“Corruption cuts across in society. It is not just a Government problem, hence it needs a multi-sectoral collaborative effort to fight it.”

Eastern Cape Premier
Phumulo Masualle - December 2016

“In the midst of alarming statistics of gender-based violence in our Province, it is encouraging to see more and more men taking the lead in standing up for no violence against women and children. This is a positive move for us as society.”

Eastern Cape Premier
Phumulo Masualle - November 2016
“Eastern Cape is a Youthful Province. It is therefore our responsibility to create a conducive environment for our youth to learn, grow and unlock their potential.”

Eastern Cape Premier
Phumulo Masualle - January 2017
State of the Province Address by Premier Phumulo Masualle, delivered in Bhisho, On 17 February 2017

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;
USihlalo Wendlu YeeNkosi, iiNkosi, kunye namaphakathi;
Executive Mayors, Mayors, Speakers and Councillors;
Judge President and Members of the Judiciary;
Leaders of Chapter 9 Institutions;
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;
Senior Government Officials and Heads of State Owned Enterprises;
Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen
Madam Speaker, we have just passed the middle point of the term of the 5th administration. We now have cause to pause and reflect on what we have achieved thus far, and what still lies ahead of us.

Kungoko ke ndisithi mandithathe eli thuba ndibulise kumlisela nomthinjane wakowethu, kwiimbombo neziphaluka zonke kweli phondo lethu lihle kangaka, emakhaya, emaholweni nakwiindawo zonke apho nihlangene khona.

Soos in vervloë dae, staan ons vandag voor die uitdaging van saam werk en saam span. So groet ek almal, en ek nooi u uit om saam met my te staan.

Sadly, as we meet today some of our citizens are no longer among us. It is a long list, which includes those of our people who perished in disasters that visited the Province throughout the year, those who died in road accidents, as well as illustrious names such as those of Rev Makhenkesi Stofile, Rev Simon Gqubule, the former President of the PAC, Mr Clarence Makwetu, Dr Phyllis Ntantala-Jordan, Mr Ngalitye Ondala.

We have also just welcomed the remains of the 14 brave warriors of Poqo that were executed by the cruel apartheid regime in 1964, and their funerals will be taking place from the 18th of February 2017.

Madam Speaker, as President Zuma already indicated in his State of the Nation Address, this year we are marking the centenary of the birth of one of our legends, the late former President of the ANC, Oliver Reginald Tambo. Working with the national Inter-Ministerial Committee,
we are going to coordinate a yearlong programme of activities in this regard. With the spirit of unity in action, we shall celebrate OR Tambo under a range of monthly themes, which include OR Tambo the revolutionary intellectual; human rights; the liberation struggle; African solidarity; dedication to the youth; the struggle for the emancipation of women; and international solidarity.

In a few days from now the nation will also be commemorating the 100th anniversary of the sinking of SS Mendi in which our heroes laid down their lives in pursuit of some of the ideals espoused by OR Tambo, for example, international solidarity and peace in the world.

Madam Speaker, we are a government that represents the wishes and aspirations of the poor, and as such all our endeavours are centred around the critical task of eradicating poverty, reducing unemployment and inequality. Accordingly, informed and guided by the National Development Plan, as well as our own Provincial Development Plan, since 2014 we have been implementing seven (7) broad strategic priorities. These are:

- Better access to quality education;
- Promoting better healthcare for all our people;
- Stimulating rural development, land reform and food security;
- Transformation of the economy to create jobs and sustainable livelihoods;
- Strengthening the developmental state and good governance;
• Intensifying the fight against crime; as well as
• Integrated human settlements and building of cohesive communities and nation-building.

As I stand here today, I’m happy to report that on the whole, the state of our Province is sound.

Madam Speaker, the provision of quality education is central to the task of building a Province characterized by a high standard of living of its citizens. It was with this understanding in mind that, at the beginning of this term, we undertook to create better access to quality education as one of our apex priorities. In making this undertaking, we understood too, that the provision of quality education to all our children is a collective concern of all of us, as parents, as stakeholders in industry and all other sectors, and as citizens. This reality is succinctly confirmed by Ziyanda Sobethwa, who in her tweeter input on how we can improve education, states that, “Tutoring, career expos and school transport are some of the things that will improve education but government does not have enough money to do all these things. Therefore, (it) must ask help from companies.”

