

**STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE
PREMIER OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE HONOURABLE CHUPU
MATHABATHA TO THE SIXTH LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL
LEGISLATURE AT THE LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE
CHAMBER.**

24 February 2022

Honourable Speaker;

Honourable Deputy Speaker of the Legislature;

Honourable Members of the Legislature;

Members of the Executive Council;

Executive Mayors and Mayors of our municipalities;

The leadership of the ruling party, the African National Congress;

Leaders of opposition parties;

Chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders;

Our esteemed Traditional Leaders;

Former MPs and MPLs;

Director General and Heads of Departments;

Stalwarts and veterans of our struggle;

Provincial Commissioner of Police;

My special guest, General Rudzani Maphwanya, Chief of the
South African National Defence Force;

Heads of our Chapter Nine and Chapter Ten institutions;

Leadership of religious community;

Leadership of organised business and labour;

Youth, women and community leaders;

Members of the media;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen:

We are standing before an expiry of time, we have been through the worst, and we have seen the worst. We have seen and experienced a deadly pandemic devastating our economy and destroying our people's livelihoods.

We have lived through various stages of a pandemic that has stalled progress and growth, a pandemic that has reversed the gains which have accumulated over the years.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an unprecedented loss of human life, many people, particularly those in the informal economy, lost their jobs, and thousands were exposed to the risk of extreme poverty.

We have seen a situation where breadwinners lose jobs, fall ill and die. This has left dependents exposed to poverty, the indignity of life without a household income and related hardships.

While COVID-19 caught us off-guard, our collective response was swift and equal to the challenge at hand.

Nevertheless, we can see a new direction which is being pointed out for us to embrace, and a new journey for us to embark upon.

Ancient Greek mythologists speak about a life of a bird called phoenix. According to the tale, a phoenix obtains a new life by arising from the ashes of its predecessor.

Like phoenix, Limpopo shall rise from the ashes of the devastation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, to embark on a fresh journey of economic growth, social development and prosperity for all the residents of our beautiful province.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members

It is in this context that we meet here today to chart a renewal path for our province.

To achieve our aspired growth levels, to support employment creation and to fortify our fight against poverty and inequality, we need to promote growth-enhancing plans.

We are steering our economy to a green, resilient and inclusive developmental path, in line with the National Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan and the Limpopo Socio-economic Recovery Plan.

Central to these economic recovery efforts, is to position Limpopo as an investment destination of choice for both domestic and foreign investors.

This will help to enhance the much-needed creation of employment, particularly for our young people.

We are hard at work to strengthen the implementation of the Provincial Procurement Strategy. The Strategy promotes the production and consumption of locally produced goods and services.

It is through this Strategy that we aim to reach the goals of economic empowerment of designated groups, which includes women, youth and people living with disabilities.

We believe that this approach will go a long way in stimulating local economy and creating jobs for our people.

Madam Speaker

Stimulating the growth of our economy is high on the agenda of this government.

As part of our response to the devastation I have referred to, our Provincial Socio-Economic Recovery Plan is anchored on the industrialization of the province, through mega projects in the manufacturing, tourism and agricultural sectors.

This Plan will also pay special attention to various Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) support programmes.

The total investment and interventions by this economic recovery plan is projected at around one hundred and seventy billion rand (R170 billion). This investment and intervention is projected to create over forty-eight thousand (48 000) jobs in the next five to ten years.

In addition, the implementation of the Limpopo Industrial Master Plan has also received R208 billion in investment pledges from the recently held Limpopo Investment Conference. This will go a long way in helping to industrialize our province and thus creating the much-needed jobs for our people.

Our approach is to make sure that these pledges or commitments are translated into tangible projects which would create value and impact to the provincial economy.

From these commitments, the Masingita Group had pledged R5.46 billion for the construction of the Nkuna Smart City in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

In this regard, I am happy to report that construction of Phase 1 of the Nkuna Smart City has already commenced. This project is anticipated to create 585 construction jobs and 325 permanent jobs.

Through an investment value of R1,2 billion, Sefateng Chrome Mine is rolling underground mining infrastructure in Sekhukhune. This project is anticipated to create 350 construction jobs and 600 permanent jobs during full production.

I am also happy to report that Ivanhoe Mines is also living up to its investment commitments. To date, the company has already spent R7 billion of the R9 billion commitment on mining infrastructure in the Waterberg Region.

