

State of the Province Address by the Premier of the North West Province
Hon Maureen Modiselle
12 June 2009

Hon Speaker of the Provincial Legislature
Hon Members of the Executive Council
Hon Members of the Provincial Legislature
Judge President and Members of the Judiciary
Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Visiting Foreign Dignitaries
Former Premier of the Province, Dr Popo Molefe
Former Premier of the Province, Mme Edna Molewa
Hon Leaders of Political Parties
Our Esteemed Traditional Leaders
Your Worship Executive Mayors and Mayors of our Municipalities
Speakers of our Councils
Heads of Our Security Agencies
Chairpersons of State Organs Supporting our Democracy
The Director General and Leaders of Administration in all spheres of Government
Chairpersons and Chief Executive Officer of State Owned Enterprises
Leaders of Labour Movement, Civil Society, Faith Based-Organizations and Business
Comrades and Friends
Ladies and Gentlemen

Honourable Speaker, **Ngugi wa Thiong'o says: "A farmer does not stop planting seeds just because of the failure of one crop. Success is born trying and trying"**.

Hon Members, we are marking the opening of the 4th Term of this Democratic Parliament of the people on the eve of the 33rd Anniversary of the June 16 Student uprising in 1976. This date in the calendar of the history of the struggle for liberation in this country shall remain a constant reminder of the highest price paid by our predecessors to guarantee our freedom today.

The youth of our country, refreshed our memories of their heroism when in their millions, took charge of the destiny of this nation by dominating the queues during the last general elections on the 22nd of April. Our journey as a nation in search of its soul has never been more intense since the 1994 democratic breakthrough like it is now.

The general elections held in April, demonstrated the resolve of the masses of our people for the creation of a nation free from the ills that defined life under apartheid. Our people put aside their differences and petty squabbles, resolved clearly to renew their mandate for the ANC led government to continue on a platform to realize the vision espoused in the Freedom Charter.

It was encouraging to observe that, except for the ideological biases we made during elections, almost all contesting political parties identified poverty, unemployment and the need to create decent jobs as the key drivers for our ongoing transformation and nation-building agenda as a society.

On behalf of the Executive Council, and Government as a whole, we commit ourselves to honour the trust bestowed on us by the masses, by making commitments in the ANC manifesto a living reality for the people of this Province.

We also commit ourselves that if we fail to achieve this, our movement the ANC, and its membership should exercise its right to recall those of its public representatives whose vision may be blinded by trappings of power and privileges. As true servants of the people, we shall forever remember that genuine transformation should be defined by the extent to which people's lives are changed for the better.

I am therefore humbled by the task bestowed upon me by my movement, the African National Congress (ANC) and by extension the people of this province, to steer this delivery vehicle for the next five years.

The Executive Council I have been mandated to lead is fully conscious of the fact that you have pinned your hopes on us to steer this beautiful Province to a path of growth, development and progress.

Your investment in us must bear returns.

I invite Hon Members sitting in opposition benches to work together with Government to defeat the only enemy we jointly share; poverty, unemployment, poor health care, crime and rural under-development.

Hon Speaker, we are determined to avoid the danger of electoral triumphalism and arrogance against people we do not share the same views with. The task before us and the challenges facing our people, require true leadership that builds consensus for the good of our Province and its people.

AS President Jacob Zuma says:

“For as long as there are South Africans who die from preventable disease;

For as long as there are workers who struggle to feed their families and who battle to find work;

For as long as there are communities without clean water, decent shelter or proper sanitation;

For as long as there are rural dwellers unable to make a decent living from the land on which they live;

For as long as there are women who are subjected to discrimination, exploitation or abuse;

For as long as there are children who do not have the means nor the opportunity to receive a decent education;

We shall not rest, and we dare not falter, in our drive to eradicate poverty."

Let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to my predecessors Dr Popo Molefe and Mme Edna Molewa for their contributions as architects of the machinery we are inheriting today. The firm foundation of the politico-administrative infrastructure laid by them remains indelible, and we as a Province will forever be indebted to their contributions. I want to assure them that theirs is a legacy we shall protect and defend as we open a new chapter in our National Democratic Revolution.

In the past, we set aside a decade ending in 2014, to reduce poverty and unemployment by half; develop skills and capacity to fight poverty and grow the economy; promote the rights of vulnerable groups like women, the youth, people with disabilities, children and the aged; efficiently and effectively provide compassionate government services to the people; markedly reduce preventable diseases and turn the tide on HIV/AIDS; and create an environment of safety and security for sustainable development.

