



STATE ^{OF THE} PROVINCE ADDRESS

BY ACTING PREMIER PATRICK DUMILE NONO MALOYI

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NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

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North West
Provincial Government

NORTH WEST STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS

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NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

20 FEBRUARY 2024

People of the North West,
Madame Speaker, the Honourable Suzan Dantjie,
Deputy Speaker, Honourable Lenah Miga,
Chief Whip of the majority party, Honourable Paul Sebego,
Honourable Members of the Executive Council,
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature,
Honourable Members of Parliament present here today,
Our permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces,
The Judge President of the North West Division of the High Court, Judge Ronald
Hendricks,
Chairperson of SALGA, Councilor Khumalo Molefe,
Chairperson of the House of Traditional and Khoi-SAN Leaders, Kgosi Thari Maotwe,
Executive Mayors and Mayors of North West Municipalities,
The Provincial Secretary of the governing party and Leaders of Political Parties,
Leaders of Faith-Based Organizations, Trade Unions and Civil Society,
Vice Chancellor of the North West University, Professor Birmsack Tyobeka
Director General in the Office of the Premier, Mr. Paul Mogotlhe,
Head of Departments and CEOs of Public Entities,
The Provincial Commissioner of the SA Police Service, Lt General Sello Kwena
Heads of our Security Services,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Invited guests,
Members of the media,
Fellow compatriots,

Hon Speaker, it would be remiss of me to ignore the unprecedented nature of the presentation of the 2024 State of the Province Address.

It is my great honour to have been appointed by Premier Kaobitsa Bushy Maape to act on his behalf and have the unique opportunity to deliver the State of the Province Address.

Hon Speaker, we wish to caution and plead with the public and parties represented in this legislature to appreciate the balance between the complexity of holding the Premier accountable and respecting his human dignity and privacy of his health information.

We wish to take this opportunity to wish Premier Maape well on his ongoing medical treatment.

Madam Speaker, the year 2024 marks thirty years since the people of this province formed long queues to exercise a right to vote after many years of racial exclusion.

As we take stock and reflect on this journey, we are reminded of the heroism displayed by our forebears in the struggle for liberation.

Today we are fortunate to be joined by veteran John Maumakwe who is one of the remaining members of the **Luthuli Detachment**.

He formed part of a cohort of Bahurutshe men from Kgosi Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality, who in the 1960's became one of the first combatants of the ANC's military wing.

It is their courage which gave birth to the country's democracy.

Their fortitude continues to inspire us to work harder towards the realization of the National Democratic Society.

Indeed, today is better than yesterday, and tomorrow will be better than today.

Honourable Speaker, the 2024 State of the Province Address is our last policy statement for the 6th Administration.

During this term we had to grapple with several factors which had an impact in the lives of our people.

Whilst our country's response to the Covid-19 pandemic is commendable, its impact was deep, felt far and wide.

Many families lost their loved ones and thousands lost their livelihoods.

Honourable Members, adverse climate change conditions have become more frequent.

The high temperatures and inclement weather with heavy rains, floods and veld fires have at times slowed down the pace of our recovery as we redirect more of our limited resources to respond to these challenges.

The instability and global conflicts such as the war between Ukraine and Russia interrupted global trade and supply chain routes, limiting availability and imports of goods and commodities, and thereby pushing up prices of fuel and food.

Hon Members, the 6th Administration had to contend with challenges of stability and collapse of governance which led to the President and Cabinet invoking Section 100 of the Constitution to intervene in the province.

Bagaetsho, all these challenges have not dampened our spirits but have built our resilience and strengthened our focus on the mandate to serve the people of the North West.

Re leboga thata baagi ba Profense ya rona! “Mabogo dinku a thebana” – “Ditau di senang seboka di siiwa ke None e tlhotsa”.

Honourable Speaker, this sitting of the legislature takes place two weeks after His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered the State of the Nation Address.

The President was candid in his assessment of our journey which encapsulated both challenges and achievements.