The remaining R2 billion will be spent in this calendar year. So far, the investment has created 778 jobs, and this figure is expected to rise to 1 000 jobs by December of this year.

With regard to the investment commitment of R48 billion from Anglo American & De Beers, I am able to report that already R3,9 billion shall be spent on the Mototolo Mine in Sekhukhune, in the first quarter of 2022. This project has extended the life of the mine, thus helping to sustain the existing jobs.

With an investment value of R250 million, the construction of Amazin Hotel in Capricorn Region is expected to commence in September this year. This project will create a good number of jobs both during and post construction.

Shekinah Lion & Game Lodge has already spent R47 million of the R60 million commitment for this hospitality project in the Waterberg Region. Once in operation, the facility will create permanent jobs through hospitality services.

ZZ2 had pledged R128 million for the construction of a pack-house in Mopani Region. So far, a total value of the R128 million commitment has been spent.

The pack-house is expected to be fully operational in April / May this year. This project is expected to create 250 jobs when fully operational.

Madam Speaker

Through the National Spaza Shop Relief Fund, we were able to support one thousand two hundred and forty-seven (1 247) Spaza Shops across the province.

This has helped to inject financial support and cushion small businesses in our rural areas and townships against the effects of COVID-19.

One of the major investments we have had to make, as the Provincial Government, is setting aside R3,5 billion to mitigate against the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the population.

The larger proportion of this funding was allocated to the social cluster, that is, health, education and social development.

Madam Speaker

The future of modern economies is premised on accessible and reliable broadband infrastructure.

This is about the deployment of high-speed Internet access for private homes, businesses, commercial establishments, and public institutions such as schools and health facilities.

It is against this background that we have been working on the deployment of broadband network infrastructure across the Province.

On the other hand, our national government has recently approved the roll-out of the second phase of the **SA Connect** project.

The approved second phase will be rolled out using state-owned entities, that is, SITA, Broadband Infraco, Sentech and the industry.

This project forms part of government's commitment to bridge the digital divide, especially in rural communities, and advance the digital economy.

The participation of the private sector will also address the transformation of the sector by involving all relevant role players in the electronic network sector.

As a province, through Limpopo Connexion, we have completed Phase I of the Broadband project, including the development of investment models and strategies for project bankability and sustainability.

The investment partner will be on-board during the 2022/2023 Financial Year. The partner will assist Limpopo Connexion in expanding the network footprint across all corners of the province. The total project investment is estimated at an amount of R1.7 billion.

Madam Speaker

As a province, we recognise that information and knowledge supported through state-of-the-art Information and Communication Technology is critical to support service delivery and the achievement of the developmental goals.

Our approved Five-Year Limpopo e-Government Strategy Implementation Plan lays a solid foundation for digital transformation in the provincial administration to enhance technical capacity.

Our objective is to build a capable and ethical developmental state with the requisite capacity to serve the people diligently.

This will help improve the delivery of government services to the people. Among other projects, the process to digitise files and records throughout the provincial administration has started.

For instance, we have started in healthcare, e-Learning in education and e-Licensing service in transport.

Another key success is the migration from the analogue to digital television broadcasting signal.

Limpopo is now one of the provinces in which the switch from analogue to digital broadcasting signal has been completed.

The transition will not only make available access to multiple television channels at high audio and video quality, but will also create new job opportunities. Already job opportunities have been created for local installers and technical support teams in the province.

Madam Speaker

After a long journey of pursuing the establishment of the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone, we are proud to announce that finally the project will be officially launched this year.

This follows the granting of the environmental authorization by the relevant authorities. This milestone will unlock the unlimited opportunities for the provincial economy.

We have already set aside R600 million towards infrastructure roll-out in the North Site of the project in Musina Town.

The manufacturing, agro-processing and logistics hubs of the project are finally taking off the ground. We are well on track in turning the Musina-Makhado Corridor into a melting-pot of industrial activity.

In keeping with the global policy shift on energy generation and our commitment to sustainable development, our SEZ has embraced the net-zero carbon emission goal by introducing green solar power.

In December 2021, the Musina-Makhado SEZ secured an investment commitment for the first phase of the energy generation project to install a multi-billion 1, 000-megawatt solar power plant to support the metallurgical complex.

In the same vein, we have made significant progress towards securing water resources for the SEZ. This includes engagements with Zimbabwe and other SADC member states.

