premier's pronouncement in his 2015 SOPA.

In order to address the infrastructure needs above, an amount of R7.5 million has been committed.

Madam Speaker, during financial year 2016/2017 plenary processes for the establishment of the New Bokone Bophirima Wildlife Institute within the Taung Agricultural College will be unfolding with the view to provide wildlife skills to the youth of the North West Province. The People & Parks conference will be held in the North West Province from the 20th to 22nd of September 2016 and Biodiversity COP17 conference will be held in Sandton Convention Centre (Gauteng Province) from the 24th September to 05th October 2016 respectively. In total the North West Parks Board has been allocated a total budget of R101.8 million.

III. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Mmusakgotla, as a department of READ, we ensure that amid our delivery of services we have a system in which we will continually reflect on accountability, fairness, and transparency in our relationship with all our all stakeholders. We therefore continue to reflect on our milestones in the commitments that we make on procedures for proper supervision, control, and information-flows to serve as a system of checks-and-balances.

Honourable Speaker, Employment Equity statistics in relation to women at the Senior Management Service (SMS) level have improved since last year and now stands at 39% to 61% males, as compared to 34.7% females and 65.3% males in the previous reporting. It is the intention of this department to continue ensuring that suitably qualified women are employed in all vacant SMS positions.

Concerted efforts are also underway to ensure attainment of 2% of people with disabilities in the employ of the department. In our endeavour to ensure that this department becomes representative of the population of this province, the department intends prioritising women and people with disabilities when filling vacant posts.

Honourable Speaker, the Internship and Learnership programmes are an integral part of our department. We have therefore tailored departmental programs to offer our students personal exposure to the real world and actual working life experience as an experiential, foundation to their career choices. We have managed to train 20 interns who have completed their 12 months in February 2016. We are in the process of further recruiting 30 new interns. We have set aside a budget of R1.6 million for this process. In 2015/16 we had 12 full time employees on learnership, 40 unemployed youth on learnership and 23 bursars. We will in this financial year further continue with 22 bursars.

Madam Speaker, allow me to present the department of READ budget for Vote 13 as a total of **R1 284 840 000** (One billion, two hundred and eighty four million, eight hundred and forty thousand Rands) for the financial year 2016/17 as encapsulated in the following nine departmental programmes:

Programme Name	Budget
Program 1: Administration	R243 163 000
Program 2: Sustainable Resource Management	R48 758 000
Program 3: Farmer Support and Development	R391 775 000
Program 4: Veterinary Services	R116 398 000
Program 5: Research Technology and Development	R59 977 000
Program 6: Agricultural Economic Services	R11 930 000
Program 7: Structured Agricultural Education and Training	R100 636 000
Program 8: Rural Development and Coordination	R54 554 000
Program 9 : Environmental Services	R257 649 000
Total Departmental Budget	R1 284 840 000

As I conclude, Motlotlegi Mmusakgotla, let me give voice to the Hon. Premier in infusing the revolutionary vision for the Bokone Bophirima and the department within its mandate.

Allow me to thank your good-self Hon. Speaker, Members of the Provincial legislature, the Portfolio Committee and the Public Account Committee for guidance and oversight.

I am also humbled and thankful to the Executive Council and our respective cluster for the cooperation.

To my gallant comrades in the African National Congress my political homage, I thank also you.

To all READ stakeholders and partners, from every possible sphere, my heartfelt gratitude goes out to you for the overwhelming commitment and support.

The Head of Department, Dr Poncho Mokaila, the CEO of Parks and Tourism Board, Ntate Mothobi Mothobi, the senior management and the rest of Team READ members are also appreciated for their support in delivering on our commitments and mandate.

Finally I wish to thank my beloved family and friends for their overwhelming courage and support rendered through turbulent times.

Motlotlegi Mmusakgotla, re dumela gore jaaka lefapha maano a rona a go tokafatsa ekonomi ya porofense ka temothuo a setse a le mo motšheng. We are not there yet, but like our Premier Supra Mahumapelo said: "*Biekie, Biekie Maak Meer! Sejo sennye ga se fete molomo*"

The bible on Zechariah 4:10 also says this: "*Do not despise small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand*".

Re a leboga

Nelwang ke pula baagi ba Bokone Bophirima!