The past thirty years call on us to reflect on the gains we have made, the challenges we experienced and many victories still to be achieved in the project to consolidate our democracy.

Honourable Members, in the last thirty years our province witnessed unprecedented levels of development.

The number of households increased from 591 145 in 1996 to over 1,14 million in 2022.

This depicts an upward trend of eighty eight percent (88%) of formal housing in the province.

Honourable Members, from 2019 to 2023, we have constructed 19 307 houses.

By the end of 2023, we had delivered 2 768 houses.

We have set aside R198 million to fund the eradication of 1 356 mud houses, of which 579 units have been delivered.

We have now cleared all the hurdles that delayed the Deelpan floods project and today we can report that 104 houses will be completed at the end of next month.

A further 317 houses will be built following the donation of land by Kgosi Kogodi Molete of Bakolobeng and his Traditional Council.

Honourable Speaker, in the coming weeks we will be launching the R2,6 billion N14 Mixed Use Development project in Ventersdorp.

The development will see installation of bulk services for 400 sites and create over 600 jobs for local people through the construction of Breaking New Ground, Social Housing and bonded stock.

The small town of Ventersdorp which come from a bad history of occupation by a right-wing racist group called AWB, will never be the same again.

We are restoring the dignity of our people.

The integrated accelerated service delivery approach called Thuntsha Lerole Programme has to date delivered 6 283 title deeds to beneficiaries across the four districts.

Bagaetsho, just over eighty percent (80%) of households in the province have access to piped water either inside their dwellings, yards or community stands, **as compared to only twenty percent (20%) in 1996.**

In November 2023, the provincial government in cooperation with Minister of Water and Sanitation, Senzo Mchunu launched the R106 million Dinokana Water Supply Intervention Project.

Furthermore, construction of R36 million bulk water sewer pipeline at Agisanang township in the Tswaing Local Municipality is due for completion this year.

We can report to the people of Madibeng Local Municipality that the Brits Water Treatment Plant will be completed by May this year.

The completion of this project will bring an additional twenty mega-litres that will ensure provision of water in the communities of Oukasi, Mothotlung, Damonsville, Mmankau, Brits town, Elandsrand, Letlhabile and Sonop.

The pipeline from Mafenya to Tlhabane will be completed in April.

The twenty-five mega-litre Tlhabane reservoir is ninety nine percent complete and will be handed over within the next two weeks.

Hon Speaker, additional boreholes have been drilled and equipped for both the Rooigrond Waste Water Treatment Plant and Water Augmentation project to address water provision challenges in Mahikeng.

The communities of Ramosadi and Seweding in Mahikeng have for the past few months been subjected to inhumane sewer spillage in their households and locality.

We have intervened and a contractor has now returned to site to complete the project of constructing a new pipeline to be delivered by Mahikeng Local Municipality and funded by Ngaka Modiri Molema District.

We can confirm that all water leaks at Tigane from extension one up to six as well as Hartebeesfontein have been fixed and there is now stable water supply.

In September last year, we began the construction of the over R200 million water pipeline from Pudumoe to Huhudi to augment the provision of bulk water supply.

Honourable Speaker, Harmony Gold Mine is resuscitating the Kraaipan Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant back to functionality at a cost of R8,5 million to ensure sustainable water provision in parts of the Ratlou Local Municipality.

The plant will be handed over to the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality for upkeep and management.

Several more water infrastructure projects in Mahikeng, JB Marks, Moses Kotane, Greater Taung, Matlosana, Kagisano-Molopo, Moretele, Rustenburg as well as Mamusa local municipalities will be completed in the 2024/25 financial year.

All these projects will be implemented through Operation Bulela Metsi which we launched in July last year.

Honourable Members, we are encouraging municipalities to start insourcing provision of water supply through tankering by procuring their own trucks.

We have engaged the police to start investigating a possible link between damaging of water infrastructure and water tankering in the province.

We would like to urge our communities to be vigilant and report these incidents to the authorities.

Vandalism of state infrastructure is tantamount to treason and I would like to appeal to all segments of our society to help nip this criminal act in the bud.

