

**STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS BY NORTH WEST PREMIER
PROF TEBOGO JOB MOKGORO DELIVERED BEFORE THE HYBRID
SITTING OF THE NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE ON
THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2021 IN MAHIKENG**

Speaker of the North West Provincial Legislature, Honourable Susanna Basetšana Dantje

Deputy Speaker of the North West Provincial Legislature, Honourable Ntsetsao Motsumi

Judge President of the North West Division of the High Court, Judge Monica Leeuw and all members of the judiciary present

Members of the Executive Council

Members of the North West Provincial Legislature

The Chief Whip of the majority party in the North West Provincial Legislature, Honourable Paul Sebegoe

Members of the National Assembly, from the North West, with us this morning

Honourable permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces

Executive Mayors and Speakers of all municipalities in the North West

The Chairperson of the North West House of Traditional Leaders, Kgosi Moshe Mabe gammogo le Magosi otlhe a rona ao a tlotlegang

The leadership of the governing African National Congress and its alliance partners

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

The Provincial Commissioner of the South African Police Service, Lieutenant General Sello Kwena

Distinguished guests

Members of the media

Baagi ba Bokone Bophirima le MaAfrika Borwa ka kakaretso

Bagaetsho

Dumelang.

Honourable Speaker, as we gather here today, just over hundred and eleven million people around the world have contracted COVID 19, with global mortality of 2,4 million.

In Africa 2,5 million cases of COVID19 have been reported with just over a 100 000 deaths. In South Africa alone over 1,5 million people have contracted COVID19, and almost 50 000 have died. The North West Province has by this week recorded over 60 000 COVID19 cases, with over 1 000 deaths, and around 55 000 recoveries.

Honourable Speaker, the world, the continent, country and the province we inhabited this time last year, has completely changed. This pandemic has visited unprecedented harm to our families, destroyed global economies and livelihoods.

It has changed the ways of our socialization, how we play and how we pray. It has halted learning opportunities of many of our children, discouraged many from attending school, claimed the lives of many of our teachers, doctors, nurses, police men and women, and many patriots in the public service and private sectors.

Today we remember and pay homage to one of us, the former member of this House and former MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, the late Honourable Gordon Mothibedi Kegakilwe.

We shall forever miss his sharp mind and intellect, his studious attention to detail and passion about local government and its delivery. He led the initial phase of our Provincial COVID-19 Risk Adjusted response from the front and laid a firm foundation that has guided our approach to the implementation of our Risk Adjusted Strategy until today.

Honourable Speaker, almost three weeks ago we bid farewell and laid to rest our mother, the stalwart Mme Rebecca Kotane whose birthday has for many years been acknowledged by this house each time our SOPA is delivered.

Mma Kotane is no more, but the lessons of her life of compassion, simplicity and dignity remain an abiding legacy of her memory. We thank God for the generosity of the 109 years of her life. She lived through two pandemics a century apart, and defeated both, including the monstrous system of apartheid denounced by the United Nations as a crime against humanity.

The people of Moses Kotane Municipality, and Pella in particular, are fortunate to live within a walking distance to the historic heritage burial site that houses the remains of two of South Africa's outstanding patriots, Moses and Rebecca Kotane.

Honourable Speaker, we hope and pray that in no distant a future, we shall find appropriate opportunity under improved health conditions to remember all the patriots whose left us over the last eleven months

Honourable Members, our resilience as a nation has been tested to the very limit of our sustenance as a state. There has been difficult and disappointing moments of failure and devastation. Equally, we have seen countless testimonies of courage, dedication and compassionate shown by many of our people across all sectors.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to ALL our health professionals who put their lives on the line in order to safe ours.

We also thank, appreciate and single out the leadership provided by his Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa who remained steadfast in his resolute and firm stewardship of our country's risk adjusted strategy since March 2020.

As shaken as we are as a nation, we take comfort in the knowledge that we have a President who genuinely cares about his country and people, and has shown this through myriad of difficult but necessary decisions he has guided cabinet to take over the last eleven months.

Honourable Speaker, we have increased community access to Primary Health Care services by increasing operating hours at our health facilities

and embarking on specific infrastructure improvements to the four provincial hospitals and 14 primary health care facilities.

We have appointed a Chief Executive Officer for the Klerksdorp-Tshepong hospital with effect from September 2020. We have increased access to life saving procedures and operations at the five largest hospitals in the North West.

In addition, we have installed new boilers at the Klerksdorp-Tshepong, Mahikeng Provincial, Gelukspan and Schweizer-Reneke Hospitals.

Honourable Speaker, life expectancy in the North West Province for both males and females continues to increase and now stands at 65 for females from 63 in 2016 and 58 for males from 57 in 2016. We have managed to put in place 995 Covid-19 related beds across the province in both public and private sector health facilities, and we have established quarantine sites throughout the province by making use of state-owned, mining and private facilities.

Furthermore, we received 3 900 doses of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines, and the vaccination of close to 42 000 frontline health care workers is well underway at two sites in the Province – the Job Shimankane Tabane Hospital in Rustenburg and the Klerksdorp-Tshepong Hospital in Matlosana.

We will be receiving vaccination doses, incrementally, every two weeks as we roll out first phase of this programme until its completion; whereafter, we will move to the second phase of the programme. We will announce

the details surrounding the second phase of the vaccination roll out in due course.

Honourable Speaker, we have decreased the vacancy rate at the Department of Health from 20% to 14,8% by the end of January 2021.

Honourable Members, accruals are still a problem, but the Department of Health has managed to process 88% of all accruals to date, and we believe that we can do better going forward.

The Provincial Council on Aids has been re-established and an acting Provincial Head of Secretariat for the PCA has been seconded from the Department of Health; we are finalizing local structures as well as to work towards having an approved organisational structure in place.

We are finalizing the appointment of CEOs for the both the Joe Morolong Memorial Hospital in Vryburg and the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital. Interviews for the vacant Head of Department position for the Department of Health have been concluded and we should be announcing an appointment in due course.

Honourable Speaker, we will be opening the Sekhing and Jouberton Community Health Centres in August this year to render comprehensive health care services to the Ga- Mothibi and Jouberton communities, respectively; we are committed to appoint appropriate staff.

We are providing back-up supply of water and electricity at health facilities that have water shortage due to drought and regular electricity interruptions.

We will rollout pre-exposure prophylaxis and promotion to two institutions of higher learning in the province, for the prevention of HIV infections to reduce the burden of the disease in the province, and improve life expectancy.

Honourable Speaker, allow me to congratulate the Grade 12 class of 2020, who despite the academic year that they had to endure due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, managed to defy the odds and attained a 76,2% percent pass rate.

