

State of the Province Address by Premier Phumulo Masualle, delivered in Bhisho, On 19 February 2016

Madam Speaker and Deputy Speaker;
Leadership of the ANC, Alliance and other Political Parties;
Ministers and Deputy Ministers;
Members of the Executive Council;
Members of the Provincial Legislature
Members of National Parliament and delegates to the NCOP
Speakers from our sister Legislatures;
Veterans of our struggle for national liberation and their families;
IiKumkani zethu zonke nooNdlunkulu abakhoyo apha;
Executive Mayors, Mayors, Speakers and Councillors;
USihlalo Wendlu Yeenkosi neeNkosi ezikhoyo phakathi kwethu;
Judge President and Members of the Judiciary;
Leaders of Chapter 9 Institutions;
Chancellor Elect of UFH and Former Premier, Rev M.A. Stofile
Vice Chancellors of our Tertiary Institutions;
Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps;
Provincial Commissioner of SAPS, Senior Officers and Heads of Security Services;
Leaders of the Religious Fraternity, Business, and Civil Society;
Director-General, Senior Government Officials and Heads of State Owned Enterprises;
Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen

Madam Speaker, in accordance with the decorum of this august House, I join you and the rest of the Honourable Members of this House to officially open the 3rd session of the 5th administration. This occasion not only presents us with an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and challenges, it is equally an occasion to motivate and energize ourselves to face the future with optimism and unwavering resolve.

Let me therefore begin by greeting the masses of our people who are listening to this address through media platforms such as Umhlobo Wenene, Tru FM, the Parliamentary Channel, as well as through several community radio stations. I am also aware that some are gathered at various venues throughout the Province to listen to us. Ndiyabulisa mzi wakowethu kuzo zonke ezo ndawo nikuzo. *Groote aan u almal, by die huis, die werk, waar ook al u julle vind in ons pragtige Provinsie.*

Madam Speaker, in the period since our last address to this House, we lost many of our outstanding citizens. The list is long and time would not permit me to read out their names. In honouring their contribution to the wellbeing of our society, we must never forget to live by the vision and values they cherished about our democratic South Africa.

Madam Speaker, we are addressing this House at a time when the world is confronted by rapid economic and environmental changes. The global economy has not yet fully recovered from the 2008 financial crisis. Global growth in 2015 was 3.1%, and is expected to rise to 3.6% in 2016, and 3.8% in 2017. However, South Africa's growth projections decreased from 1.3% in 2015 to 0.7% in 2016, and are projected to rise only to 1.3% in 2017. Our growth has also been limited by electricity supply constraints, the drought which is crippling our agricultural sector, skills shortage, as well as low levels of investment resulting from reduced business confidence and heightened levels of risk adversity towards emerging markets by global bond and equity investors.

Furthermore, currency depreciation has off-set any gains from the low oil prices, and is contributing to higher price inflation. This has forced the South African Reserve Bank to implement a less accommodative monetary policy, using higher interest rates to protect the currency, and ward off hyper price inflation.

The current conditions require us to do things differently and strive to achieve more with less to meet the needs of our people.

Madam Speaker, these challenges are not insurmountable. Working together we can, and we will,

overcome them. This we shall do in fulfilment of the commitment we made to the people of the Eastern Cape, who elected us in 2014 to lead a collective effort towards “a better life for all”. We are rising to that call, and we are inspired in our endeavours by the work that has been done in the past twenty two years of democracy.

In partnership with our people, we have improved access to services for most of the citizens of our Province; we have built houses; and we have made health services more accessible; and through policy innovations such as no-fee schools, amongst others, we have provided our children with better access to education.

As we consolidate democratic governance, and as we move deep into the twenty-first century, our work is framed in the context of both the National Development Plan and the Provincial Development Plan, which call for a growing, inclusive and equitable economy; an educated; empowered and innovative citizenry; a healthy population; vibrant, equitably enabled communities; and for a capable, conscientious and accountable institutions. We are confident that with the full and resolute implementation of our strategic priorities, we shall realise the aims and objectives of Vision 2030.