Madam Speaker, we cannot agree more with Ziyanda as her assertion resonates well with our call for partnerships, of which we need more in improving our education for the betterment of our people’s livelihoods. As former President Nelson Mandela so aptly put it, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”.

Our effort in improving early childhood development is beginning to yield results as more children have been enrolled at ECD centres throughout the Province. As we speak, ECD coverage in the Province has improved to reach 98% of public schools.

At the beginning of 2016, we tabled a three year education transformation plan, which focuses among other things on increasing the number of functional schools, the rationalization and realignment of small and unviable schools, fully capacitated and functional districts and head offices, social partners mobilised and rallied around the change agenda, as well as increasing the supply of appropriately trained educators.

We believed then, and still do now, that if we continue fixing these fundamental points over the three year period, the quality of teaching and learning will improve in our province. In this area, we have been contending with an ever increasing challenge of a high teacher attrition rate. For example, between January and June of 2015, up to 2,343 teachers exited the system, 47% of which were resignations. One of the direct consequences of this has been the negative impact it has had on the teacher-learner ratios as per the accepted norms and standards.

Indeed, we have already recorded some achievements in education. For example, in the 2016 school year, we did not experience any lost school days due to any civil or worker-related protest action. This is important as it displays that all stakeholders, parents, teachers and education officials alike are united in ensuring that
learning takes place in the classroom with minimal disruptions.

Similarly, 1 599 046 learners benefitted from “no fee schools” by the 2\textsuperscript{nd} quarter of 2016, and 1 476 479 qualifying learners also benefitted from the school nutrition programme. Furthermore, the Community Survey conducted by Statistics SA, reported that there has been a marked improvement in the provision of water to schools, from 23 schools in 2014, to 342 schools currently. In terms of provision of sanitation facilities to schools, there has been an improvement from 47 schools in 2014, to 287 schools currently. We also believe that, in the context of a very challenging environment, the 7 point transformation plan has begun to contribute positively to the marginal improvement of 2.5\% of the 2016 Matric results compared to that of 2015 results.

On behalf of our Government and the people of our Province, I wish to congratulate the class of 2016. Our top achievers who made it in the Provincial Top Three are Ms Hanne Mertens, from Pearson High School; Ms Siphokazi Hlalukana, from Holy Cross Senior Secondary; and Ms Moya Eybers, from Clarendon High School. Similarly, top learners who came from historically disadvantaged institutions are Mr Xabiso Ncanywa, from Sangoni Senior Secondary School; Ms Anelisa Marwanqana from Mariazell Senior Secondary School; and Mr Siphelele Danisa, from St Johns College.
Madam Speaker, notwithstanding these achievements, we are aware that the matric results of 2016 are also pointing to the reality that, in spite of the package of interventions we have made to date, our education system still needs a lot of attention. The fact that the five under-performing districts in the country are all based in the Eastern Cape, clearly demonstrates that much as there may be light ahead, we are still not out of the woods yet. This is a challenge, I submit, which calls on all of us, as Government, as leaders, as parents, as learners, as all interested stakeholders, to make an extra-ordinary effort to improve the quality of our education.

Madam Speaker, this government and institutions of higher learning enjoy a valuable relationship, through our constructive engagement with the Vice Chancellors and Principals of TVET Colleges. Universities have committed to collaborate with Government on the social and economic research to support the provincial development agenda. TVET Colleges will also realign their curriculum to bolster agricultural development and economic initiatives within the Province. Let me take this opportunity to welcome the new Vice Chancellor of the University of Fort Hare, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu.

We strongly condemn the destruction of property when there are differences of opinion. We call upon all stakeholders in the education sector to find amicable ways of resolving challenges.

Going forward, we will intensify the implementation of the three year education transformation plan. We are also
confident that the appointment of a permanent Head of Department, the continuing support from the Office of the Premier and Provincial Treasury as well as support received from the Department of Basic Education, will turn the tide in our education system.