I am buoyed by the fact that out of 433 schools that presented Grade 12 in the North West in 2020, 288 schools performed at 70% and beyond; this shows quality performance against all odds.

I wish to congratulate Ms Jana Geyser from Rustenburg High School, who obtained seven distinctions, attaining above 90% in all her subjects to become the best Grade 12 learner in our province for 2020, as well as all other top performers in the North West.

Honourable Members, to ensure that our teachers and learners are better equipped to meaningfully participate in the 4IR, robotics and coding, the roll out of connectivity still remains the highpoint of our strategy for use of ICT in teaching and learning.

To this extent, we are increasing access to the internet through broadband and Wi-Fi connection from the current 25% of our learners to 75% at end of the 2021 academic year. In addition, we are extending access to broadband and Wi-Fi connection to non-teaching staff such as cleaners in our schools to enable them to participate in online classes and homework for their own studies, especially in previously disadvantaged communities.

Honourable Speaker, we are intensively promoting maths and science in our schools as well as fast tracking reading revolution programmes. Furthermore, we are putting measures in place to strengthen the capacity and functionality of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) through quarterly assessments.

Due to the demand in technical skills, we are fully implementing two streams, academic and technical, and will now pilot the third stream in 11 schools. This third stream is Vocational and includes 13 new subjects, which will enable learners to qualify for a General Education.

Honourable Speaker, three additional schools will increase enrolment of learners in the Agriculture learning areas so as to ensure that learners leave school with skills required in the Farming sector and business in general. This would in turn encourage young people to participate in food production and create jobs in the farming sector.

The outbreak of COVID-19 came with new protocols, among them that learners and teachers had to maintain social distancing. This implied that

more classrooms would be needed, greater effort should be given to providing running water for all schools, proper fencing would be required, and appropriate sanitation facilities a must. We do this because the safety of learners is of paramount importance to us.

To ensure security of learners and teachers, 87 fencing projects have been completed and 27 are under construction. We will be providing 95 more schools with fencing in the 2021/22 financial year. Furthermore, in order to restore the dignity of our learners and educators, appropriate sanitation facilities have been provided. This includes the eradication of pit latrines in 166 schools over the past 2 years.

We have completely eradicated all traditional pit latrines in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and the Bojanala Platinum Districts, while all the pit latrines in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District will be completely eradicated from our schools by the end of next month.

Ladies and gentlemen, 15 more schools are currently under construction and 44 more will be provided with sanitation facilities. The provision of water is being prioritised.

In the current financial year, we targeted 10 schools for running water, but we had to increase to 33 to ensure that all schools complied with Covid-19 protocols. In the 2021 academic year, we will ensure that 64 schools are provided with water.

We have provided 16 water storage tanks, commonly known as JOJO tanks, in the Bojanala Platinum District, 14 in Ngaka Modiri Molema, 18 in Dr Kenneth Kaunda and 64 in the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati; we have no backlog in the provision of these JOJO tanks.

There were 46 new schools under construction, and we have completed 19, and these are distributed as follows per district, Bojanala District 9, Ngaka Modiri Molema District 5, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati 4 and Dr Kenneth Kaunda, 1. These included expansion of boarding schools in the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District.

In the 2021/22 financial year, we'll be kick starting plans for the construction of 25 new schools, at a combined cost of R 597 million for planning and construction and this will create 3 140 jobs. This is to further create space for social distancing, alleviate overcrowding and reduce the number of learners who need scholar transport.

Honourable Speaker, asbestos has been identified as a health hazard and we aim to eradicate it from all our schools .

Honourable Members, full asbestos schools – those that were built entirely out of asbestos - have been eradicated completely and what is remaining are those schools with partial asbestos buildings, which are part of this programme, and we'll be starting with worse cases.

In the 2021/22 financial year, we'll be reconstructing existing hostels at Coligny Special School and Moedwil Combined built with asbestos with conventional building material. The existing asbestos workshops at

Wagpos High School are also being replaced with new and improved workshops.

We have identified the Mega Farm School model as a solution in providing quality education to small farm schools. The new planned mega agricultural farm school at Rysmierbult, in Dr Kenneth Kaunda is at the planning phase and construction should start in 2022.

Honourable Speaker, allow me to appreciate the existing partnerships with the following mining houses and business entities; XTRATA, Impala Platinum, SAMANCOR, Sibanye Gold, Northam Zondereinde Community Trust and Sun International Limited, amongst others, in the building and upgrading our schools.

The construction of Waterkloof Primary & Secondary School is almost complete through our Rand-for-Rand partnership with Royal Bafokeng Platinum, at a cost of R 70 million each.

Honourable Speaker, we have established 28 Community Nutrition Development Centres (CNDC) as part of our feeding programme to alleviate hunger amongst vulnerable communities.

In the 2019/20 financial year, 50 319 beneficiaries were reached in increasing access to nutritious food, and in the 2021/22 financial year, we will establish food banks in all four districts to improve distribution turnaround time of nutritious food to CNDC and other centres which will benefit from these food banks.

We are establishing a Provincial Food Bank to ensure access to nutritious meals and reduction of food insecurity amongst households and vulnerable communities as well as responding efficiently and effectively to the problem of hunger and malnutrition in the Province.

We have put aside R15 million to establish the Provincial Food Bank, which would distribute food to the District Centres, and these in turn would drop off food directly to the households

Honourable Speaker, we continue to strengthen the implementation of our Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Programme during and post the COVID-19 pandemic to efficiently and effectively respond to the challenges of disasters, household crisis, hunger and undue hardships. For the 2021/22 financial year, we'll allocate R29 million available to address the food security of about **24 000** households, affected by COVID-19 and poverty.

In the last year alone, SASSA reached almost 1,28 million people in the North West at a cost of over R1,02 billion, amongst them the following grants; old age and war veteran, disability, foster care, care dependency, child support and grant-in aid.

Honourable Speaker, in response to COVID-19, SASSA has, from May to October 2020, paid approximately R8.6 billion to approximately just over 1.27 million beneficiaries, and this includes normal social grants as well as the Top-up grants.

While hunger and poverty have increased drastically over the past few years and months due to the devastating impact of COVID-19, empirical evidence shows that our massive social relief package has gone a long way in ameliorating severity of the impact.

These grants have helped to offset unemployment and poverty in townships and informal settlements, and withdrawal would aggravate conditions in rural and poor urban communities.

Honourable Speaker, we have an obligation to constructively engage women through dialogues to understand their key socio-economic factors that need our intervention.