It is now a fact that our Country is in recession. This economic situation may create a damper on the program of action we have outlined. But as Ngugi wa Thiong'o says; **"we will not stop striving for these goals simply because we may miss on one target this year or the next one"**. Even if we may be compelled to revise down some ambitious undertakings, we will not abandon the total implementation of the program.

Recession or no recession, our people still expect government to provide answers on Job creation, poverty relief, investment and growth.

Recessions require extraordinary responses from all social partners. It also calls for better and more efficient management and utilization of available resources. The entire public service will be redirected to infuse a new sense of prudence to ensure that we achieve twice more with the same resources than we did in the past.

Government will be introducing more stringent cost cutting measures across state departments to close leakages in the system. Since the beginning of the 2008/9 Financial Year we introduced a 2% budget cut across all departments, and stopped all non essential expenditure items which are not core functions of particular departments. We will intensify this intervention in the coming years.

Current forecasts of real growth in South African Gross Domestic Product for the period 2009-2014 optimistically puts the average annual rate midway between 3% and 4%. In order to deal decisively with poverty challenges we have identified the following **priority objectives** on which to build the future prospects of this Province:

- Speeding up economic growth and transforming the economy to create decent work and sustainable livelihoods;
- Massive programme to build social and economic infrastructure
- Comprehensive rural development strategy linked to land and agrarian reform and food security
- Strengthen our skills and human resource base;
- Improve the health profile of the nation;
- Intensify the fight against crime and corruption;
- Build cohesive, caring and sustainable communities;
- Sustainable resource management and use;
- Pursuing African advancement and enhanced international cooperation; and
- Building a developmental state including improvement of public services and strengthening democratic institutions.

Each of our Ten Provincial Departments will in the course of the next three weeks give more elaboration on how these priorities will be implemented as part of Government Program of Action for the year.

As part of preparing government for the achievements of these goals, we will be starting a process of auditing the functioning of State Owned Entities responsible for Economic Development. Duplications and cross funding of same mandates has in the past limited the opportunity for these entities to maximize their contribution for the attainment of Provincial goals.

The creating of a stand Alone Department of Economic Development at National has opened an opportunity for a better integrated and coherent Economic Policy development and implementation in the country.

The larger part of our Provincial Growth & Development Strategy will therefore be revised to speak to and be aligned with newly determined economic policy priorities. We seek to create a new economic planning dispensation, which is less technocratic and more participatory and consultative. In this regard, all social stakeholders will be mobilized to shape and take ownership of the Provincial Economic Strategy which shall evolve in the next few months.

Honourable Speaker, Mafikeng Industrial Development Zone remains an anchor pillar for the revitalization of the economy of our Capital City. During the course of this year, Government will unveil a new Industrial Strategy for the MIDZ, which shall be a marketing tool to attract investors. In addition, the MIDZ will be expected to conclude all processes for the filling of critical vacancies to allow it to function.

State owned enterprises should play a leading role in the creation of decent job opportunities through procurement and infrastructure spending. Government will increase its capacity to monitor and evaluate the social impact or consequence of the expenditure by State Owned enterprises. Key areas of focus will be:

- Monitoring initiatives of all parastatal procurement spend in the province's creation of real jobs
- Participation in enterprise development initiatives of multi-nationals and mining companies operating in the province. This will be monitored through existing instruments such as the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (with emphasis on women & youth) score card and other compliance requirements.

EDUCATION

Honourable Speaker, Education receives the largest share of our Provincial Equitable Share. Over the last few years, important milestones have been achieved in improving conditions in our public schools. But a lot still remains to be done to achieve; total universal access for all children in the Province, elimination of learner drop outs within the system, improved performance in gateway subjects (Mathematics, science & English).

In order for us to promote a culture of achievement and improving learner outcomes with a target of an overall 20% improvement in the key education indicators by 2014, the following measures will be put in place:

- Progressive implementation of Grade R in public primary schools.
- Transforming some of our public schools into Full Service Schools for easy access to physically challenged learners as well as strengthening of special schools.
- Providing learner transport in rural schools and nutritious meals to all learners. Our target is to improve on the progress made by our predecessors.
- Increasing the number of "No Fee" schools. We will during this term integrate our education and social development information systems so that learners caught through our social grant system do not have seams at other levels of our delivery system.
- Increasing student's intake in our FET Colleges.