The second area of our focus has been on improving the **health profile** of our province. It is our health that ensures we get to live and thrive longer into the future. The improvement of the health status of the Province depends on us addressing the critical social determinants of health, which include income and social status; social support networks; employment and working conditions; and healthy child development.

Madam Speaker, we have reduced the maternal mortality rate from 156 maternal deaths per 100 000 births at the beginning of the term, down to 135.2 in 2016, whilst the infant and child mortality rates for children under five have been reduced to 12.8 per 100 000 children in 2016. We have also managed to reduce the rate of prevalence of HIV/Aids for people between 15 and 49 years of age from 10.4% in 2014 to 7.7% by 2016. This was mainly achieved through enhanced ARV distribution, as well as through the pregnant mothers’ programme. Partnerships with NGOs, as well as the strengthened role of the Eastern Cape Aids Council have also contributed to this improvement.

With respect to TB management, 1 424 752 clients 5 years and older were screened in facilities for TB symptoms by mid-year 2016. In the same period, TB Treatment success rate stood at 83.6 per cent. We undertook an
extensive HPV vaccination campaign, which contributed in decreasing the number of young girls susceptible to cervical cancer.

In re-engineering Primary Health Care, we have made use of the districts, which were identified nationally to pilot the NHI; namely; OR Tambo and Alfred Nzo districts. As with education and teachers, it is the training of healthcare professionals that is the engine of the healthcare system. As such, we have supported over 2,000 medical students with bursaries, and over 3,000 student nurses, post-basic nurses, midwifery nurses and technicians graduated across the province. Our training of healthcare professionals has also targeted pharmacists, medical doctors and radiographers.

Moving forward, in the year ahead, our focus will be on increasing universal health coverage by strengthening the re-engineering of Primary Health Care, which is the cornerstone of the NHI program. We will continue with implementing the World Health Organization 90:90:90 strategy on HIV, STIs and TB. To this end, HIV Counselling and Testing will continue in order to improve the HIV testing coverage in the Province. For the 2017/18 year, we are targeting to test 1.4 million clients for HIV. We also aim to increase the number of HIV positive adults accessing ART to 500,000; and to improve on the current 82% of the TB treatment success rate to 90%.

We have also heard the cries about staffing shortages at some of our health facilities and have made an additional allocation to the Health budget to address the shortages. At this juncture, I need to acknowledge the
sterling work of Dr Nxiweni in helping with the backlogs at the Bedford Hospital, especially in spinal surgery.

Madam Speaker, we are enjoined by the Freedom Charter and by our Constitution to provide shelter to our people. Similarly, the wounds of our past have not yet healed. Every day we see evidence of this in homes that remain broken, in the ever increasing levels of alcohol and drug abuse, in the unceasing women and child abuse, and in communities that still lack basic recreational infrastructure. It is for this reason that we remain seized with the critically important task of establishing **Integrated Human Settlements and Building Cohesive Communities.**

Year on year our Government continues to outperform other provinces in housing construction by over-achieving set targets. Our extraordinary performance in housing delivery has required that we source additional funding from national government. The Department has delivered a total of 38 345 housing units and installed 31 945 services since 2014. I can also report that the Department has once again won the National Govan Mbeki Social Housing award, Peoples Housing Process and Best Informal Development Project amongst a number of other National awards.

Moving forward, in the coming financial year we will be focusing on new housing units for the destitute, our Military Veterans and those beneficiaries affected by disasters. The Department will also be working more closely with all municipalities through CoGTA to ensure improved integrated spatial planning of all projects, so as
to adhere to the objectives as outlined in the Provincial Development Plan.

Madam Speaker, our plans, our dreams, and our wishes hinge on our economy performing optimally. It is for this reason that we began the term by adopting a Medium Term Strategic Framework priority regarding the transformation of the economy to create jobs and sustainable livelihoods.

The economic and fiscal outlook in the country is heavily influenced by the global economic challenges thus leading to slow economic growth rate. The current growth is less than 1.2% per annum and does not meet the 5% target set in the National Development Plan. This does not auger well for job creation. Furthermore, the unemployment rate has grown faster than the economic growth. Mostly affected by this phenomenon are women and youth.