We are also excited about the partnership with the Vhembe TVET College to build its Musina Satellite Campus inside the SEZ.

The partnership will contribute significantly to empower the youth in technical and vocational training.

Honourable Members

Progress towards the designation of Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ is at an advanced stage. The completion of this designation will go a long way in contributing to our employment creation imperative.

Already 21 companies with a potential to invest R45 billion and create over 8, 000 jobs have shown interest in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ.

The first phase of the Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ, covering 316 hectares, will integrate the expansion of an already existing industrial hub focusing on building a mining-input-supplier precinct.

Madam Speaker

In an effort to strengthen our investment in the Provincial Industrial Parks, we are working together with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) to industrialise our provincial economy.

I am therefore proud to announce that both Seshego and Nkowankowa will host our Digital Hubs programme. This is designed to bolster digital training and create jobs within the broader national infrastructure development programme.

The project will help to equip young people with skills and knowledge to prepare them for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The hubs will serve as training centres for community members, provide access to information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, and enable incubation mainly for young entrepreneurs operating in the ICT sector.

Central to the objectives of digital hub initiative is to provide the youth and the unemployed access to information and communication technology.

The Business Plan for Seshego Digital Hub has been finalised and Limpopo Connexion has been appointed as the operator of the Hub. Modelling and layout plans has been finalised. The construction of the Seshego Digital Hub will commence in this Financial Year, at a project cost of R23 million.

Madam Speaker

During the recent State of the Nation Address, President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, emphasised that “the digital economy will increasingly become a driver of growth and a creator of employment”.

In that context, as Limpopo, we have completed the roll out of a requisite infrastructure, comprising a Data Centre, Network Operating Control Centre and Contact Centre. A total of 52 sites have been connected to the network, using both fibre and satellite technologies.

The establishment of the Limpopo Science and Technology Park, which is a visionary and catalytic project to transform our provincial economy, is well underway. Once completed, it will be a major driver of the Province's competitiveness.

Madam Speaker

Through the Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA), we managed to provide incubation support to over 100 SMMEs with over 60 per cent youth-owned enterprises.

In the process, we were able to create 279 employment opportunities benefitting youth, women and people living with disabilities.

In addition, we were able to provide similar developmental support to 100 co-operatives, thirty-two of these cooperatives are youth owned.

This tailored support to co-operatives assisted to sustain around 690 employment opportunities.

We are proud to announce that we have assisted around 77 youth-owned enterprises to access development finance.

Development finance is a necessary start-up assistance that most emerging businesses need.

Madam Speaker

Mining is one of the strategic economic competitive edge of our province. It is in this context that, through a partnership between Corridor Mining Resources and Sefateng Chrome Mine, we have embarked on the development of the underground mine.

Once fully operational, this mining project will contribute to the economic development and empowerment of the surrounding communities and the province at large.

When it reaches full operational stage, the mine will be able to produce thirty thousand (30 000) tons of chrome ore a month, creating around 500 direct jobs.

Through Corridor Mining Resources, we are also in the process of finalising the second phase of public participation, that will help towards the finalization of the application of the mining rights for Tshepong Chrome Mine.

In this regard, we have completed a bankable Feasibility Study and the results are positive. This means that there is enough chrome ore that can be mined for a period of six to seven years, through the underground mine system.

Indeed, these are good news for the people of Limpopo.

Madam Speaker

During our recently convened Mining and Energy Conference, a resolution was adopted that all the mines that were placed under care and maintenance in our province, should be reopened for production.

Following the conference, in December 2021 the joint venture partners in Bokoni Platinum Mine, Atlatsa Resources and Anglo-American Platinum, announced that they have entered into a sales agreement with African Rainbow Minerals (ARM).

This transaction is still subject to regulatory approval. We expect the process to be completed this year, creating around 3, 000 jobs.

Dilokong Mine already has new owners, who have commissioned an independent study towards opening production operation. We hope to see the mine reopened and operating to full capacity, creating the much-needed jobs.

De Beers continues to invest in the province and because of this investment the life of its mining operations in Musina is extended to the year 2046. That is 24 years from now.

Honourable Members

As part of our strategy to ignite the broiler production and processing industry in Limpopo, we are now finalizing signing a lease agreement to operate the Lebowakgomo Chicken Abattoir.