Honourable Speaker, the role of parents in the education of our children is very important. Government shall continue with a program to train and increase the skills levels of parents serving in School Governing Bodies. Each School Governing body should at least receive two leadership training sessions during its term.

Research has also shown that schools which produce better grade 12 results, have relatively better managerial leadership. In this regard, we concur with the State President that the role of School Principals is central to the success of government's intervention in making our schools work.

On our part, we will be expanding on the already built 38 Resource Centers, which are resourced to give support to schools and progressively ensure that each school has access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and other services. In this regard, we will also be ensuring that all schools in the province are provided with a computer to enhance information management and administration.

The introduction of Occupation Specific Dispensation in the Education Sector has brought some stability since the National Strike of 2007. Government shall continue to work together with teacher unions to progressively improve job conditions of educators in public schools.

Educators should equally honour their side of the contract, to carry out the non-negotiables announced by President Zuma.

Health

In the recent past, our public health response capacities were challenged with the outbreak of Cholera in certain parts of the Province. Though the number of fatalities and infections in our Province were insignificant, important lessons were learned on how in future such epidemics could be responded to.

We thank sincerely, our health professionals in both public & private sectors who worked around the clock to assist those who needed treatment during this time. We now know better, that the best cure of Cholera is prevention. In this regard government shall intensify its sanitation program to reach all areas of the Province.

Honourable Speaker, we are renewing our energies to deal with the scourge of HIV/AIDS. A number of interventions in the Province will be rolled out to resuscitate our Provincial Council on Aids. Such interventions include:

- Developing a Provincial Strategic Plan
- Relocating the Provincial Council on Aids to the Office of the Premier, for better accountability and political leadership

- Streamlining overall Departmental budgets on HIV/AIDS to maximize impact
- Increasing the role of local government leadership in all our local and district councils on Aids
- Amending legislation to align it with National.

As the new Provincial Council on Aids is appointed, the Premier as Political Head of Government shall assume the Chairpersonship of the PCA. Equally, all our District and Local Mayors will be encouraged to play the same role in PCA local Chapters.

The fight against HIV/AIDS cannot succeed if government and the entire political leadership do not integrate work on HIV/AIDS as part of their daily responsibilities.

Government will move swiftly to include HIV/AIDS, as an area of assessment for the performance of all Political and Administrative Heads of Departments. I encourage all members of this House, through the Hon Speaker, to include in the work that we do as public representatives, monthly constituency reporting on HIV/AIDS programs in our localities.

We concur with President Zuma, that if we do all the above, we would achieve all the targets contained in the Comprehensive Plan for the Treatment, Management and Care of HIV/AIDS; to reduce the infection rate by 50% by 2011, and reach 80% of ARV treatment by 2011.

We need to strengthen the treatment of TB to combat the high rates of immune suppression and the emergence of the Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) and Extreme Drug Resistant (XDR) strains. Our Province is one of the Provinces with the lowest TB cure rate in the country.

The Department will intensify the training and deployment of home based care givers to increase our coverage of TB patients particularly in rural areas. This we will do by reducing the burden of long distances travelled by TB patients for treatments.

The maintenance of reliable and credible Health Information Systems is crucial for the provision of quality health care in our hospitals. Government will investigate the possibility of the introduction of Smart Card for Primary Health Care (PHC), whose job is to ensure that patients attending Primary Health Care can keep a record of their illnesses when transferring from one clinic to another. This will further ensure that patients are given appropriate treatment because they will have traceable medical histories.

We believe this will reduce the case load of instances where government is cited for incorrect diagnosis, wrong drug prescriptions etc.

The MEC for Health and Social Development, the Honourable Rebecca Kasienyane will elaborate further in her budget policy speech later this month on this and many other interventions that are intended to improve the health care system in the province.

FIGHT AGAINST CRIME AND CORRUPTION

Hon Speaker, we are moving with speed to strengthen our institutional machinery to deal with corruption in the Public Sector. In this regard, during the next two months we will be starting a process to recruit new staff to resuscitate the Forensic Investigations Unit in the Premier's Office.

This unit lost highly experienced and competent personnel who went to National Treasury and other Provincial Governments. As a result this unit could not function effectively.

The Office of the Premier shall give all the assistance required to ensure that our public service is cleansed of any corruption. All cases which have remained dormant following the transfer of the unit from Finance in the past three years shall be reopened to assess whether successful prosecution can still be achieved.