In response to this, a Provincial Economic Development Strategy has been developed. The Strategy is based on six economic sectors on which the province has a comparative advantage, namely, agricultural development, oceans economy, tourism, renewable energy, light manufacturing and automotive industry.

Our Industrial Development Zones and State Owned Entities, COEGA IDZ, ELIDZ and the Eastern Cape Development Corporation have amongst themselves signed new significant investment deals, promoted trade exports and funded new businesses. The IDZs have attracted investment in the agro-processing,
automotive, aquaculture, energy, metals logistics and business process services sectors. This has advanced socio-economic development in the Eastern Cape region through skills development, technology transfer and job creation.

COEGA has signed 61 new investors, with a combined investment value of R35.8 billion. The recent investment of R11 billion by Chinese OEM, (BAIC), and R4 billion by VW has consolidated the Province’s dominant position as the strategic auto sector HUB. Furthermore, the COEGA IDZ has created 18,366 jobs thus far, of which 7,174 are operational jobs and 11,192 are construction jobs.

The East London IDZ signed three new investors for the year 2016/17 with an investment value of R779 million, thus creating 417 direct manufacturing jobs. Furthermore, the ELIDZ has awarded R30 million of its total expenditure during the 2016/17 financial year for SMME development.

Moving forward, we are consolidating our IDZs in order to achieve synergies and efficiencies. To this end a new SEZ Act was passed in 2014, with a view to expand the strategic industrialisation focus, and to cover diverse regional development needs and contexts.

Our achievements in supporting SMMEs and Cooperatives are well documented and this support is starting to bear fruits. The efforts undertaken by ECDC, COEGA and ELIDZ led to the creation of 18 216 permanent jobs in 2016.
To further give impetus to the growth of SMMEs and cooperatives, policy provisions have been put in place to ensure that Service Providers are paid within 30 Days; maximise local procurement opportunities, develop local suppliers and to provide off-take agreements to promote employers of 100 or more people.

We are determined to ensure that as part of our enablers we continue to strive to deliver sound infrastructure, sustainable water and energy sources, as well as efficient movement of goods and services.

With respect to roads, we are continuing with the construction work on strategic roads and related infrastructure throughout the Province. As part of celebrating the centenary of the legendary OR Tambo, the Nkantolo road linking the R61 and his birth place is being surfaced. Other roads under construction include the R61 from the Mthamvuna River to Mbizana, and the R72 from East London to Port Alfred, as well as sections of the N2 between East London, Peddie, Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth. The provincial government has also supported various infrastructure projects including high mast lighting in Burgersdorp, as well as bridges in Bawa, Zazulwana, Mazizini and Mancam.

We have invested up to R107 million in plant machinery for the maintenance of the provincial roads located in municipalities, and we will continue with the maintenance of surfaced roads through a programme of resealing.

Going forward, in responding to the challenges posed by the shrinking fiscus, we have partnered with the
CSIR on the evaluation of alternative technologies to be utilised in the maintenance of rural roads. This initiative will be implemented during 2017/18.

As we implement the Presidential Strategic Integrated Projects in the Province, we are moving ahead with plans for the development of the N2 Wild Coast route from East London to the Mthamvuna River. This project includes the construction of two mega-bridge structures on the Msikaba and Mthentu Rivers, as well as seven additional major river bridges and three interchanges. SANRAL estimates that the tender for both bridges will be awarded and contractors be on site during the first quarter of 2017/18 financial year. The planning and design of the Mzimvubu Multipurpose Development is nearing completion. The funding model is being attended to by the national government. On our side we have established the Project Management Office and we will be intensifying engagement with the traditional leadership, municipalities, and affected communities.

I am also pleased to report that upgrades to the Mthatha Airport terminal building, including the airport runway lights, have been completed. These developments will help in attracting other operators to open new routes that are critical for the economic potential of that region.

We continue to provide affordable bus passenger services through Mayibuye Transport Corporation, Algoa Bus Company, and AB350. Furthermore, as government we are committed to continuous engagement with the taxi industry, with a view to address the challenges confronting the sector.
Madam Speaker, in the area of oceans economy, we seek to ensure that our people derive economic benefit from the 800km of our coastline, and to unleash new economic opportunities. The national Departments of Public Works and of Transport have started with a feasibility study that will lead to the construction of the Port St Johns fishing harbour. Transnet will commence with processes to establish a Maritime Training Centre at the EL Port in the first quarter of 2017/18. This centre will, amongst others, cater for the artisanal maritime skills required to provide quality services to the ships that dock in our ports and to the maritime industry at large.