Honourable Speaker, the provision of electricity has increased significantly from 58,1% in 1996 to over 94,7% to date.

We also recognize the devastating impact of loadshedding to our provincial economy and households.

Honourable Speaker, the department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs is coordinating intervention efforts to assist municipalities implement renewable and alternative energy sources.

In an effort to end loadshedding we have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Chinese National Import and Export Corporation to construct R16 billion gas to electricity power stations at both the City of Matlosana and Moses Kotane Local Municipality respectively.

The first phase of this project will see Matlosana producing 198 megawatts of electricity and construction is earmarked for a maximum of ninety days per one hundred megawatts.

The Chinese Import and Export Corporation in addition to their project investment, committed to invest further resources to assist eradicate mud houses in the province, by building 500 houses every year, for the duration of this MoU.

This project is expected to create a minimum of over 10 000 jobs.

I would like to take this opportunity and acknowledge the presence of Madam Jin Sun of Chinese Import and Export Corporation, who is my special guest today.

Honourable Speaker, since 2019 to date, we have completed seventy-seven road projects to the total value of just over two billion rands.

These roads cut across four districts of the province, and they form a larger part of our road network of over 19 000 km.

We have connected rural communities with the province's main towns and economic hubs in Lokaleng in Mahikeng, Kgomo-Kgomo in Moretele and Manokwane in Taung.

Honourable Speaker, during the 2023/24 financial year, twenty-five maintenance projects across the four districts were implemented as part of the Routine Road Maintenance strategy, with a budget of two hundred and fifty-six million rand (R256m).

Honourable Members, rehabilitation and widening of the Phelindaba to Pecanwood road is progressing well and due for completion in December 2026.

The Hartbeesfontein to Ottosdal road is envisioned to be completed ahead of schedule in June this year.

We acknowledge and apologise for the delays in the construction of Nelson Mandela Drive in Mahikeng.

This has impacted negatively on businesses along the road and the public who use the road daily.

However, there is progress, as three point two (3.2 km) kilometers of the road has been completed. Construction for the remaining four hundred and fifty meters is nearing completion.

After this address I will be visiting the project to meet with the contractor to emphasize the commitment to complete the project.

As part of addressing road infrastructure backlogs, twelve (12) roads have been transferred to SANRAL for construction.

This includes portions of roads on the N18 from Mahikeng to Vryburg and R30 that will cover Klerksdorp to Ventersdorp as well as Orkney.

The remainder of these projects will be spread across Bojanala-Platinum, Ngaka Modiri Molema, and Dr. Kenneth Kaunda Districts.

Over 320 kilometers of potholes across the province will be resealed, creating 429 job opportunities.

Municipalities such as Matlosana and JB Marks are to insource road maintenance and pothole patching on an ongoing basis as a municipal function undertaken by municipal employees.

This initiative will be emulated in other municipalities across the province.

Work on the Lichtenburg to Koster and Derby to Magaliesburg will commence in the new financial year.

We have terminated and appointed a new contractor to start working on the Majakaneng to Sun City Road.

Honourable Members, a total of 69, 528 EPWP work opportunities were created between 2019 and October 2023 benefiting women, youth, and people with disabilities.

In 2024 alone, an additional fifteen thousand (15 000) work opportunities will be created, translating to a total of 84 528.

Madam Speaker, while our province is endowed with vast mineral deposits we continue to be inundated by high levels of poverty and unemployment.

Economic growth remains sluggish, and this has had an adverse impact on our efforts to create jobs for our people.

Unemployment rate in North West gives us sleepless nights, particularly because it affects mainly women and the youth.

However, there are encouraging signs of recovery in our province.

North West is one of the only three provinces that recorded the largest employment increase in the third quarter of 2023, creating over 61 000 jobs.

We hosted two important investment promotion engagements with major investors, the North-West BRICS Investment Conference which was held during the BRICS SUMMIT in August 2023 in Sandton, and the Premier's Dinner with Investors held in September 2023 at Sun City.