We, therefore, continue to support women cooperatives and SMME's to improve their livelihoods, and part of that support includes capacity building, mentoring and procurement of equipment's and other necessities for women cooperatives and SMME's. This programme will cost R6 million for the 2021/22 financial year.

In November last year, we launched a White Door Crisis Centre in the Ratlou Local Municipality, to serve as a first stop for gender-based violence victims.

We have other White Doors in Tswaing, Ditsobotla, Ratlou and Kagisano Molopo; which together have serviced over 4 000 GBV victims by December last year. They were provided with accommodation, basic counselling, court preparation services and psychosocial support.

Honourable Speaker, we continue to promote the use and preservation of indigenous languages in the Province through digitisation of the indigenous language published books. The published books will be narrated into audio through social media platforms and CD's with the intention to have electronic reading/listening.

Some artists will be used in the narration of the books into audio. Furthermore, library services for the blind and visually impaired people are being enhanced following the launch of the programmes in partnership with the SA Libraries for the Blind.

Honourable Speaker, the Mmabatho Tennis Centre is being upgraded through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, implemented by the Mahikeng Local Municipality and the project is expected to be completed in 2023.

As a priority, we will revive, develop and support tennis structures in the Province to produce talent and elite tennis players. These athletes will particularly be identified through the school sport programme.

In addition, capacity building programmes are being implemented to train members of the various sporting federations in administration, in the different sporting codes in order to improve on the corporate governance of these institutions.

Honourable Speaker, the development of netball structures and players in the province has started in earnest and will continue in the next year, in preparation for participation in the 2023 Netball World Championships.

The two multi-purpose sports centres at Manthe in the Greater Taung Local Municipality and at Ipelegeng in the Mamusa Local Municipality were planned for completion in the 2020/21 financial year.

The Ipelegeng Multi-Purpose will be completed and handed over by end of next month, while implementation at the Manthe Sports Centre will start in the 2021/2022 financial year as it was suspended due to budgetary constraints.

Ladies and gentlemen, the creative and sports industries have been hard hit by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and measures have been explored in order that the industry remains active and visible.

The lockdown restrictions that we put in place to combat the pandemic also placed a burden on unprofessional and recreational activities.

Honourable Speaker, engagements have been concluded towards the construction of a 6km access road to the Kgora Farmer Training Centre in Mahikeng and this will create about 20 temporary jobs in the process.

As part of our effort to tackle poverty and food insecurity, we are putting back into production 12 000 hectares of fallow land that surrounds the Springbokpan grain silos infrastructure in Ditsobotla with grain production.

This initiative would enable the participation of all the 15 villages within a 50km radius, from the infrastructure Springbokpan silos infrastructure. This project would have a positive spinoff of 240 jobs.

Honourable Speaker, as an intervention to assist farmers adversely affected by drought, we are drilling additional 20 boreholes in communal farming areas to stand guard against the negative impact of drought.

This would ensure that stock watering provision in terms of our state of drought disaster. As part of the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), we are implementing a value chain focused production of beef, pork, aqua-culture, poultry, vegetables, chevon, grain oilseeds, and lucerne across the province, benefiting 1 430 farmers while creating 600 jobs.

To ensure food security, through the ILIMA/LETSEMA programme, we are supporting production of cash crops for 600 beneficiaries across the province, with the aim of creating 300 jobs. In addition, we have provided 1 654 food insecure households with agricultural production packages.

Honourable Speaker, our assessment has so far revealed that five earthen dams in Lehurutshe, Shupingstad, Lobatla, Driefontein and Ganyesa have been washed away by floods and will require R3 million to repair and restore these dams, which are mainly used for irrigation and livestock drinking.

Floods have also destroyed crops and fences in the Ditsobotla, Kagisano Molopo, Tswaing, Mamusa and Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipalities. We will be allocating funds in the 2021/22 financial year to restore those fences but unfortunately, the crops cannot not be recovered.

Honourable Speaker, as committed in the last SOPA, we have successfully created 313 land care jobs and another 86 jobs through our Rural Development initiatives.

With regard to our commitment to develop a fodder bank, we have, so far, planted 1200 hectares of lucerne, secured 131 hectares for planting in the next season and identified a further 76 hectares for further expansion.

Once all hectares are in production in the next season, we should have fodder reserves of 16 000 tons of lucerne.

To enhance the support that we continue to provide to emerging farmers, we have successfully established three livestock facilities, facilitated 17 livestock auctions where 3 583 livestock units were sold to the value of R20,8 million.

Honourable Speaker, the right to adequate housing is an important basic human right which is recognized in the Constitution and international human rights instruments. In the year under review, we had planned to build 6 381 units and to service 3692 sites. To date, we have managed to deliver 1862 houses and 3 409 serviced sites.

Honourable Speaker, COVID-19 hit the construction sector very hard as no construction could take place for 5 months of the year. Plans are underway to catch up on the backlog and to ensure that our people receive their houses.

Our review of blocked projects, which are projects that were started but were not completed, revealed that the province has close to 8 000 units that need to be completed, and that close to 30 000 people who have been approved on the Housing Subsidy scheme, claim not to have benefitted from government's housing policy.

We are, therefore, increasing our efforts to deliver adequate housing to the people of North West in the 2021/22 financial year.

Honourable Speaker, we have decided that all contractors who provide shoddy work or fail to complete projects awarded to them, are to be listed on the National Treasury list of Restricted Suppliers, which aims to blacklist such contractors, and ensure that they no longer participate in the built environment.

Honourable Speaker, we have experienced good rainfall in the past month in various parts of our Province. However, those rains have brought with them some unprecedented challenges that have resulted in flooding, loss of lives and livestock, damage to people's dwellings as well as the destruction of infrastructure and road networks.

The Emergency Housing policy is being implemented, with municipalities hard at work doing assessment of households, to determine which houses need government assistance, to make them habitable and safe.

Preliminary assessments were completed by the 22 February 2021 and the number of affected households is estimated at 4000 houses across the province. These include houses that have totally collapsed, some that are partially damaged – windows broken, roofs blow away – and the majority are mud houses that are slowly disintegrating because of the persistent rains.

The information on all these affected households has been submitted to the Disaster Management Centre en route to the National Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. Further information is being collated by the disaster management team to finalise our provincial submission for the declaration of a disaster.

Temporary shelters are being considered to assist families who have lost their homes, as well as those whose homes are still submerged or not habitable.

We are considering the use of alternative building technology to provide temporary shelters. Our efforts to address these challenges require a concerted effort and all hands must be on deck to assist.