In pursuit of our vision to set up the biggest bunkering service in the continent, offshore bunkering services were launched in May 2016 in Nelson Mandela Bay. This has recorded a phenomenal growth from serving 10 ships in May 2016 to 103 ships per month as at January 2017. This has also unleashed a lot of opportunities for local business. The province will conduct a value chain analysis of the service in order to promote local beneficiation.

With respect to renewable energy, we have been awarded 16 wind farms, and 1 solar energy farm with a total investment value of R33,7 billion, and 18 132 job years being created over the life of the projects. We also received an additional boost to our energy security when the R3,5 billion, 342 Megawatt DEDISA peaking power station achieved commercial operation in October 2015, immediately playing a role in reducing the chances of load-shedding. Our involvement in renewable energy
projects, especially wind farms, has generated 18,132 full time equivalent jobs.

As part of our international relations work, the province is collaborating with the Province of Lower Saxony in Germany to build the EC-Lower Saxony Mini-grid Project. The project will be piloted in one village at Raymond Mhlaba Municipality and will entail electrification using renewable energy mini-grid.

The Department of Energy has also identified Coega IDZ for the construction of 1000 Megawatt (MW) Liquid Natural Gas fired power station. The project will unleash a host of opportunities for the development of the gas industry in the province.

With respect to the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), 430,600 work opportunities and 135,609 full-time equivalent jobs have been created during this term.

Madam Speaker, in 1965 Amilcar Cabral said, “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, to guarantee the future of their children…” As a rural province, we have taken a conscious decision to turn the Eastern Cape into the food basket of the SADC region to realise this noble ideal by this African revolutionary. To this effect, agriculture is key in promoting local economic development, ensuring food security and employment creation. We have supported smallholder farmers with agricultural infrastructure,
inputs and implements, as well as training. The four newly established RED hubs, have begun primary production of maize and sorghum crops, yielding over 3,000 tonnes. The agricultural sector has stimulated 386 permanent and 137 temporary jobs through the Jobs Stimulus Fund.

Unfortunately, we are also experiencing unusual climatic conditions, such as the recent one in Mthatha, which struck twice within a space of few days. As a Province we have allocated R70 million towards the assistance and support to the affected communities. This will be managed through the Provincial Management Disaster Centre in collaboration with municipalities.

We are also aware of the continuing drought, which is affecting parts of Amathole, Chris Hani and Joe Gqabi District Municipalities. Working with the Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation, mitigating plans have been put in place and we are continuing to monitor the situation in the affected areas.

Madam Speaker, let me echo the President in congratulating the 2016 Female Farmer of the Year, Ms Vanecia Janse from Koukamma Municipality.

We have noted with great appreciation the contributions and the concerns of the business sector on the manner which government implements its noble policies. Our government remains firmly committed to 30 day payment of suppliers, 30 percent local procurement and labour sourcing for projects, as well as 50% localization. Accordingly, the procuring of goods and services will not
only be at the lowest possible price, but will consider **promotion of local economic development**. To emphasize this, we will ensure that every senior personnel including HODs are aware and adhere to the Eastern Cape Local Economic Development Framework. Furthermore, the PPPFA Act that will be promulgated from 1 April 2017 will strengthen the legislative framework for local procurement. We are determined to ensure that the remainder of this term is characterised by what Michael Bloomberg has termed: "**making decisions and standing up to the criticism**".

Our efforts to improve Tourism profile have increased. These include hosting the Ironman SA and the National and Provincial Tourism Careers Expos which attracted approximately 80,000 spectators and over 10,000 participants and learners respectively. The Snapshot released by SA Tourism at the end of Quarter 3 of 2016 showed the Eastern Cape as the 3rd visited province domestically after Gauteng and Limpopo. The province will build on this positive outlook by intensifying marketing and branding of the Eastern Cape as well as through the repackaging of the nine provincial tourism routes. We shall also target new emerging tourism markets like East Asia and the African Continent.