Madam Speaker, let me now turn to my report card for last year. The creation of **better access to quality**

education is our apex priority due to its strategic contribution in building successful nations and in growing the economy. In the past 22 years of democracy, we have made tremendous strides in transforming education and addressing the imbalances of the past. More than 90% of the learners in public schools benefit from the no-fee policy. Grade R classes have been attached to more than 90% of our primary schools. As part of strengthening the foundation phase, ECD enrolment has doubled over the past five years.

In 2015, enrolment of learners with special needs increased by more than 7 000 from 12 000 to 19 900 compared to 2014. The provincial performance on Annual National Assessment (ANA) has improved in the foundation phase although more work still needs to be done at intermediate and senior phases.

Although the 2015 matric results were disheartening there were shining examples and centres of excellence that must be acknowledged and applauded for their performance. In this regard I would like to mention Mmangaliso Dobe from Toli SSS in Libode, who attained 1st position in Quintile one schools in the country. Kukhokuhle Tsengwa from St Johns College in Mthatha achieved 2nd position in Maths and Physical Science nationally. Also from St John's College, Aviwe Blackheard

achieved 3rd position nationally in Maths and Physical Science. Noziphiwo Mdingi from Efata Special School in Mthatha achieved 1st position amongst the special schools nationally.

Honourable Speaker, our children could not have performed at this level without the able leadership in their schools. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the principals of these schools that are amongst us today: Mr Zolisa Magaqa from St Johns College; Mrs Nolundi Ngqolo from Efata; Sister Mvulazana Mphoyiya from St James. Unfortunately, Mr Thembekile Dobe from Toli SSS in Libode, could not come due to an accident. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Madam Speaker, our analysis of the state of education in the Province has revealed a number of challenges that require urgent intervention. These include the existence of a large number of schools that are dysfunctional, resulting in high drop out and failure rates; the province has a number of small and unviable schools resulting in less than optimal use of resources; district offices are also poorly capacitated to support the schools; there is a dire shortage of appropriately qualified and skilled educators in critical subjects and in certain phases; as well as low levels in numeracy and literacy at primary education levels that are limiting the ability of learners

to progress smoothly up the system.

In the light of these, the Executive Council has since adopted a transformation plan to improve the system over the next three years. The plan focuses on:

1. Increasing the number of functional schools by appointing capable principals to lead our schools and ensuring that no school is without a principal by March 2016.
2. Strengthening the administration and management of curriculum delivery in public schools especially in quintile 1-3
3. Timeous appointment of qualified educators in schools to ensure that there is always a teacher in front of the learner. In this regard, a team from the Office of the Premier and Treasury has been deployed for a year in the Department of Education to resolve that department's Human Resource Management challenges.
4. Small and unviable schools will be rationalized and realigned into functional and productive schools
5. Through the new service delivery model, district offices will be reduced and capacitated to provide quality support to schools.

6. Improving the quality of primary education through a number of interventions including training of educators and use of ICT.
7. Mobilization of all social partners and stakeholders to improve teaching and learning in our schools.
8. Improving systems and strengthening of management at Head Office and District level.

We are now placing a premium on teacher placement turnaround times and professional development. Further details in this regard will be dealt with by the MEC for Education in his Policy and Budget Speech, suffice to say the Provincial Government will pull its weight behind this effort.

In order to assist the education e-learning initiative targeting 560 identified schools, support of broadband connectivity will be implemented.

We also call upon parents, stakeholders and communities to work closely with government in improving education outcomes. The unjustifiable acts by some sections of our communities of keeping their children away from schools as a way of expressing their displeasure with government services are unacceptable and cannot be condoned. We should at all material times protect the rights of learners to quality education.

Madam Speaker, in the area concerning our priority on **promoting better healthcare for all our people**, we had previously stated that our objective is to address the social determinants of health and to improve health outcomes and quality of life of our people.