Even as we try to implement the Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy, a number of challenges continue to hamper the provision of housing. These

relate to questionable quality and workmanship of the houses constructed by the government, as close to 40% of beneficiaries reported weak walls and 30% indicated weak roofs requiring rectification resulting in wasteful and fruitless expenditure.

Honourable Speaker, the fact that our people are dependent on government for provision of housing, in no way should subject them to shoddy workmanship or sub-standard houses.

We are taking a hard stance against these contractors by ensuring that they go back and repay and/or rebuild these houses at their own cost.

We will therefore have to double our efforts to deliver adequate housing to the people in North West in the 2021/22 financial year. Contractors who fail to deliver as agreed in their contracts will be terminated so that we can appoint contractors who will deliver the number of houses we are committing to.

Honourable Speaker, we are ensuring that all contractors who provide shoddy work or fail to complete projects awarded to them, are listed on the National Treasury list of Restricted Suppliers, which will blacklist the contractors and ensure that they no longer take part in the build environment.

Motswana wa maloba o rile "matlo go sha a a mabapi", ka jalo a re se tsenyeng ditlhogo mo motlhabeng, re itira o kare ga re bone mathata ao baagisane ba rona ba iphitlhelang ba le mo go one.

A re thusaneng, gone fa re dira mmogo, re tla kgona.

Mmusa Kgotla, merwalela eo re itemogetseng yona mo malobeng e sentse ditsela tsa rona mo Profenseng, mme ditshenyegelo tseo di lekanyediwa go dimilione milione tsa diranta.

We have already conducted an assessment and submitted reports to the Provincial Disaster Management Centre for further assessment.

Honourable Speaker, we have started to work on some of the roads utilizing internal teams to do pothole patching, blading and spot re-gravelling. The repairs to the flood damaged roads network will further assist SMME contractors in the province to participate in the rehabilitation of roads. The remaining work will be carried out in the new financial year.

Honourable Speaker, the upgrading of rural roads in the North West remains one of our key priorities. To fast-track our plans in improving rural roads, we are creating a unit on rural roads that will be led by Office of the Premier and Treasury, whose work will be implemented by the Department of Public Works and Roads to, among other things, create jobs to boost local communities targeting youth and women.

In the process, we are considering alternative building methods and approach from the Presidential Infrastructure Fund as we improve our rural roads. We are prioritizing rural roads that connect to major tourism attractions and cross border roads as part of stimulating economic growth in the province.

We are tightening monitoring of roads through implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that performance challenges identified throughout the province are dealt with to redress the service delivery backlogs.

Honourable Speaker, increased funding for long-term and flood-damaged roads plan is a must. Our 10-year Road Master Plan is being integrated in our District Development Model approach as part of our efforts to improve rural roads.

Honourable Speaker, the North West Housing Corporation has issued title deeds to communities in Atamelang, Mogwase, Lehurutshe and Tlhabane in the 2020/21 financial year.

These are communities that have been occupying houses for decades without ownership. We are now planning to issue over 1000 title deeds across the Province, to communities in order to improve their livelihood in the 2021/22 financial year.

Further to that, all the North West Housing Corporation flats in Mahikeng are being sectionalized to enable tenants to purchase the individual units.

Honourable Speaker, a culture of non-payment of rental and services remains a strategic threat to service delivery.

Even though the Department of Human Settlements, in their business plan, has already provisioned for development of Mixed Human Settlements, EXCO will as a matter of urgency conclude the policy framework thereof.

We are also in the process of applying for the Social Housing Regulatory Authority accreditation in order to improve our capacity to implement social housing and rental stock.

This will enhance the ability of the North West Housing Corporation to execute its mandate of providing housing for the gap market, which is in dire need.

Honourable Speaker, my office is inundated with allegations of fraud, corruption, maladministration relating to departments, entities, municipalities and traditional council.

We have, therefore, found it necessary that these matters must be investigated speedily and where there is prima facie evidence such matters must be escalated to the law enforcement agencies.

In this regard, effective from April 2021, we are establishing a Provincial Forensic Investigation Unit, to perform investigations on allegations of identified fraud, maladministration and corruption in provincial departments, public entities, municipalities and traditional authorities. This forensic unit will be established within the Provincial Treasury and will be functionally reporting directly to the Premier.

Honourable Speaker, last year we came to this august House and said that we will conduct lifestyle audits for Members of the Executive Council, including the Premier.

We are happy to announce that we are at an advanced stage to secure the services of a reputable service provider for this specific assignment, who should start duty at the beginning of April this year.

Honourable Speaker, the state's capability to deliver services is uneven and at times uncoordinated.

We have therefore resolved to address maladministration, poor governance and corruption across all three spheres of government, including public entities, decisively.

We aim to achieve (i) a capable and honest government, (ii) improved leadership, governance and accountability, (iii) a functional, efficient and integrated government, (iv) a professional, meritocratic and ethical public administration and (v) the mainstreaming of gender and empowerment of youth and persons with disabilities.

We are prioritizing the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption strategy towards building an ethical state within the context of the new normal, as induced by the negative effects of COVID-19.

We remain immensely committed towards economic transformation and job creation, apprenticeships, learnerships, internships, the Extended Public Works Programme and Community Based Programmes.

The Office of the Premier is reviewing and finalizing the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy. An economic modelling and analysis is being conducted to determine targets for this PGDS.

The Office of the Premier will continue to strengthen social collaboration programmes with the Moses Kotane, the Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and the JB Marks Foundations as pronounced in the last SOPA.

Honourable Speaker, following the establishment of the Task Team on the Plight of Military Veterans by President Cyril Ramaphosa in November last year, under the leadership of Deputy President David Mabuza, the Office of the Premier is engaging with all Military Veterans structures of former statutory and non-statutory forces to implement the provisions of the Military Veterans Act, aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of military veterans.

The Office of the Premier is engaging the Department of Higher Education and Training to explore the feasibility of a University of Technology in North West.

Honourable Speaker, this year, the Ikatisong School of Governance is to undergo a comprehensive turnaround to respond to the President's call for a capable state that is able to address the dire socio-economic needs. The North West University is the main stakeholder in this process.

We are committed to continue coordinating the important task of building skills and capacity of the state for efficient service delivery and to expose the youth to relevant cutting-edge skills required in the world of the 4th Industrial Revolution. In addition, we are rolling out two digital incubators in Dr Kenneth Kaunda and Ngaka Modiri Molema Districts, in line with the letter and spirit of the District Development Model.

The Office of the Premier is implementing an upgrade of the of new Mainframe for the Province; new equipment to enable this has arrived and has been installed.