As we work to achieve socio-economic development and transformation, we remember Nelson Mandela’s words, which echo those of Gustavo Gutiérrez, when he says “Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity, it is an act of justice. It is the protection of fundamental human rights. Everyone, everywhere, has the right to live with dignity – free from fear and oppression, free
from hunger and thirst, and free to express themselves and associate at will.”

In support of communities in distress, the province has been implementing community Nutrition Programme and Social Relief of Distress. We also established a drug rehabilitation centre in Port Elizabeth to assist with rehabilitating drug abusers. We have also extended community-based service centres to older persons, benefiting approximately 14,000 older people in over 388 centres, where skills development such as arts and craft, food security and income generation programmes are provided. Furthermore, 364 households accessed food through our food security programmes. Up to 16 012 houses in the anti-poverty sites also now have access to water, sanitation, access roads and electricity.

As we move forward into 2017/18, we are going to focus on strengthening community development interventions targeting youth and empowerment programmes. Our anti-poverty programme will include four Anti-poverty initiatives coordinated in line with the four pillars of the anti-poverty strategy, as well as the establishment of 50 functional War Rooms for the coordination of Anti-poverty initiatives.

Madam Speaker, as part of our nation building and social cohesion initiatives, we have continued to promote our culture through a number of arts and culture festivals. These include the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown; Isingqi Sethu Wild Coast Cultural Festival in Port St Johns; Siqhayisa ngengoma Battle of Maskandi Festival in Mt Frere; Komani Jazz Festival in
Queenstown; Sondela Youth Festival in Aliwal North; OR Tambo Choral Music Festival; Iphulo Drama Festival in East London; and Shukuma Dance and Drama Festival in Port Elizabeth.

There is an old African proverb which says that, “Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter.” This is a cautionary tale instructing us to tell and preserve our history in our own terms. With this in mind, we have also focused on transforming our museums to reflect the irreversible reality of our freedom. Critical elements in this regard include the promotion of multilingualism, the building of libraries and archives, the promotion of sport and recreation, the promotion of cultural industries, and the changing of place names.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate citizens of our Province who have excelled in various sports, in particular Azinga Fuzile, Promising Boxer of the Year; Sheraldine Vortun, Female Boxer of the Year; Xolisani Ndongeni, Boxer of the Year; and Mbali Zantsi, Female Promoter of the Year. Mr Vuyani Bhungu appointed by the IBO as its African Ambassador, Border Women’s Rugby Team which won the National League for the fourth time in a row and Mr Sivile Mpengesi, Chairman of the Chippa United Football Club, the only PSL team representing the Eastern Cape since 2014.

Madam Speaker, informed by an intrinsic appreciation that without peace of mind, the creative potential of our people, which we need to harness in the effort to develop our Province, would be stillborn, one of priority
areas has been the need to **intensify the fight against crime and corruption**. Our approach in this regard can therefore be described as a concerted attempt to avoid the kind of life, which Thomas Hobbes famously described as, “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.”

To this end, we developed a range of policies and strategies aimed at strengthening our policing machinery, which include the White Papers for Safety and Security, as well as Policing, the Provincial Safety Strategy, and the Anti-Gang Strategy.

The effectiveness of these strategies is borne out by the Provincial crime statistics, which show a decreasing trend for all the categories, with significant impact being noted on the reduction of crime against women and children.

Furthermore, the implementation of the policy to prohibit public servants from doing business with the state has reduced conflict of interests during the tender processes of government, and also resulted in the reduction of the number of officials applying to do remunerative work outside government. As part of Anti-Corruption Awareness Campaigns, we have further taken a step in building ethics at school level and intensified the fight against crimes committed by learners including drug abuse and carrying of violent weapons to schools.

We are committed in rooting out corruption and fraud wherever it manifests itself. The focus of the Hawks on some of our public institutions is applauded and appreciated. We will continue to collaborate with all law enforcement agencies in addressing this scourge.
Madam Speaker, in terms of our Victim Empowerment Programmes, we have increased the funding for victim friendly centres. As at July 2016 the province had up to 166 Non-Profit Organisations spread across the province, with a potential to service more than 10 000 clients per year. Furthermore, there is a marked improvement on the part of Victim Friendly Police Stations to ensure that police stations have victim friendly service, and this has increased the public trust and confidence to report crimes of sexual harassment.