The Eastern Cape average life expectancy at birth has shown an increase from 46,7 for males, and 50,2 for females in 2001 to an estimated 53,2 for males and 59,0 for females in 2016.

The average infant mortality rate has decreased from 38,9 per 1000 live births in 2010 to 34,4 per 1000 live birth in 2014, while the under-five mortality rate decreased from 53,8 per 1000 live birth in 2010 to 44,1 per 1000 live birth in 2014.

The non-communicable diseases contribute jointly 20,8% of excess mortality from preventable conditions. The lifestyle behaviours will have to change in order to reduce this burden of disease. Recent interventions championed by the District Health Specialist teams have started to show positive trend in the reduction of maternal deaths related to pregnancy.

TB and HIV/AIDS are the leading causes of mortality in the Province accounting for 9,8% and 5.4% of avoidable mortality respectively.

Our tireless efforts in fighting HIV/AIDS by implementing prevention and treatment initiatives are bearing fruits. Through collaborations with the AIDS Council, NGOs and various other stakeholders, several testing campaigns were conducted in the past year. Similarly, the expansion of HIV/AIDS and TB treatment is also showing positive results. As we speak, patients having access to ART increased from 320 062 at the end of March 2015 to 352 256 at the end of December 2015.

Madam Speaker, in laying the basis for the effective implementation of the National Health Insurance in the Province, we are making steady progress. As we know, the OR Tambo district was selected to be a pilot NHI project by national government. By the end of December 2015, a number of milestones had already been achieved, and these include appointment of Ward Based Outreach Teams in 93 wards.

Major investment has also been made in health infrastructure. We successfully completed all four health facilities that were planned, including Cecilia Makiwane hospital and St Elizabeth Resource Centre. Furthermore, in the past year, 18 clinics were provided with additional consulting rooms and these were mainly in the OR Tambo NHI pilot sites. Refurbishment works were also completed in 22 clinics across the province. In

the next financial year, we plan to upgrade three more health facilities.

Madam Speaker, as a Province that is largely rural, we remain seized with the critically important priority of **stimulating rural development, land reform and food security** in the Province.

Accordingly, in pursuit of the target of cropping 300 000 ha, which we set in the previous SOPA, we planted 195 421 ha with maize, where 3 670 smallholders participated. For the current season, 15 000 ha have been ploughed, and other inputs have been procured to the value of R91.6 million. Furthermore, a total of 3 409 households were supported with seedlings, garden equipment and water harvesting facilities.

Madam Speaker, we have done all of this against the backdrop of one of the harshest droughts to ever hit the Province, especially in the districts of Joe Gqabi, Alfred Nzo, Chris Hani, OR Tambo and Amathole. Severe losses in both livestock and crops have been reported. As part of our mitigation strategies, these districts were declared drought disaster areas, and to this effect more than R129m has been reprioritised towards supporting farmers in the affected areas as part of the drought relief.

I must also thank the citizens who voluntarily assisted in areas like Joe Gqabi in water provision efforts. The severe drought we are experiencing re-enforces the need to promote improved environmental management and care. We cannot over emphasize the need to conserve water and minimize water wastage.

Going forward, we shall continue with our drought mitigation programme by, amongst others, up-scaling fodder production at Qamata, Blue Crane, Cradock and Kieskammahoek. This will contribute towards the establishment of fodder banks.

Responding to the President's pronouncement on the introduction of the Agri-Parks to support agriculture development in all districts in the country, we have continued to increase primary production in support of Agri-park hubs in Lambasi, Ncorha, Sundays River Valley, Butterworth, Matatiele and Sterkspruit-Senqu.

Through the ECDC we have disbursed R27 million in development loans and invested R3.8 million risk capital for 27.85% equity in the Ndlambe Natural Industrial Products (Pty) Ltd, which is a pineapple beneficiation company. This funding has created and saved a total of 1 500 permanent jobs, 750 of which are seasonal jobs. Furthermore, in strengthening the agricultural value chain, we also supported the production of

chicory, pineapples, tomatoes, citrus and deciduous fruit enterprises over an area of 870 ha.