We are busy with the reconfiguration and the two systems – the old one and the new one – will, for now, run parallel to ensure continuity of services such that service providers can be continually paid. The switch over to the new system will take place at the beginning of April this year.

In addition, the Office of the Premier is expanding internet connectivity to 123 libraries in the new financial year; citizens will then have access to internet access and the wider knowledge economy. These are our first steps as a government into the 4th industrial revolution; notwithstanding the strides that our private sectors are making in this space.

Honourable Members, we are moving at breakneck speed to ensure that the North West Province is on par with technological advancement brought about by 4IR.

Working together with the national Department of Communication and Digital Technologies, we are addressing digital infrastructure challenges and services in the North West Province, which include the roll-out of broadband network and Wi-Fi services to public facilities.

Some of these facilities include, but are not limited to, 103 schools and 22 health facilities in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, which have been fitted with 10-megabytes per second speed connectivity by BroadBand Infraco; which is a state-owned telecommunication service provider.

Furthermore, another 75 facilities are to be connected this year in the province; Wi-Fi and Local Area Network (LAN) roll out is already in progress and for that, 35 facilities will be completed this year.

Honourable Speaker, two SMMEs have been appointed as Access Network Providers (ANPs) for Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, and additional SMMEs were appointed as subcontractors by the main Access Network Providers.

The target groups on SMME Development are enterprises owned by Youth, Women and People with Disabilities, and Broadband Infraco has provided technical support and resources to these SMME's as part of its Enterprise Development Strategy.

Honourable Speaker, 20 new point of presence (PoP) sites are being established in order to connect municipalities, hospitals and economic hubs; with a total of 1 709 kilometres of fibre.

The Scope of Work includes the following: provisioning of fibre, transmission equipment, site establishment, labour costs for fibre installation and equipment installation.

Honourable Speaker, Communication and Digital Technologies Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, in her interaction with us, stated the need to modernize Provincial Government services through e-governance solutions, saying this strategy is already being expanded to the local government sphere.

I can confidently say we are on course towards having an improved citizen experience of government service delivery through digital channels and improved efficiency of government operations through the provisioning of secure and cost-effective ICT solutions, products and services.

Honourable Members, this is a catalyst for increased citizen value through availability and accessibility of core government public facing services on digital platforms and a better capacitated public service workforce capable of solving complex problems and adopting innovative solutions.

Regarding the digital migration programme, we are urging indigent households of the North West, since we are a prioritized province, to register at their nearest Post Offices in order for them to benefit from the

subsidized Set Top Boxes provided being by the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies, as installation thereof will resume from next month.

We are committed to working with unemployed young people and SMMEs to participate in government's Youth Digital Skilling programme which seeks to equip them with skills in Software development, App development, Web development, Artificial Intelligence and robotics amongst others.

The Mafikeng Digital Innovation Hub, under the management of 4IR Commissioner Joseph Ndaba, who is serving on Presidential commission on 4IR & CEO of MDI Hub, is an innovative co-working 4IR hub in the heart of Mahikeng.

Its focus is to unearth and cultivate innovative solutions that will ultimately assist communities to acclimatize in this vast changing technological world, while creating new business pipelines, new and future jobs, improving efficiency and effectiveness in the North West province.

MDI Hub being a champion of Digital Transformation in North West province in partnership with DEDECT has managed to rollout Digital COVID-19 SMME Business Recovery training intervention, training over 180 Entrepreneurs in 4 Districts of North West Province.

The aim of the intervention was to assist SMMES who received or are still to receive COVID 19-Relief Fund from DEDECT/NWDC to be able to operate during COVID 19 and beyond using technology as well as ready themselves for the new normal, take advantage of digital tools and develop their digital strategy.

We are indeed working a full speed to ensure that 4IR benefits the youth of this province.

Honourable Speaker, last year, we announced that the North West will benefit from the proposed Smart City Project linking Lanseria in Gauteng to Hartebeespoort Dam in Madibeng in the North West.

Since then, a lot of work has been done by the North West Development Corporation to acquire 30% of the land earmarked for the Smart City that has been offered to us by project developers who currently own the land. The MEC for Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism will unpack that process during the departmental budget vote.

We also reported to this august house that the Bojanala Platinum Valley Special Economic Zones Programme comprising of targeted investment in capital equipment manufacturing, renewable energy, agro-processing zone and general manufacturing and general mixed area in the Mogwase Industrial Area, has been established.

Honourable Speaker, we have strengthened the SEZ Project Management Capacity, and the SEZ Board, CEO and Chief Financial Officer will be appointed to drive this catalytic project in the province.

The revised business case is being finalised and will be submitted to the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) for designation and awarding of an SEZ Operator Licence before the end of the 1st Quarter in 2021/2022.

We have, with the support of the dtic, implemented the Bodirelo Industrial Park Revitalization Programme in Mogwase to revitalize and refurbish state-owned industrial parks as part of regional industrialization and increasing the manufacturing base by offering quality industrial infrastructure in township and rural areas.

The second phase was dedicated to refurbishment of eight factories. In Bodirelo in Mogwase leading to 1700 sustainable jobs.

Honourable Speaker, COVID-19 has severely impacted on businesses and SMMEs have been also felt the wrath of the pandemic due to the lockdown that had to be imposed to curb the spread of the pandemic.

In response to the devastating effect that COVID-19 has had on SMMEs, we developed an SMME Relief Fund in July last year and mandated the NWDC to administer the fund worth about R40 million as from 31 August 2020, when we transferred that money to the NWDC to provide the much-needed relief to SMMEs and informal traders.

As at the 17th of February 2021, a total of 3390 beneficiaries were paid over R14,4 million from the COVID-19 Relief Fund. The total remaining disbursements will be completed by the end of this month.

Honourable Speaker, the draft bill to merge the North West Parks and the North West Tourism Boards is currently before the Legislature following an extensive public participation process and the implementation of the merger underway in line with the implementation plan thereof.

We are expecting that the merger should be finalised before the beginning of the 2021/22 financial year to ensure that the merger of the two entities into one is effective from beginning of April 2021. The inputs are being incorporated so that merger can be effective from the first of April 2021.

Honourable Speaker, in addressing the infrastructure challenges within our Parks and Reserves, the North West Parks Board is already engaging with the Private sector to explore Public Private Partnerships.

It is important to go this route to improve the standard of infrastructure and ensure that we attract tourists.

At the moment, the R30 million Bloemhof infrastructure project is 85% complete and the second phase of the development will be completed during the 2021/22 financial year

The R15 million Vaalkop Dam project has been approved for implementation and will commence in the 2021/22 financial year while

the R15 million Borakalalo Tented Camp development project will also commence and be completed in the 2021/22 financial year.