We will also be resuscitating the North West Anti Corruption Forum. This forum represents a dynamic cooperation and integration between government, civil society, and private sector in advocacy programs to create a non-tolerance culture for corruption in our communities.

Hon Speaker, & Members, there will be no place to hide for corrupt officials in the public sector. The Executive Council has adopted a principled policy position, that none of us as Political Leaders shall be involved in any form of defense for any Officials charged with corruption.

In order to pay special attention to the Safety & Security of our communities, we have taken a decision to establish a Stand Alone Public Safety Department. In the last few months our reservist recruitment campaign has assisted to improve the visibility of our police across the Province and thereby reduce dramatically petty crime incidents.

At this point, Hon Speaker, allow me an opportunity to use this moment on behalf of government to extend our deepest condolences to the families of the six Police Reservists who died in a car accident near Tlhabane over the last weekend. Our banners are lowered as we pay tribute to these committed young people who left us when they still had a lot to give to this Province.

I was particularly saddened, to hear that the families of the deceased do not qualify for any form of compensation from Government. In consultation with National, a policy determination will have to be made on how better we could show appreciation of the sacrifices that these young members paid in service to our government.

We are worried about the spate of farm killings and other related crimes afflicting our farming communities. The Province will develop a specific intervention program to increase the safety levels of both our farmers and farm workers.

Indigent rural communities who depend on their livestock for survival are facing ever increasing threat of stock theft. Lack of proper policing coverage particularly in rural areas has created a cover for criminals operating in these areas to perpetuate their crimes with impunity.

Community participation in crime fighting remains one of the effective methods of policing and prosecution of perpetrators of crime. Government will find funds to inject into Policing Forums and Street Committees to empower our communities in their endeavor to work together with government to create safer communities.

We have set ourselves the objective to accelerate efforts to reduce serious and violent crimes in line with the set national target of 7% to 10% per annum. More than ever, there is a more and pressing need to intensify efforts on crimes against women and children.

GROWING THE AGRICULTURE ECONOMY

Hon Speaker, Agriculture is the second largest contributor to our Provincial GDP after mining. Economic studies indicate that there are growth opportunities in the agro-processing sector which have not been fully explored.

Provincial Government through our Economic Development Cluster will be putting together a comprehensive package of available opportunities in the Province to be marketed to potential investors.

Over the past few years, government has not performed well in the utilization of public funds dedicated particularly to assist small subsistence farmers. This coupled with failure to implement a sustainable funding system for agricultural projects has increased the debt burden of small farmers. Many small farmers have opted out of business. Prohibitive input costs continue to drive many farmers into insolvency and inhibits new entrants. We will start engagement between commercial farmers, financial institutions and government on interventions needed to rescue our Agricultural Sector in the Province.

Hon Speaker, in the last five years, this House debated on countless occasions how we can better respond to the challenges in our Agriculture Department. Linked to this debate has been the perennial headache of non performance of the Directorate for Entrepreneurial Development (DED).

Let me take this opportunity to announce that, by the end of this year, we will bring legislation through the relevant Portfolio Committee to repeal the DED founding legislation. When that happens, in simple terms, **DED will formally seize to operate and its functions shall be integrated into relevant directorate within the Department.**

The MEC of Agriculture will during this year unveil a new Rural Development Strategy which shall guide government's approach to improve conditions of our people in rural areas.

Government has identified the Village of Mokgalanweng in Moses Kotane Local Municipality (In Bojanala), to launch our Package of Interventions on rural development. We have already done preliminary needs evaluation in the area. Further technical personnel will be sent in the next week to do thorough intervention assessment.

Provincial Government will work together with Moses Kotane Local Municipality and Bojanala District to achieve better results.

BUILDING STRONG LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Hon Speaker, Hon Members, I am the first person to admit that we are facing serious credibility crisis in our local government sphere. In recent months media reports have painted a picture of a collapsing system of local government in the North West, riddled with corruption and maladministration.

Whilst some reports have largely been over-exaggerated and fabricated, in some instances we admit as government that if urgent interventions are not implemented, such municipalities could collapse.

Together with National Department of Cooperative Governance, we will be introducing a set of intervention packages to stabilize some municipalities. Such interventions will include acting firmly and decisively on reported cases of corruption against certain Officials at local level.

The 5 year Local Government Strategy for the North West will be a sustained government intervention that deals with fundamental issues which are central to the survival and delivery capacities of our municipalities. SALGA North West as an important partner shall be engaged to bring the glory of our local government sphere.