Madam Speaker, as part of intensifying our focus on agriculture, we have engaged StatsSA to conduct annual agricultural surveys, beginning with an agricultural census that will be conducted in 2017.

Madam Speaker, on the **transformation of the economy to create jobs and sustainable livelihoods**, the President indicated in his State of the Nation Address, that we are implementing this priority under conditions that are most unfavourable. Notwithstanding these conditions, we have made notable strides.

Through our economic agencies such as COEGA IDZ, East London IDZ and the ECDC, we have added a total of 12 740 new jobs in the areas of manufacturing, logistics, alternative energy and agro-processing. In agro-processing, through the work done by our IDZs, a total of 2 035 operational jobs and 1 188 construction jobs have been created.

As part of the social safety net a total of 98 185 job opportunities were created in the Expanded Public Works Programme. Through the community works programme, we created 37 346 jobs, with women being the most beneficiaries.

Going forward, in an effort to drive more employment creation in the province, we are supporting the establishment of new manufacturing enterprises in the existing provincial industrial parks. As government, we commit to providing take-off agreements for new manufacturers that can absorb at least 100 permanent workers. I have also tasked the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs & Tourism with the consolidation and coordination of support to all Co-operatives.

Madam Speaker, work is in progress to expand Coega Dairy and Coega Cheese by 9 500 m². This development is aimed at increasing milk export volumes by 200%; increase cheese export by 60% and attract additional foreign revenue into the country.

Furthermore, under Operation Phakisa, our Industrial Development Zones have commenced with the development of an Aquaculture Development Zones. The ELIDZ has earmarked 30 ha for the development of an Aquaculture Development Zone with the potential to unlock about 2000 direct jobs.

With respect to enterprise development, a total of 253 SMMEs and 22 cooperatives were supported. The majority of these SMMEs were in the creative industry.

With respect to the development of the trans-shipment

hub in the Port of Ngqura, two berths are now complete and were recently launched. This development will strategically position the Eastern Cape as a crucial trade and logistics gateway to the national and African economies.

We are also paying particular attention on improving our transport systems in the Province. Our vision of having the Mthatha airport as the gateway to the Wild Coast and to the national liberation heritage route is progressively being realized. As we speak, the Mthatha airport terminal building project is now complete and the airport has been operating with the new terminal building since 05th October 2015. Airport Company of South Africa (ACSA) has since been appointed to manage the airport.

Madam Speaker, the Eastern Cape is also a popular tourism destination, and more work is being done to ensure that the number of tourists visiting the Province is increasing. International tourists arrivals have improved by 9.3% from 2013/14 and domestic arrivals have increased by 57.2%, in the same period.

Madam Speaker, with respect to the oceans economy, in the last SOPA, we committed to formulate a Provincial Maritime Skills Development Plan, which has indeed been developed. As we speak, we have started implementing

interventions in the Plan, in partnership with key institutions such South African International Maritime Institute and South African Maritime Safety Authority. We have also established two maritime high schools at George Randell and Ngwenyathi schools, in East London, starting from Grade 10 in 2016.

Madam Speaker, the Automotive Industry is thriving, especially through strong support from the Automotive Production and Development Programme. Currently automotive exports have increased from 11,000 units in 1995 to 270,000 by 2014. Mercedes Benz has made an investment of R5 billion for the new C-Class, and MBSA has commenced with the expansion of their training facility through the support from National Treasury's Jobs Fund. Furthermore, the ELIDZ attracted six new investors, with a collective value of more than R890 million. This resulted in more than 534 additional direct jobs. Similarly, VWSA has committed to a total investment of R4.7 billion to operationalize the new Polo vehicle range.

Madam Speaker, **roads are a critical enabler to access and mobility**. Slowly but surely, our roads infrastructure is improving. I am sure all of you can attest to the fact that everywhere you go in the Province there are road works.