Both initiatives yielded thirty-four (34) investment pledges with a total value of over R104,1 billion.

Honourable Members to date there are fourteen (14) confirmed investment projects to the tune of R13,5 billion, which are in the pipeline for the Bojanala Special Economic Zone.

These investments will further create an additional 10 000 jobs.

Bagaetsho, the implementation of the Tourism Recovery Plan by our province has begun to realize growth in the number of both domestic and international visitors.

Between 2022 and 2023 our industry has risen from the ashes of the Covid-19 pandemic, and this has generated R 6.9 billion in revenue for the province thereby creating and preserving 24 000 jobs.

We have started with the process to revitalize Pilanesberg and George Dick Montshiwa Airports.

Both these airports will add capacity to the province to grow tourism and open new economic frontiers in cargo hauling, hanger, and airline services among others.

We have sent **Request for Proposals** for the running of these two airports and lure investments.

The preferred bidders will commence work by May this year.

Honourable Members, the agricultural sector is yet to reach its full potential through meaningful participation of emerging farmers in this growing sector.

The Letsema (Illima) and Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme, (CASP) in the past five years supported about 383 agricultural projects and 4 570 farmers to the tune of over R 888 million.

A further R77 million, will be used to support farmers with inputs, livestock, feeds, and medication.

The fund will also focus on expanding irrigated areas and promoting dry-land farming in rural and communal areas.

Honourable Speaker, over R 91 million will be utilized in the 2024/2025 financial year to support over eight hundred farmers across the province to address infrastructure backlogs.

We are going to disburse land to 300 farmers as part of our support to strengthen the agricultural sector.

This will include a goat massification project of 1 734 goats that will be procured for 81 farmers.

Honourable Members, our food security programme is yielding desired results.

Over fifty eight percent (58%) of the people in the province are doing backyard gardens producing 74.8 % for their domestic consumption, while 5.2 % is produced for markets.

Given these figures we must facilitate access for these products to the markets.

We are convening a sectoral consultation with the sector to solidify social compacting between government and organized agriculture.

We thank Mr Boeta du Toit of Agri-North West who sent us a message to express his support for the National Agricultural Masterplan for Agricultural Development in our province.

Our gratitude also goes to Mr Andrew Aphane of the African Farmers Association South Africa who shares our sentiments in the goat massification project.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development is in the process of transferring leased land to 614 farmers for ownership.

This intervention is intended to strengthen and empower emerging black farmers to join the main stream economy.

Since 1998 government has restored over 600 000 hectares of land to over 74 000 households, constituting over 300 000 beneficiaries in North West.

Government will further handover 100 title deeds to beneficiaries by the end of March 2024.

Honourable Speaker, economic development challenges require coherent policy responses backed-up by long-term planning.

The province has now finalized the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS) whose primary aim is to provide a broad economic policy planning guide, to anchor interventions to meet the goals as set out in the National Development Plan 2030.

Honourable Members, the finalization of the PGDS has now enabled us to complete the resuscitation of the Premier's Economic Advisory Council.

The Council will provide strategic support and coordination in the implementation of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, promote integrated economic planning and sector contributions.

The names of the Economic Advisory Council members will be announced within the next two weeks following necessary consultations with critical stakeholders.

Honourable Speaker, the Premier's Infrastructure Coordinating Council (PICC) is now operational.

The Council is chaired by the Premier and its membership includes the MECs of Provincial Treasury, Public Works, and Roads, COGHSTA, the Provincial Chairperson of SALGA, and a representative of the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

This Council oversees the implementation of strategic Mega Projects in the province and provides guidance to provincial departments on Strategic Infrastructure Projects, planning, budgeting, and delivery.

Honourable Speaker, a panel of experts which was appointed to review State-Owned Entities has completed its work.

We now have a proper framework to align developmental objectives of SOE's with provincial government priorities to contribute towards economic development and job creation.

Honourable Members, we have introduced a digital interactive youth portal to provide a platform for the youth to access government information in real time, when and where they require such information.