Honourable Speaker, we have promulgated the North West Business Licensing Act No. 3 of 2019 to regulate, control and license businesses in the Province and to ensure that all businesses, under this Act, are conducted in a manner which promotes the integrity on the business sector and does not cause harm to the public interest, promote opportunities for historically disadvantaged people to participate fully in the business industry.

Ladies and gentlemen, all staff at the North West Gambling Board have submitted vetting forms to the State Security Agency as part of turning around that entity and ensure that it adheres to clean governance as a regulatory body.

The North West Gambling Board has completed and submitted proposed amendments to its legislation, including the introduction of online gambling to enable broader revenue platforms and enhance our efforts to fighting illegal gambling, the introduction of greyhound racing as an alternate racing mode in the province as well as horse racing.

As part of the North West Protected Areas Expansion Strategy and Implementation Plan, we are availing, at least, 24 000 hectares of land into conservation estates through the biodiversity stewardship programme.

We are pushing ahead with this through the combined efforts from the Provincial Government and the North West Parks Board; to achieve cost-effective protected area expansion for improved ecosystem representation, ecological sustainability and resilience to climate change. In this way, protected areas form a valuable network of ecological infrastructure; and can support rural livelihoods and local economic development.

Honourable Speaker, as part of our continuous efforts to improve the accounting practices of Provincial Government Departments and Public Entities, through the Provincial Treasury, we are implementing plans to improve asset management in the Province.

We are doing this through intensive training on asset management effective from the second quarter of the 2021/22 financial year for Provincial Government Departments and Public Entities and implementing the immovable asset guide in both Departments and Public Entities. Furthermore, the Provincial Treasury will conduct quarterly accounting updates on Modified Cash Standard (MCS) for Departments and GRAP updates for Public Entities.

This is over and above initiatives of capacity building through training targeting the CFO's sections of all the departments and entities so as to ensure improved audit outcomes.

Honourable Speaker, we remain concerned about the state of financial management in the Province. This situation impacts negatively on the

ability of the municipalities to deliver critical services of water, sanitation, electricity, roads and refuse removal.

It is for these reasons that we are continuing, in the context of the District Development Model, providing dedicated support to all the 22 municipalities in the North West to improve financial management and conduct municipal capacity building interventions such as Contract Management, mSCOA GRAP Aligned Financial Management and Reporting.

These support initiatives include monitoring, assessing and guiding municipalities to comply with legislative requirements relating to municipal revenue financial management and sustainability.

In an effort to improve municipal audit outcomes, the Provincial Treasury will be reviewing the interim financial statements of the municipalities with the aim of improving the quality of the financial statements at the end of the financial year.

Honourable Speaker, we have had to be decisive and invoke the provisions of Section 139 (1)(b) of the Constitution due to the untenable situation at the JB Marks, Madibeng, Ratlou, Tswaing, Lekwa-Teemane and Mahikeng Local Municipalities for a period not exceeding 12 months. The intervention period has since ended and we continue to support these municipalities in terms of Section 154 of the Constitution.

The intervention will continue post the local government elections this year to allow for a proper handover to newly elected councils and to allow for smooth transition.

Honourable Speaker, we continue to work with municipalities, especially on the recruitment and selection of senior personnel.

We can only change the situation in municipalities and fast track service delivery by appointing people who have the required skills, experience and qualifications.

There is a need to increase our water sources and at the same time, educate our communities to preserve water. Most of the water projects which were commissioned last year have been completed or are near completion and they are the Dinokana Water Augmentation project, the Ganalaagte Boreholes and Sewer Pump Station Refurbishment project, the Naledi Water Augmentation Phase 1 and 2 projects as well as the Tshing Cent Fall Sewer Line project.

Honourable Speaker, the Khunotshwane Water Reticulation, Decontamination of Septic Tanks and Kopela Water Supply, Rooigrond waste water treatment plant have all been completed and they will assist to reduce the pressure for the demand on water supply in all these areas. I am pleased to announce that the following water and sanitation projects have been completed and they are the refurbishment of the Mahikeng Mmabatho Sewer Pump stations & Waste Water Treatment plants, the refurbishment of Tshing Sewer Pump station, the upgrading of the Tshing

Bulk Sewer line phase1 and the refurbishment of the Schweizer Reneke Water Purification plant.

In order to deal with the water challenges in the province, the water projects that we had committed to giving priority attention to are at between 80% and 95% completion; and they will be completed this year across the four districts of the province.

Honourable Speaker, the Taung/Naledi Bulk Water Supply project which aims to benefit 189 139 households in more than 55 villages in the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District and has already created 304 job opportunities, is nearing completion. The last phase of this project will commence in July this year.

The water from this scheme is aimed at both the domestic and commercial purposes within the Greater Taung and Naledi Local Municipalities.

Honourable Speaker, we are developing provincial capacity through the establishment of a dedicated unit to coordinate water provision and sanitation across the province.

We have instructed the Moretele Local Municipality to prepare and submit a business plan for an unfunded bulk water supply project there; for consideration by the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Furthermore, we have instructed all municipalities in the North West to submit concrete plans to the Provincial Water Master Plan and as a

priority, address sewerage and sanitation problems within their boundaries as a matter of urgency by end of March 2021.

We have an ongoing commitment ensure the adequate provision of clean, drinking water in the North West and this is a commitment we aim to keep Honourable Speaker, during the last SOPA, we presented the Investigation Report into the affairs of the Baphalane Traditional community to this august House.

Instead of moving forward with the recommendations of that report, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic frustrated our implementation plans. We are engaging with those stakeholders in due course and report back to this house.

Following the release of the final Report into Traditional Succession Dispute and Claims of the Bakgatla ba Kgafela in 2019, we appointed an Administrator, Mr Phineas Tjie, to take over the affairs of the Bakgatla Ba Kgafela Traditional Council. The process to appoint an independent forensic auditor there is almost complete.

Following a protracted court battle, we managed to release the reports into succession disputes and claims of the Bapo Ba Mogale 1 and Bapo Ba Mogale and issued the rightful successors with the recognition certificates on 21 August 2020.

We have also approved the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the succession dispute and claim of the Batlhako Ba Leema.

To that end, on 14 August 2020, we issued a recognition certificate to a Kgosi identified by the royal family.

The Commission of Inquiry into the dispute over the Bogosi jwa Barolong boo Seitshiro is a subject matter before the Mafikeng High Court. The Applicants want the High Court to review and set aside the report of the Commission Inquiry on the basis that the Commission continued in their absence. The Applicants are in possession of the report.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Commission of Inquiry into the dispute over succession to the Bogosi jwa Bahurutshe ba Gopane is expected to resume its work soon. The Commissioners and legal representatives are engaging on the problem that had brought that commission to a halt.