Through our collaboration with SANRAL, we are continuing to upgrade provincial and national roads within the province. Current and planned upgrading initiatives include R61 from N6, near Queenstown, to Ndwalane near Port St John's through Ngcobo and Mthatha; R56 from Elliot to Matatiele through Maclear and Mount Fletcher; R72 from East London to Port Alfred and R63 from Bhisho to Komga. We have also agreed with the Minister of Transport to hand over additional strategic provincial roads to SANRAL for upgrading and maintenance, and amongst these is the R335 which is utilized for export by the citrus industry in the Sundays River valley.

As a catalyst for regional and economic development, the N2 Wild Coast Highway project will unlock the tourism and agriculture potential of the entire wild coast region. The detailed design for the two mega bridges is now complete, with construction planned to start in November 2016. Construction in the uncontested part from Mthatha to Ndwalane, near Port St John's, is progressing well. Upgrading of strategic roads, including the R61 from Umtamvuna to Mbizana and Nomlacu, as well as Nkantolo Road, is progressing well.

As a government that prides itself for working closely with the people, we also sought inputs for this SOPA.

We appreciate the inputs we received through Umhlobo Wenene FM's Breakfast Show. Amongst the callers, Mzingisi Malangabi said: "Xa kunethile iimoto azingeni tu ngenxa yokuba uyagcwala umlambo, and MEC Majodina uyayazi lonto. Ndicela uPremier akhe ayikhangele lento." U-Anele Tshamlambo yena uthi: "Ukuba angakhe agxile ezilalini, balungise iindlela." No-Busie MaGxarha uthi: "Mna ndiqwenela aphuhlise iinkonzo ezilalini – iindlela namanzi."

Mzingisi, Anele and Busie, in my first SOPA I appointed four MECs to look specifically into the issues of access roads. I am pleased to report that work on improving access roads has commenced- across all districts- in collaboration with SANRAL. To this effect R456million was appropriated during the adjustments in November 2015. The DRPW in collaboration with SANDF will also work on the critical bridges to connect inaccessible villages, schools and health institutions.

Madam Speaker, with respect to renewable energy, one solar energy project and 16 wind energy projects worth R33.7 billion, have been awarded to independent power producers in the Eastern Cape. Of these projects 7 are fully operational, 4 are under construction, and the remaining 6 are about to commence. The combined local benefits of the 17 renewable energy projects amount to

just over R12billion.

With respect to the broadband solutions to education and health, the rollout of Integrated Financial Management Systems, will be piloted in two sites in the Province, namely, Department of Social Development and Provincial Treasury. The assessments of the sites have been completed and work is progressing well in preparation for the IFMS rollout in the two departments.

Madam Speaker, a vibrant democracy has to be responsive to people's needs at the local level. Government, therefore, accords high priority to **strengthening the developmental state and good governance.**

Madam Speaker, it has been sixteen years since the establishment of wall to wall developmental local government in South Africa, which among other things, was intended to bring government closer to the people. On the whole, the system of local government in the Province has been fairly stable since its establishment. Of course there have been challenges which we have had to respond to through a myriad of programmes and special interventions.

Through the Back to Basics Programme, we are providing hands-on support to municipalities throughout the Province. We are also rolling out War Rooms in all wards in order to promote citizen participation in planning and

programme implementation. As we speak, the Chris Hani district has been leading in the rolling out of these War Rooms at ward level, with 112 of them established and functional.

To further enhance efficiency and service delivery at local government level, four municipal boundaries have been re-determined. This will result in the amalgamation of 9 municipalities into 4 new municipal entities from July 2016. We are working hard to ensure a smooth process of amalgamation and formation of the new entities.

Going forward, we will intensify our efforts to stabilize all struggling municipalities and strengthen all our municipalities as part of the Back to Basics programme.

Madam Speaker, with respect to social infrastructure support to local government, water restoration and maintenance in Makana was completed. In collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, projects that were successfully implemented include the provision of formal and legal electricity connections to dwellings in the informal areas of Walmer; the construction of storm water detention ponds in Walmer; waste management support through the removal of illegally dumped waste, as well as the collection of dumped waste where there were no transfer stations.