I can confirm that this state-of-the-art abattoir will finally start operating around June this year. This facility will open doors for aspirant and existing broiler producers in the Province.

It is expected that the opening of this abattoir will create around 500 jobs through the entire value chain. The facility will itself create 150 permanent jobs.

With regard to Tshivhase Mukumbani Tea Estates, we are looking into the possibility of replacing tea with a more viable and profitable commodity that will sustain the project and restore jobs for local communities.

Madam Speaker

We have previously spoken about the resilience that we witnessed in the tourism industry in the past two years. Tourism in Limpopo contributed to economic growth and employment. As we are well aware, COVID-19 impacted negatively on the tourism sector.

The Tourism Sector Recovery Plan, which is incorporated into the Limpopo Socio-Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, has facilitated implementation of key projects aimed at achieving recovery in the tourism sector.

We are looking forward to the sector benefitting from the easing of COVID-19 restriction and reaching population immunity through mass vaccination.

The Limpopo Tourism Agency will continue leveraging on major events and partnerships such as the international golf event Limpopo Championship and the DSTV Premier League.

These events have in the past and even now continue to profile Limpopo as a great tourism and sporting destination.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members

The local government sphere continues to play a central role in advancing local economic development and delivering basic services to our communities.

The task of building strong, resilient and effective municipalities is directly linked to the urgency of taking services to our people.

Madam Speaker

About three months ago, our people participated in a democratic exercise to elect new municipal councillors. As always, our elections were incident-free and credible.

In this regard, I want to thank all the stakeholders, including the Independent Electoral Commission in the province, the police, Traditional Leaders and School Governing Bodies for their contribution.

I also want to take this opportunity to commend all the political parties and independent candidates who participated in this election. Your participation is important for the growth of our democracy.

I have already reminded our newly elected councillors that their election to different councils is not a party-political achievement or a personal achievement, but an invitation to serve the people of Limpopo.

Our councillors have been elected to ensure that the people have clean drinking water;

They have been elected to ensure that municipal finances are managed prudently and are accounted for;

They have been elected to ensure that there is regular refuse removal in our communities;

The mandate of our councillors is also to ensure that our municipalities stimulate local economic growth so that jobs and other opportunities are created.

As the provincial government, we are working closely with the South African Local Government Association, (SALGA), to implement the municipal Back-to-Basics approach.

In line with this approach, we expect municipalities to:

- Put people and their concerns first and ensure constant contact with communities through effective public participation platforms;
- Create conditions for decent living by consistently delivering municipal services of the right quality and standard;
- We expect our municipalities to be well governed and demonstrate good governance, cut wastage, spend public funds prudently, hire competent staff, ensure transparency and accountability, and;
- Ensure sound financial management and accounting, and prudently manage resources.

Honourable Members

Our municipalities are also expected to play a leading role in executing the District Development Model which is being championed by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

We are saying this because every single development that takes place in this country, does so on a municipal space. There is no development that can happen outside of a municipal space.

Madam Speaker

Municipal infrastructure development is a key driver for growth and development and a critical enabler for economic growth.

The development of infrastructure, particularly infrastructure at a municipal level, contributes significantly to human development, poverty reduction, and the attainment of the development goals as captured in the Limpopo Development Plan and the National Development Plan.

Our municipalities are expected to invest more in the development and maintenance of water, sanitation, electricity, and road infrastructure.

It is for this reason that we continue to support and monitor how our municipalities perform on their spending of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG).

As you know, the MIG aims to eradicate municipal infrastructure backlogs in poor communities to ensure the provision of basic services.

In the past years, our municipalities have been performing above expectations with regard to their MIG spending, however, since the advent of Covid-19, MIG spending has been negatively impacted.

By December of 2021, our municipalities had spent just over 41 per cent of their MIG allocation. This was against a mid-year target of 54 per cent.

It is however, worth noting that there are municipalities which have performed well with regard to their MIG spending. These municipalities are:

- Capricorn District Municipality at 55.1 per cent;
- Elias Motsoaledi Municipality at 56.1 per cent;
- Blouberg Local Municipality at 63.1 per cent;
- Maruleng Local Municipality at 63.8 per cent;
- Makhado Local Municipality at 66.5 per cent;
- Collins Chabane Local Municipality at 92.1 per cent, and;
- Greater Tzaneen at 94.1 per cent.