Honourable Speaker, we are serious about our commitment to restoring the dignity of our traditional leaders. We are striving to ensure that they work under conditions that are conducive.

The handover of a number of completed traditional council offices, being Batlharo Ba Ga Masibi, Barolong Ba Ga Phoi and Batlhaping Ba Ga Maldi, was put on hold due to some defects and funds are being made available in the 2021/22 financial year to address those defects.

Honourable Speaker, we are strengthening our anthropological capability with the establishment of the digitization unit in the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to preserve information

relating to culture, heritage, good governance and traditional leadership in all the 56 traditional authorities in the North West.

Working together with the North West House of Traditional Leaders, we are hosting a Provincial Rural Economic Development Summit, this year, aimed at coming up with a Comprehensive Rural Development Strategy so as to position rural development as a key part of the District Development Model.

Honourable Members, we are indeed thankful for the continued cooperation, support and assistance we receive from Kgosi Moshe Mabe and the North West House of Traditional Leaders.

Mmusa Kgotla yo o tlotlegang, dipalangwa tsa bana go ya dikolong mono North West e santse e le tlhoba boroko.

Mme tlhoba boroko segolo bogolo mo ntlheng eno, ke tlokego ya madi a lekaneng go diragatsa jaaka dikopo tsa thuso ka dipalangwa tsone di ile magoletsa.

Mme re itumelela lodi lwa tekanyetso-kabo lo le okeditsweng ngwaga-tlola me re santse re tlike go boela re oketsa kabo eno gape go kgontsa gore bontsi jwa dikolo, bana le mafelo a a mantsi a akarediwe mo dipalangweng tsa bana ba dikolo.

Re dirisa bokana ka R400 million ka ngwaga go pega bana ba sekolo ba feta 65 000 go ya dikolong tse fetang 400 mo Profenseng ka bophara.

Bontsi jwa dipalangwa di ba pega go tswa kwa metse selegaeng, metse ya dipolasi, di kgaolong tse di kgakala le ditoropo le makeishene a rona. We are therefore working round the clock to ensure that no learner is deprived of transportation to go to school and this is a commitment we intend to keep.

Honourable Speaker, following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, we successfully distributed Personal Protective Equipment and related PPE materials to taxi operators throughout the Province.

These included sanitizers, disinfectants, masks, face shields and gloves.

Honourable Speaker, in the 2021/22 financial year, we are continuing with the second phase of the Lichtenburg Weighbridge which is already underway with a budget of R2,2 million set aside; over R17,19 million has been ring-fenced for the Renovation of Pilanesberg Airport; a further R450 000 and another R350 000 has been allocated towards the completion of renovation at the Mogwase and Kgomotso Registering Authorities; and the construction of an ablution block at GD Montshioa Airport with an estimated cost of R4 million.

Ladies and gentlemen, on 05 May last year, the North West Division of the High Court ordered that the provisional liquidation that was placed on NTI in August 2019, be discharged, ending eight months of anxiety and uncertain future to the more than 1500 workers of and 20 000 daily commuters serviced by NTI.

The liquidation albatross was brought about by the inability by those at the helm of the entity to maintain prudent financial management, an ageing fleet and high operational cost; to mention but three. To avoid further deterioration of the financial situation at NTI, the EXCO, as a Shareholders Committee, approved measures to improve the entity's liquidity and set it on a path to recovery, thereby mitigating for future liquidation threats.

These measures included, among others, re-negotiating vehicle lease agreements, making a case for the extension of commuter contracts, disposal of non-core assets, enhancement of revenue enhancement systems and other cost containment measures.

Honourable Speaker we are, therefore, strengthening capacity and restoring corporate governance principles that were disrupted by the liquidation in order to sustain the recovery plan.

These interventions are meant to, undoubtedly, propel NTI to financial prosperity, save 1500 direct jobs and 20 000 indirect jobs; behind whom there are tens of thousands of households that depend on their support.

Honourable Speaker, we received R80 million to implement the Presidential Employment Initiative (PEI) programme which is a labour-intensive programme aimed at creating the much-needed jobs in support of the economic recovery initiatives.

We are therefore utilizing the Vuk'Uphile Contractor Development Programme as anchor contractors who will appoint SMME companies as sub-contractors to carry out the work.

The sub-contractors have already appointed 5000 employees through the EPWP Programme to do drainage maintenance, roadside maintenance, traffic signs and roadside furniture, protection work, vegetation maintenance as well as brick making and paving.

The programme was implemented with effect from January 2021 and will run until 31 March 2021.

As part of the economic recovery programmes aimed at generating more revenue for the state, we are implementing the disposal of non-core assets such as houses and vacant stands.

The disposal programme is a multi-year project that is aimed at disposing 476 houses and stands over a period of three years aimed at generating approximately R238 million.

We are starting with a first batch of 150 houses in the 2021/2022 financial year with an estimated revenue of R75 million.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have recently concluded the transfer of 233 hectares of farm land to Mekgareng community around Hartebeespoort Dam and a further 11 127 hectares of farm land has also been transferred

to the Bakgatla ba Kgafela tribal authority around the Pilanesberg Nature Reserve.

We are, in the 2021/22 financial year, transferring a further 48 farm portions towards achieving our socio-economic objectives, including land reform, black economic empowerment, alleviation of poverty, job creation and the redistribution of wealth.

Honourable Speaker, Eskom has spent R1,5 billion on 81 276 electrification connections over the last five years in the North West.

Honourable Members, working in partnership with Eskom, we are well on track to electrify an additional 13,769 connections this year at a cost of R268 million.

We are 80% completed although we have risks that we are in the process of mitigating.

Over the last 5 years, Eskom has also spent an additional R1.3bn on capital projects in this province; we have, working with Eskom, added 234 kilometres of electrification lines and cable and we strengthened another 134 kilometres of line while we added 2 648 more additional customers in over the last five years.

Honourable Members, we are pleased to report that five of our municipalities are now paying their current account on time and in full and we salute them.

They are the JB Marks, Madibeng, Ramotshere Moiloa, Maquassi Hills and Tswaing Local Municipalities.

Working together with Eskom, engagements are afoot with other municipalities to make arrangements to settle their debts with Eskom and follow suit in paying their current accounts on time.

In April 2020, the State President, His Excellency, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, in addressing unemployment in the country, announced a R500 billion fiscal stimulus package.