In Gariep, provincial support to social infrastructure includes the replacement of water mains and water leak repairs in Burgersdorp. Several drought relief projects are progressing well in Maletswai including the upgrading of the water main to Phola Park. In Senqu municipality, funds have been made available even before the drought to attend to water shortages in the Lady Grey area.

The King Sabatha Dalindyebo Municipality is being assisted with ring-roads to reduce traffic congestion in the city centre. Work is progressing with the upgrade of the electricity network in the Western side of Mthatha in support of the NHI programme. Various municipalities have already benefitted from roads interventions, such as Mbhashe access roads and the refurbishment of the main street in Ntabankulu, amongst others.

In the year ahead our social infrastructure programme includes collaboration with ESKOM to address what is termed 'electricity hotspots', as well as a focus on improving access roads to schools, health institutions, agricultural hubs and tourist sites.

Madam Speaker, pivotal to the strengthening of the developmental state and good governance, is leadership. Whilst great strides have been made to ensure leadership stability in the Provincial Administration, going forward, focus will be on accountability.

The need for accountability and effective performance management at all leadership levels in the Provincial Administration cannot be overemphasised. Measures to foster accountability and consequence management will be developed and implemented going forward. These measures will enhance what is already in place including Service Delivery Agreements and performance agreements. Leadership pledges will also be introduced.

I call upon all leadership to aggressively champion the implementation of cost cutting measures as mapped out by the President during his State of the Nation Address. This will be over and above the existing austerity measures that we have been implementing.

Madam Speaker, the provision of **integrated human settlements** remains a key focus of Government as we move towards a society characteristic of a better life for all. At the Congress of the People, back in 1955 in Kliptown, we said, that “there shall be houses for all.”

Accordingly, we are continuing with our programme of providing sustainable human settlements for our people. Among other things, as part of a national drive to promote home ownership, 2 954 title deeds have been issued. Similarly, eighteen informal settlements have been upgraded.

For the current financial year we had planned to build 13 100 quality housing units, service 10 231 sites and rectify 2 311 units. Up to 97% of the targeted housing units were delivered, and we have surpassed the targets for site servicing and rectification. This programme has contributed to youth employment: currently up to 100 young people from Mdantsane, and Dukatole, have undergone construction training through our Youth Build & Artisan Programme in the Eastern Cape.

In collaboration with the Department of Military Veterans we have successfully launched, the Military Veterans Housing Programme in Lukhanji, within the Chris Hani District Municipality. The Province will collaborate with the Department of Military Veterans in order to expand the Programme to other areas and to address the welfare of Military Veterans in the Province.

Madam Speaker, we are **intensifying the fight against crime**, which indeed has become a major concern for our citizens. We also recognize the fact that the rise of gangsterism in our townships, and substance abuse, in general, is a serious concern in our Province. Increasing road accidents, robberies, murders, violent and intrusive crime, theft of livestock as well as trans-national organized crime are also significant areas of concern. We are particularly concerned about crimes

committed against the elderly, especially women in our communities, including women headed homes. The inhumane and brutal killings of elderly women accused of witchcraft are a serious indictment on us as a society and calls for all sectors of our society to join hands and root out this scourge.

We are reasonably satisfied with the progress we are making in the fight against crime. The drop in the provincial crime statistics is indicative of the effectiveness of the collaboration between members of the community, Community Policing Forums, Ward Committees, and SAPS in fighting crime. Going forward, we call on all municipalities to ensure that they adopt and establish Community Safety Forums in their municipal areas in collaboration with Department of Safety & Liaison and SAPS.

Whilst the Constitution correctly protects the rights of citizens to peacefully demonstrate and express their dissatisfaction with any aspect relating to their lives and surroundings, the same Constitution guarantees the authority of government to protect government assets and property attained through tax-payers' money. In the same vein this government will not tolerate destruction of state property in the name of public demonstration, and any citizen found to be unlawfully destroying property

will be dealt with to the full extent of the law.