Madam Speaker, notwithstanding the mountain of challenges we have had to deal with, we are a very young Province. On the 27th of April this year, we will be turning 23 years old. It may seem like a distant memory, but only yesterday we were divided into pieces of Bantustan and apartheid territories. Today we are a vibrant democracy, and as this Government, we see it as our task to deepen this democracy, by strengthening the developmental state and good governance.

We are seeing the results of this through the provincial and municipal audit outcomes. Likewise we are happy to note that for the past 3 years, the number of municipalities with unqualified audit opinion has increased from twelve (12) municipalities in 2013 to twenty-one (21) in 2015.

As part of our programme of providing hands-on support to municipalities, we are continuing with the implementation of Back to Basics in all municipalities, with a particular focus on 16 municipalities that are at risk. We are also continuing to support the newly established municipalities post the amalgamation process.
We are also ready to support the local sphere for the continued roll out of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) and those provisions that underpin Land Use Management and Spatial development frameworks. This spatial framework will necessitate and expedite integration of government programmes and projects in order to meet the objective of a functional local government.

We have continued to fulfil our constitutional obligations relating to the provision of access to basic and essential services such as bulk water and sanitation, electricity and municipal access roads. While this remains a competence of local government, the provincial administration has allocated over R1 billion towards municipal access roads, bulk infrastructure for electrification, the de-silting of dams and the drilling of additional boreholes for drought mitigation.

By the end of the current financial year, we shall have re-established the **Provincial Planning Commission**. The task of the Commission will be to close gaps in the Provincial Development Plan (PDP), develop a clear implementation plan as well as serving as an advisory body on the key pillars of the PDP and sectors of the Provincial Economic Development Strategy.

Madam Speaker, we have an abiding respect for the institution of traditional leadership, and we appreciate the role it plays as a partner to complement our efforts as we build sustainable communities. We are therefore committed to ensuring that traditional leaders are provided with the necessary infrastructure and tools
of trade. To this end, provision has been made for the appointment of secretaries for 25 traditional councils, the acquisition of computers and printers for the traditional councils to be connected to each other and the world. Furthermore, assistance will be provided through the implementation of the long-term strategy for Traditional Leadership capacity building, and the utilisation of the Jongilizwe College. We are also looking forward to joining the provincial House of Traditional Leaders as it celebrates its 20th anniversary in April this year.

Madam Speaker, I cannot emphasize this enough. The custom of initiation is, and should be nothing else but a happy occasion. It saddens me to see that we continue to experience the death of young people due to negligence and greed. Together we must act to stop this.

Madam Speaker, we are strongest when we work together as one, and as team Eastern Cape. To borrow the slogan of the Disabled People of South Africa, which says, “nothing about us without us”, through our Operation Masiphathisane, we have ensured that everyone has an opportunity to participate in matters affecting and determining the welfare of their communities. The war-rooms serve as points of integration, coordination, referral and tracking of issues raised by community members. This programme will continue to bring government closer to the people and enable it to respond to community needs. Furthermore, we pride ourselves as a Government founded on the value of putting people first. Through platforms such as the Executive Council Outreach, and the Imbizo Focus Week, constantly we engage with all sectors of society in our Province. In
fact, leading to this address, we had an opportunity to engage with a variety of stakeholders including the youth and the business sector.

Madam Speaker, it is the quality of civil servants that determine the impact and success of government’s efforts. Given the varied nature and disciplines of the work of government, it is critical that the right skills are recruited in the correct way, at the right time, and used in the correct manner for the right reasons. Every civil servant carries the face of government with them wherever they go. We are the first point of contact, especially when our electronic systems fail us. We have a responsibility to uphold the values and principles espoused by this government, especially as they relate to good conduct and ethics.