National Treasury has made available R7 billion to fund implementation of the Presidential Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI) Project. A large proportion of the funding will go towards creating work opportunities for an estimated 319 000 youth between the ages of 18 and 35 years old.

Honourable Speaker, we are re-affirming our commitment to reduce unemployment and create jobs, as alluded to by President Cyril Ramaphosa at the recent 2021 State of the National Address.

As result, we are continuing with critical job opportunities which also support skills development and experiential learning programmes.

I am pleased to announce that the two campuses of the North West College of Nursing have obtained provisional accreditation from South African Nursing Council and the Council for Higher Education.

Ladies and gentlemen, the intake of 90 first year students into the new nursing programme has been completed and the academic programme will commence in due course.

In the 2020/21 financial year, the Department of Health had committed to recruit 299 unemployed young people on internships, learnerships and bursary programmes.

In this regard, we have already registered 25 unemployed electrical engineering youth and we are in the process of appointing 50 apprentices to assist with the maintenance of health facilities; and the selection process to recruit unemployed youth on internship, learnership and bursary programmes is underway.

Honourable Speaker, the Sefako Makgatho Medical Sciences University has approved the admission of eight students to be trained as Pharmacy Assistants while the Tshwane University of Technology has identified five applicants to be trained in health technology while six students are currently registered for clinical psychology at the North West University, Mafikeng Campus.

In addition, 120 Unemployed youth are currently being trained as Pharmacy Assistants by the Health and Welfare SETA.

In our resolve to develop young people in this province, for the 2021/22

financial year, we are providing training and bursary opportunities for 90 professional nurses, 15 medical doctors and 29 allied health professionals.

We have, in cooperation with TVET colleges, granted 50 beneficiaries the opportunity to be trained as artisans to contribute once again to youth development and to the maintenance of our health facilities.

Through the Office of the Premier, we aimed to appoint 39 learners to participate in a learnership programme as part of our strategy to enhance youth capability and reduce youth unemployment.

However, as part of the Artisan Development Programme, 25 learners are currently placed at the Pretoria Portland Cement (PPC) Training Centre in Slurry, just outside Mahikeng and 10 others are at the Intelek Training Centre for assessment to resume their apprenticeship.

Working together with the Automotive Industrial Development Centre (AIDC), we are implementing an Automotive Skills Development Programme targeting 200 young people in the fourth quarter of the next financial year and rolled over the MTEF period to provide automotive repair skills that include mechanic, welding, panel beating, spray painting, diesel mechanics, auto electricians, wheel alignment and tyre replacement.

We have also trained and appointed 144 young people as business regulations data capturers and they have been very central in capturing paper based North West SMMEs Relief Fund application for evaluation purposes.

The 144 youth are also developing an online provincial database of liquor traders in the province as we migrate from paper-based liquor registration to an online system to prevent fraud and double registration. The programme commenced in the 2020/21 financial year and will be rolled over into the 2021/22 financial year.

Honourable Speaker, 100 young people have been placed into the EPWP Waste Management & Biodiversity Economy Programme, of which 60 were placed in Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati, ten in Bojanala, 20 in Dr Kenneth Kaunda and 10 in Ngaka Modiri Molema and all the while getting a stipend.

This programme will continue in the 2021/22 financial year. A further 100 beneficiaries will be placed within Tourism Businesses for a period of six months in all the four District Municipalities to get-on job training and experience while receiving a stipend of R3980 per beneficiary.

During the 2021/22 financial year, we'll be partnering with Lepharo Incubator, which is a SEDA Incubator to the tune of R22,3 million; Harmony Gold's Kraaipan Operations to the tune of R4,5 million; Rustenburg Local Municipality to the tune of R9,5 million; and the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and

Tourism to the tune of R14,5 million to incubate 135 SMME's over three years in manufacturing, engineering services, mine water rehabilitation and to reclaim remaining gold in existing mine tailings to eventually create 540 jobs.

Honourable Speaker, the Carousel Casino near Hammanskraal has reopened for business, affording its immediate community entertainment and employment opportunities; at the moment, 300 staff are employed, which is a significant increase from the 79 staff at the time of closure.

In line with the resolution of the Lekgotla last year, the Department of COGTA has been able to create a total of 20 900 job opportunities through various initiatives, including 120 EPWP job opportunities and 20 701 for the Community Works Programme, eight internships whilst 71 contract employees were appointed in this financial year.

Honourable Speaker, regarding our job creation efforts, we had committed ourselves to appoint 400 EPWP workers from all four Districts in the Province through the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management, to work as safety patrollers in crime riddled areas and hotspots, in order to enhance the fight against crime by SAPS.

To date, 395 were appointed to work in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and the Ngaka Modiri Molema Districts. 140 will soon be appointed in Bojanala to bring the jobs created to 535, which is an increase of 135 from the initial target of 400.

For that exercise, R2,61 million of the EPWP incentive grant and R2,69 million of equitable shares is budgeted. And as a way to respond to the COVID-19 protocols, the Department of COSATMA has also employed 160 graduates to monitor and ensure that all learner transport buses comply with COVID-19 guidelines.

The Department of Education, through infrastructure projects, has created 4 468 short term jobs throughout the province. We have also appointed 44 interns, 295 classroom assistants and 7134 screeners and cleaners.

Another aspect of the Project pertains to the saving of School Governing Body (SGB) funded posts in fee paying schools and posts at government subsidized independent schools.

We have been allocated an amount of over R445 million to appoint 23 738 School Education Assistants (SEAs) and General School Assistants (GSAs) from 1st December 2020 until 31st March 2022.

Honourable Members, through EPWP programme at the Department of Social Development, we have created job opportunities for 1 540 beneficiaries in the current financial year and we aim to still create job opportunities in NPO's to improve governance and service delivery; as a result, 1 071 job opportunities will be created in the 2021/22 financial year.

As part of our efforts to continuously create job opportunities, the Department of Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation has contributed to job creations in the following fields; EPWP, 508 including artists in schools, 34 contract workers, 26 sports co-ordinators and two internships.

Honourable Speaker, a lot has been done in the past financial year, notwithstanding the enormous challenges posed by the devastating effect of the novel Coronavirus on service delivery and we are of the firm belief that we have an inherent responsibility as elected public representatives and leaders of society to change the lives of the people of this province to the better.

Honourable Speaker, in conclusion, allow me to borrow from the late Guinea-Bissau poet, theoretician, nationalist and revolutionary, Amilcar Cabral who said the following in reference to leaders of society, "**Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories**".

A re ithuteng bothokwa jwa go bolelela baagi nnete ka dinako tsothe.

Ke a leboga Mmusu Kgotla yo o tlotlegang.

Ends