Similarly, in an effort to curb crime and violence in schools, crime ridden schools have been provided with safety patrollers and were also linked to local police stations.

To mitigate the effects of substance and alcohol abuse, in the past year, 266 illegal liquor outlets were closed down and the multi-disciplinary substance abuse State Treatment Centre, in Port Elizabeth, was opened.

Madam Speaker, in line with our zero tolerance to corruption and fraud, we continue to fight against fraud and corruption in our system. We have now strengthened our partnerships with crime fighting agencies such as the Hawks and the Special Investigation Unit.

To sustain the gains already made in fighting the scourge of crime, fraud and corruption we call upon our communities – acting within the provisions of our laws – to reclaim their streets and their villages from criminal elements operating in these spaces.

Madam Speaker, the strengthening of the social fabric of our society is the reason we are also focusing on **building of cohesive communities and nation-building**. Putting first the welfare and future of the people of our Province remains a top priority. In these

harsh economic times, the poor are the most affected. They are the prime victims of a crisis that they did not cause and are unable to resolve.

Prevailing conditions force us to strengthen the social safety net, and it is our intention as government to target additional resources to assist the most vulnerable in our society. The injection of these resources is starting to bear fruit as evident in the fact that about 1.8 million children under the age of 16 years are accessing the Child Support Grant, which makes it the largest child poverty alleviation programme.

We are also building an Eastern Cape which will be a comfortable place to live in for persons with disabilities. To this end, 882 persons with disabilities participated in skills development programmes such as sewing, pottery, crafts, leatherworks, welding and basic computer. Similarly, 3 807 persons with disabilities accessed community based rehabilitation services.

Madam Speaker, in our quest to inculcate a culture of reading and learning, we have also spent a total of R27m to deliver a total of 23 Modular Libraries which have been handed over to needy communities to address the imbalances of the past. Moving forward to 2016/17 we project to spend up to R33m on a total of 11 library facilities to ensure a sustained programme of learning

and reading as a mechanism to foster nation building and social cohesion.

The Legends and Heroes Marathon has emerged as a powerful unifying force to foster social cohesion across the globe. The Province attracted athletes from 13 countries; not only from the continent but as far afield as the USA, Europe and Asia. Our athletes are using these marathons as springboards to qualify for the Comrades Marathon and the Two Oceans Marathon.

As we move forward, we will continue to ensure that these marathons remain a tool to equip our emerging and local young athletes to be prepared for competitive marathons for social upliftment and better life through sport.

We are proud that three of our provincial soccer teams, AmaBees, Chippa United and Mthatha Bucks, will be participating in the Nedbank Challenge 2016. Working together with the National Lottery we have secured R10 million as their contribution to the construction of the Mthatha stadium. Further funding will be availed in the next three years between Provincial government and the Lottery to bring the construction of the stadium to final completion. The stadium will alleviate the shortage of recreational facilities in the Mthatha area.

Madam Speaker, this year we are celebrating 40th

Anniversary of the 1976 June 16 uprisings. To give meaning to the selfless contribution of young people in the struggle for freedom, we shall intensify programmes towards youth development in the Province. Informed by our Youth Development Strategy, we are progressing well with the establishment of the Youth Unit in the Office of the Premier.

This Unit will help us with the coordination and implementation of the strategy. It will also help in co-ordinating other development initiatives driven by young people, including artisanal and technical skills, as well as enterprise development.

Lastly, we are partnering with business and municipalities in an ambitious programme that will place 10 000 unemployed youth at work by the end of 2017. So far, 282 young people are undergoing training in various disciplines in the War on Water Leaks programme. A further 1 460 is being recruited for training on water related artisan skills like plumbing.