Accordingly, as a province, we have instituted accountability measures to ensure that what is entrusted unto our civil servants is actually carried out in the appropriate manner, with the appropriate spirit. We have institutionalized the provincial leadership pledge during 2016 which determines that, in all that we do as officials, we must put the citizenry first. The Executive Council has chosen a balanced scorecard to assess and evaluate the impact of our strategies given our respective mandates. Further to this are the MEC Service Delivery Agreements (SDAs), which are complemented by the scorecard, the MPAT and HOD reviews. These SDAs are signed with every MEC.

Madam Speaker, as I move towards the end, let me emphasize that indeed we have managed to improve in
many of our priority areas. According to the results of the 2016 Community Survey, we have reduced the poverty headcount from 14.4% to 12.7%. We have marginally improved access to piped water supply as source of drinking water. We have improved our proportion of households connected to a supply of electricity from 36.2% in 1996 to 75% in 2011 and to 85.4% to date. We improved the number of households with access to flush or chemical toilets from 776,222 in 2011 to 928,332 to date. Accordingly I repeat, that on the whole, the state of our Province is sound.

Madam Speaker, our focus going forward will be on addressing the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequalities in an integrated and targeted approach. This involves reducing the silos, introducing the “new way of doing business”, which includes dynamic interaction with civil society and industry to find workable solutions. We are going to prioritize the development and implementation of the provincial spatial development framework, in terms of which we seek to inform small town revitalisation including townships; access to basic services; as well as local economic development.

Given the declining distribution of the allocation of the provincial equitable share, we have decided to make the best use of the equitable share to balance government’s efforts between rural areas and peri-urban and urban areas. Our people have spoken and as government we must show that the voices of our rural communities are as audible and valid as those of their urban counterparts.
Madam Speaker, we are going to pay special attention on **youth development**. We have started in earnest with the implementation of the Provincial Youth Development Strategy that we adopted in 2015.

Accordingly, we have finalised engagement with the SANDF, to place youth for training in infrastructure maintenance programmes. Going forward we will look for other strategic partnerships to up-skill our youth. The Departments of Health and Education will also set aside 25% of their infrastructure maintenance budgets to target the youth maintenance initiative from the adjustments period onwards.

We have listened and heard that there are many young people who are trying to make it in agriculture, but needing extra support to change from ‘trying’ to ‘succeeding’. In line with the Masiphathisane approach, we have decided to focus on youth already involved in agricultural activities by providing them with financial and non-financial support. Over and above, the youth will also be assisted with access to market opportunities, including providing produce for the school nutrition programme.

The Youth Unit in the OTP, together with DRDAR, will also consider setting aside a special fund for youth already working in agriculture of not less than R20 million in 2017/18. Apart from training already specified, this allocation will fund hydroponics and aqua culture training as well as support to agro-processing initiatives.
As I conclude,

Let each and every one of us rise to the task of making the Eastern Cape a better Province. It is through unity in action that our vision and dreams will be realised. Umanyano ngamandla! Kopano ke matla! Eenheid in aksie!

I thank you.
FAST FACTS
ON THE EASTERN CAPE

- **Eastern Cape** is South Africa's second largest province covering about 13.8% area and third largest in terms of population. Two-thirds of the population speak isiXhosa, followed by Afrikaans, English then Sesotho and is renowned for its pristine coastline of 800km.

- It is divided into two Metropolitan Municipalities; Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan and six District Municipalities, Sarah Baartman, Chris Hani, Amathole, Alfred Nzo, O.R. Tambo and Joe Gqabi.

- With Bhisho as its capital town and the seat of the provincial government, it is the only South African province that offers investors two industrial development Zones; East London IDZ and Coega IDZ.

- Manufactures half of South Africa’s passenger vehicles and over 50% of its vehicles exports. Assembly plants are at Mercedes Benz of South Africa in East London, Delta Corporation in Port Elizabeth and Volkswagen South Africa in Uitenhage.

- We boast a legacy of 150 years’ experience in mohair production which contributes 65% to the world’s mohair industry.
“We who are free to eat and sleep at will, to write, to speak, to travel as we please; we who are free to make or break a revolution, let us use our comparative freedom, not to perpetuate the misery of those who suffer, nor to give indirect aid to the enemy they fight by withholding our own contribution.”

Oliver Reginald Tambo