In the last two weeks, there has been increased utilization of the portal to seek information on employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, education etc.

During this financial year close to 900 internships and learnerships benefited young people in various Departments, Municipalities, State Owned Entities and SETAs.

We are going to prioritize young people in various infrastructure projects that we will be rolling out for the 2024/25 financial year.

Bagaetsho, Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka fa bogaleng.

Women are the backbone of our provincial economy. Eight women-led cooperatives and individuals will benefit from R1, 4m which has been set aside for their upskilling and business growth.

A further R4,5m has been set aside to support women cooperatives, and SMME's to provide market access for their products and commodities.

Women contractors were appointed to build 532 houses with a budget of R289m in the 2023/2024 financial year.

Honourable Members, we are saddened that many women, girl children, the elderly and people with disabilities continue to face abuse in some of our communities.

We have funded twenty NPOs to provide GBV services to all service points across the province.

R17 million has been set aside to fund NPOs to provide a basket of services to persons with disabilities.

Seven hundred and ninety-two (792) victims of Gender Based Violence and Femicide received sheltering services.

To contribute towards the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide 2 429 job opportunities were created in the Arts, Culture, Sports, and Recreation Sector.

Bagaetsho, the province has finally exited the section 100 intervention phase with the full restoration of all executive functions of provincial departments.

The benefit of national government intervention is demonstrated by continued upward trajectory in improved audit outcomes, improved labour relations environment and general stability in the province.

The audit outcomes of public entities have also improved from seven unqualified opinions in the previous financial year to eight.

Honourable Speaker, the audit outcomes of municipalities reflect a mixed picture of progress and stagnation with only three municipalities receiving unqualified opinions.

We are continuing to provide dedicated support to all municipalities to improve financial management through the implementation and monitoring of the Financial Recovery Plans (FRP's).

The Executive Council has approved the appointment and deployment of Provincial Executive Representatives (PER's) to implement financial recovery plans for identified municipalities, under the joint coordination of Provincial Treasury and Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA).

The Ditsobotla Local Municipality requires constant and sustained support and intervention from Provincial Government before full recovery can be declared.

EXCO has deployed a team of experts and other seconded officials to the municipality to assist with capacity.

There is progress but not significant enough to reverse the extent of the governance collapse in the municipal administration.

Hon Members, we have rolled out skills and qualification audit in all municipalities.

This project has to date audited 5 487 employees.

We have completed this exercise in Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality, Tswaing and Ratlou Local Municipalities and we will in due course complete the remaining municipalities.

We have instituted a sustainable implementation of a turnaround strategy in all the 22 municipalities in the province through the District Development Model (DDM).

We now have an Early Warning System in the form of an Electronic Dashboard that will monitor municipal performance and reporting.

The “Thuntsha-Lerole Mobile App” has now gone live, providing an interactive communication platform to connect government with the people to report service delivery challenges in real time in their localities.

This web-based mobile application provides an immediate service delivery escalation mechanism to relevant departmental and municipal officials to facilitate quick responses to challenges of water interruptions, sewer spillages, electricity outages, etc.

We are in consultation with major technology and network providers for this mobile application to be data free to improve access for people, particularly those in rural areas and townships.

Honourable Members, traditional leadership plays a major role in the preservation of our cultures, tradition, and language.

“Bogosi ke phate e e mitlwa bo a kokonela”

Magosi a rona ga a bone boroko, ba tshwenngwa thata ke botlhoka tiro le tshalelo morago ya ditlhabololo mo metseng ya bona.

Mmusakgotla, ke rata go leboga thata Monnasetilo wa Ntlo ya Segosi ya Bokone-Bophirima Kgosi Maotwe le Khuduthamaga ya gagwe ka kemonokeng le tirisano mmogo le puso ya rona.

To promote administrative stability in some of our traditional authorities we have invoked section 59 of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, 2019, to establish six Investigative Committees in an endeavor to deal with traditional leadership disputes.

The work of three committees out of six have already started with the investigations of Banogeng, Bakubung ba Ratheo and Bakwena ba Mmatau.