Considering the inextricable link between education and development, we have, from the 2016 academic year increased the provincial contribution to the education of economically disadvantaged young people in our local universities by R16.3 million. This should benefit an additional 300 financially needy students at institutions

in our Province. This is also over and above the R20.1 million that will be made available in the 2016/17 budget. A further R75 million has been sourced from the SETAs to support placement of TVET college students to gain workplace experience in 2016. This is part of our contribution to youth development in the province.

We are committed to working with Youth formations with the singular objective of getting the youth to be gainfully employed, as well as encouraging and supporting youth entrepreneurship by providing both financial and non-financial support.

The restoration of human dignity for our fallen heroes and heroines remains at the centre of our Social Cohesion strategy. Exhumations, repatriations and the reburial of fallen struggle heroes have been coded into a formal policy which has been adopted by National Department of Arts and Culture.

We also recognize that without effective collaboration and coordination with Traditional Leadership and the Religious Leadership, the needs of our people will not be adequately met. Let me thus, take this opportunity to thank these institutions for their role in building our communities and in fostering stability, morality, ubuntu, safety and security in our communities. Both the Traditional Leaders and the Religious Leaders

continue to serve as pillars of our Moral Regeneration Movement. There is still a lot to be done in this respect and your invaluable contribution in building the moral fibre of our society, and thus building our nation, is highly appreciated. Ningabi sasiyekela: ubambiswano ngamandla.

In 2016/17 we will pay more attention to programmes that will bolster social inclusion, social capital and social mobility as key components of nation building and social cohesion. These programmes will include fostering constitutional values, offering equal opportunities, promoting inclusion and redress through increased interaction across race and class, as well as promoting active citizenry.

Madam Speaker, the initiation of young boys into manhood is a time honoured tradition of our people. It saddens us though to see families grieving the loss of their children as a result of botched circumcisions. In the last season, out of 42 225 initiates, the province suffered 43 fatalities notwithstanding many of the cross-cutting interventions we embarked upon which involved COGTA, SAPS and the House of Traditional Leaders. Clearly we cannot allow this situation to continue like this. Working together we shall continue to seek effective ways of making this tradition the pleasant experience it is supposed to be.

We noted with appreciation the reduction of fatalities in OR Tambo, and this needs to be applauded. We also noted that a number of arrests were effected during the previous season, which should hopefully act as a deterrent for perpetrators of some of the acts that led to the deaths of the initiates. Sisatsho nangoku sithi xa bebeye bephilile, mababuye bephilile. Siyayibulela intsebenziswano nokuzinikela kweeNkosi zakowethu zisebenzisana namasebe ka Rhulumente kwinkqubo yolwaluko.

Madam Speaker, as I conclude, at this point let me commend our Legislature for preserving the decorum of this Institution. The recent events where we have all witnessed the vulgar and unbecoming disruption of proceedings in our National Parliament is a matter that we must strongly condemn. I call upon all of us present here today and upon all the Province's citizens to take heed of NDP's call for the nation to say no to wayward behaviour that has the potential to destroy the soul of the nation. Disrespect of the noble institutions and offices as well as rules and regulations that govern them, is a cancer that has led to the collapse of successful nations and must not to be accepted as the norm. If we allow this rot to take root in society, the current generation will have nothing to hand over to the next generation but hollow freedom and democracy.

Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate the University of Fort Hare, which successfully marked its centenary on the 8th of February 2016. Indeed we are looking forward to hosting the national celebration of this centenary on the 20th of May this year. Our claim that we are a home of legends is perhaps particularly borne out by the existence of this legendary institution that has produced a variety of outstanding leaders in the country and in the continent.

The third local government elections are scheduled to take place this year. The Independent Electoral Commission has announced 5-6 March 2016 as voter registration days. Let me therefore take this opportunity and call on all of us to carry out our patriotic duty, and register to vote in numbers.

In the coming days, I will be interacting with stakeholders and communities throughout our Province in order to enable our people more time to engage with the substance of this address. I would also like to extend an invitation to all stakeholders to come and witness our schools children as they debate this state of the Province Address on 12 March 2016.

I thank you