The Constitution enjoins us to support the local sphere of government and we will acquaint ourselves of this mandate despite the capacity constraints we have in terms of both human and financial resources.

Hon Members, we have made tremendous strides in the past 3 financial years in addressing the housing backlog. We have managed to spend our budget and meet our cumulative delivery target. Despite this, the objective of eradicating the backlog eludes us due to the limited Capital budget. We are also challenged by the lack of suitable and well located land as well as the absence of bulk infrastructure in many Municipalities.

We will, however, despite these constraints prioritize building sustainable livelihoods in our rural communities and those communities living in stressful conditions in informal settlements.

Cooperation with Dikgosi in facilitating development in traditional rural communities is crucial. The House of Traditional Leadership will be an important partner in the success of our rural development strategy. Government will also be piloting a new Legislation to replace our current Act on Traditional Leadership, in order to align with changes at National Level.

Hon Speaker, now that we have created a stand-alone Department of Housing, all Housing functions will be consolidated under this Department. As a consequence of this development, we are proceeding with speed to conclude the finalization of the process to wrap-up and **dissolve** the North West Housing Corporation by the end of the year. The transfer of staff is already underway, and will be concluded in due course. Because of the sensitivity of such processes, we are allowing adequate time for thorough consultation with labour unions.

Legislation will be brought to this House to formally repeal the North West Housing Corporation founding Act. By this time, the Department will have completed the complicated process of locating and accounting for assets owned by the Corporation.

We are going to follow closely all allegations reported in the past, about illegal isolation of property owned by the Corporation. Past and present Managers found to have used assets of this state institution to enrich themselves, will face the full wrath of the law.

PROVIDING A STAGE FOR THE WORLD

Honourable Speaker, in the next two days we are hosting the first FIFA Confederation Cup in the African Continent as a dress-rehearsal for the main World Cup event in 2010. On Wednesday, the MEC for Public Safety Hon Yawa, addressed an assembly of dedicated law enforcement officers who will be doing duty during the Confederation Cup.

The Confederation Cup offers a chance to open a window to the world, to show what our Province and Country can offer. I have no doubt that for the duration of this tournament including the World Cup event, our people will roll out red carpet treatment to our guests from all over the world.

Our Government has secured all required financial resources to ensure that this tournament becomes a success. We are confident that we will realize positive returns on our investment as many tourists arrive in the Province now, before, during and after the 2010 games.

Hon Speaker, all roads projects around Rustenburg are scheduled for completion by January 2010. Routine maintenance activities in preparation for the Confederations Cup have been completed, and the Department is currently busy with final inspections.

The hand-over of part of the roads to the Organizing Committee took place on Monday this week already.

Hon Members, we promise that Rustenburg, as the Host City, will successfully deliver a 2009 Confederations Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. As Provincial Government we have made a commitment to fully support Rustenburg and the Royal Bafokeng in their endeavour to deliver on this spectacle. We wish to call on the world to enjoy our hospitality...

Let the games begin!!!

As I conclude, I am extremely grateful and overwhelmed by the sea of support I have received from South Africans across age, race, class and gender lines.

Honourable Speaker, my experience of the last three weeks, has highlighted to me how great a people we all can be, if we could just spend a fraction of our time talking about those issues that unite us than those that drive us apart.

Standing here on this podium today, your support has lifted my spirit, and my feet feel lighter to run the race for the next five years, to fight crime and corruption, create sustainable livelihoods, broaden access to education, improve access to decent healthcare, create decent jobs and fight crime and corruption.

I am even more grateful for the support, love, advice and nurturing of my lifetime partner and friend, comrade Husband, Dr Peter Modiselle. Your daily deep searching questions and incisive engagements, constitutes the most rigorous accountability sessions I am ever subjected to. Thank You comrade Peter!

To my movement, led by the Provincial Leadership, and National Leadership under the stewardship of President Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, thanks for the vote of confidence.

Honourable Speaker, **Ngugi wa Thiong'o** says: **“A farmer does not stop planting seeds just because of the failure of one crop. Success is born trying and trying”**.

I am making this observation from this great African Literary Giant, to contextualize challenges posed by the current Economic Climate. It therefore means that even if some of the commitments we set for ourselves in the past and now, may be affected or their realization delayed by the current economic slow - down, we shall never tire from working towards their achievements.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for Your Attention!

Pula!

**Issued by Office of the Premier
Mafikeng
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