The Investigative Committees of Bahurutshe boo Manyane, Bahurutshe boo Moiloa and Bakwena ba Mogopa will also commence soon.

In our previous engagement with the Deputy President, the North West House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, raised a number of issues.

We can report that all these issues have been processed and most of them have been resolved.

We will give a detailed report to the House during its opening later in the year.

Honourable Speaker, we are saddened and regret the deaths of nine initiates at various initiation schools.

These deaths have been caused by people who operate outside the confines of the law.

We are confident that the police will ensure that all those arrested and connected to these illegal activities face the wrath of the law.

Honourable Members, the 2023 National Senior Certificate Examination Results set us on a right path to reclaim our space as one of the best performing provinces in the country.

We have improved by one point eight percent (1.8 %) from 79, 2 to 81, 6%.

All the four districts improved their pass rate when compared to the previous year.

Bagaetsho, our initiative to feed learners two meals per day at schools in economically depressed communities is gaining traction.

The National School Nutrition Programme in the province currently feeds over 740 000 learners in all four districts.

We have recently handed over a R103 million newly built Huhudi Primary School at Vryburg in Naledi Local Municipality.

The newly constructed Mamodibo Secondary School in Mogogelo village in Moretele Local Municipality was officially opened on Mandela Day last year.

A total of ten newly built schools will be handed over to communities this year with a combined cost of over R700 million.

These schools include Mphehana High School in Bojanala, Tlaakgameng Primary School in Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and Dirang ka Natla Primary in Dr Kenneth Kaunda.

Honourable Speaker, 448 transport operators have been appointed to provide scholar transport, following an open and transparent bidding process.

They have all signed service level agreements following a thorough vehicle inspection and verification process.

We do however acknowledge that isolated challenges were experienced at the beginning of the current school year when some operators brought buses that were not part of the inspection list.

We have since established a 'War Room' chaired by the Head of the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management to deal with these challenges as and when they arise.

Honourable Speaker, we envisage discontinuing scholar transport in the long term as we build schools with increased boarding enrollment capacity and construct further schools within the proximity of where people reside in line with our education norms and standards.

Honourable Members, government is hard at work to fight crime and corruption in the province. Several high profile cases both in the public and private sector are receiving attention. In the current financial year nine corruption and commercial crime cases were finalized and culprits convicted. We would like to commend law enforcement agencies on their efforts to combat corruption and other acts of malfeasance.

Honourable Speaker, we have established a new traffic unit called ‘The Eagles”, which has been resourced with 30 high powered vehicles to increase visibility in all arterial roads in the province.

Our traffic law enforcement members have been trained to secure accident scenes and their vehicles are equipped with all the necessary, latest, and advanced technological devices to process an accident scene on the spot.

This is the first initiative of its kind in the province.

Honourable members, we have set up a technical team to turn around the National Transport Investment (NTI) in order to reposition the entity to play its mandate of providing efficient and safe transport solutions to the residents of the North West and surrounding areas.

The entity provides affordable transport to over 500 000 commuters per month, in townships, rural areas, and peri-urban areas.

It has also created over 1 200 employment opportunities for locals.

We have now completed the audit of the company’s liabilities and verified all its debts.

This process has empowered us to table revised debt settlement offers to all creditors in line with the Companies Act.

The company will be out of business rescue in due course whereupon an interim Board will be appointed to assume legal authority over the affairs of the NTI to deliver on its mandate.

We want this entity to come back and serve the people of the North West.

Bagaetsho, we are making significant progress in the provision of primary health care in our rural and township communities.

In the current financial year, we hosted his Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa who presided over the official opening of the Jouberton Community Health Centre on Freedom Day.

During one of our Thuntsa Lerole Programmes, Deputy President Paul Mashatile visited Greater Taung Local Municipality where he handed over a newly built R245 million Ba Ga Mothibi Community Health Centre. Both these facilities will service over 68 000 people in their respective communities.

Honourable Speaker, we are strengthening our district health services by opening five more clinics in Itsoseng, Mokgalwaneng, Marikana in Rustenburg, Hokfontein, Boikhutso and Steve Tshwete in JB Marks in 2024.

The closure of the Thusong District Hospital was inevitable. The hospital was faced with serious structural flaws coupled with the apparent dolomitic nature of the soil, which made rescuing it virtually impossible.

The closure of Thusong has given birth to three projects, being the upgrade of the General De La Rey District Hospital, Itsoseng Community Health Centre, and the construction of the Sheila Clinic using alternative building technology.

Hon Speaker, for the past three years, HIV positivity rate in our province has been showing a steady decline. Last year there was a decline of 1.7 percent in HIV infections. HIV cascades are now being monitored through the 95-95-95 targets as set out by the Joint United Nations Programme.

I am happy to announce that, the province is sitting at ninety-three (93%) of those who know their status. Seventy five percent of HIV patients are on treatment and know their status.

The figure of patients who are virally suppressed stands at eighty-four (84%).

Honourable Members, we have averted the crisis of unemployed doctors following engagements with their union.

All qualified doctors in the North West will be deployed in line with the framework agreed to with the union.

In 2023 the North West Provincial Government and North West University (NWU) signed a joint commitment letter for the establishment of the NWU Medical Faculty.

The Minister of Health, Honourable Joe Phaahla has also given his support for the commencement of this project.

The project aims to have its first students intake in 2028 and will among others create access opportunities for students from previously disadvantaged communities.

The Klerksdorp /Tshepong tertiary hospital which has been developed over the past 20 years as an academic training platform under Wits University will be the key clinical training site with a network of hospitals and clinics in the province for training in primary health care.

Honourable Speaker, we are pleased to inform you that we successfully delivered the second instalment of the N12 Marathon.

The marathon provides opportunities for athletes development and for more established athletes to qualify for the Comrades Marathon.

We are the reigning champions of Comrades Marathon through Tete Dijana who successfully defended his title in two successive years.

The province has an illustrious history of dominating this marathon through the Kelehe brothers from Sekhing village in Taung, Edward Mothibi from Magogoe village in Mahikeng and recently Adele Broedryk from Potchefstroom.

We also honour Steven Mokoka from Ramatlabama in Mahikeng, who in 2022, broke the 50km world record in Gqeberha.

Honourable Members, we have now unlocked the legal hurdles that delayed the commencement of the development of the Desmond Tutu Precinct in Matlosana.

The first phase of declaring the Precinct a Heritage site will be completed in March this year.

We have started with the construction of libraries in Matlosana, Wolmaransstad, Coverdale/Boitumelong and Bodibe.

These libraries will be built over a period of four years at a combined cost of R75 million. A further R20 million has been set aside to upgrade libraries in Mabeskraal and Ganyesa.

Mmusakgotla, we applaud Sibanye-Stillwaters working with various Community-Based Organisations for following up in the implementation of the Marikana Farlam Commission recommendations.

To date, fifty-five socio-economic projects have been implemented through the Marikana Legacy Project amounting to a shared R13,9 billion of Sibanye-Stillwater Corporate Social Investment and Social Labour Plans.

We further commit to work with all parties for the construction of a monument at the Koppie in memory of all the people who lost their lives as well as those who were injured on that fateful day and days preceding the 16th of August 2012.

We are making plans to visit Marikana shortly through the accelerated service delivery programme, Thuntsha Lerole.

Honourable Speaker, today we have told a story of a province on the move.

We have taken account of the victories we have scored, the lives we have changed and the many service delivery battles that still lie ahead.

We hear reverberation of the cries of our people, imploring us to do more of the good work we have already done.

Their message is clear, do more and talk less.

They are tired of empty rhetoric and verbosity.

In the famous words of Guinea-Bissau revolutionary and one of the finest African thought leaders, Amilcar Cabral, and I quote, "...always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head, they are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, and to guarantee the future of their children...". **Therefore, we owe it to our people to see their lives change for the better and to guarantee our children a better tomorrow.**

Thank you.

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