We cannot overemphasise the significance of spending on infrastructure grant as this is directly linked to service delivery, particularly the delivery of basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation.

Honourable Members

One of our standing commitments has been to ensure that our municipalities are well governed and that finances are properly accounted for. We continue to work with our municipalities to ensure good corporate governance in that important sphere of government.

The recent municipal audit outcomes show that the governance and the financial management of our municipalities is improving. We have come a long way since the days of adverse and disclaimer audit opinions.

The latest audit results by the Auditor General shows an improved picture.

Out of the 19 municipalities whose audits have been completed, 14 have received unqualified audit opinions, with only four being qualified, and one clean audit.

In this regard, I would like to congratulate the Waterberg District Municipality for achieving a Clean Audit for the 2020/2021 Financial Year.

The audit process is still going on for Mopani District Municipality, Sekhukhune District Municipality, Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality, Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Lephalale Local Municipality, Bela-Bela Local Municipality and Polokwane Local Municipality.

Honourable Members

As a province we pride ourselves in the institution of traditional leadership, with which we continue to work together, enjoy cordial relationship and guidance.

In the past two years, the institution of traditional leadership has had to make unprecedented, but important decision to suspend the annual programme of initiation schools, because of the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic.

This contribution has helped us to protect the health of our people and to save lives.

In the same vein, I am happy to announce that the province has finalised the establishment of the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC).

We have established this in line with the dictates of the Customary Initiation Act of 2021. This will assist us with the coordination of all initiation schools, practices and activities.

We are finalising the amendment to the Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act to align it to the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act.

We are also working on a plan to establish of traditional councils in line with the provisions of the new Act.

We also continue to provide infrastructure support to traditional leaders. To that effect, I am pleased to report that the construction work of the traditional council offices is proceeding well.

Recently, we completed the construction of Masia, Mphaphuli and Ditlou Machidi traditional council offices.

The completion of Mogashoa traditional office is underway following the termination of the previous contractor due to poor performance. The new contractor is already on site, ***mošhomo o tshaba diatla***.

In the next financial year, we will commence with the construction work for the following traditional council offices:

- Bakone ba Matlala in Capricorn;
- Majeje and Ramphahlelo in Mopani;
- Bakwena ba Matsepe and Manoke in Sekhukhune;
- Davhana in Vhembe; and
- Bakone Traditional Council in Waterberg.

There is no doubt that we are well on track in ensuring that we help this important institution of traditional leadership to carry out its work as custodians of our culture and traditions.

In the same vein, we are concerned the challenges that continue to characterise the institution of traditional leadership, especially the three kingdoms and other traditional councils across the province.

As we have always said, the vacuum created by these leadership uncertainties continues to cause governance and leadership instability in the affected traditional communities. Once more, it is our call that we resolve these problems.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members

Education is the backbone of economic growth, development and prosperity. It is in this context that as government, our task is to ensure that access to education, particularly basic education, is not unnecessarily impeded.

We do this by monitoring the implementation of policies that support the opening of the doors of learning. These policies include the no-fee school policy, the school nutrition programme and the scholar transport policy.

In addition, we are working to ensure that those who enter our education system are assisted to succeed.

We do this by availing supportive schooling infrastructure, ensuring that schools have well-trained and qualified teachers, and by ensuring that learners are supplied with relevant learner-teacher-support-material, among other measures.

Madam Speaker

The 2021 Grade 12 results have given us a cause for concern. This has also given us an urgent assignment to focus our attention on. We are worried that overall pass percentage has dropped to 66.7 per cent.

Nevertheless, the quality of our results remain resilient. It is no surprise that Limpopo has featured in the top 5 provinces which have produced the most bachelor passes.

Even more notable from our results is that for the first time in many years, there is not even a single public school that has produced a zero percent pass rate.

Madam Speaker

As I have alluded to earlier on, this drop in Grade 12 results should be arrested.

To that effect, I am convening a Provincial Education Lekgotla next month to help us find long-lasting solutions to this challenge. The work has already begun, with my Office having convened technical committee workshop, with experts and stakeholders in education last week.

The envisaged Provincial Education Lekgotla should, amongst others, focus on:

1. Holding accountability sessions with district and circuit managers on performance of their respective districts and circuits;
2. Intervention strategies to improve learner performance across the system;
3. Hold principals accountable for underperformance in accordance with the provisions of the law;
4. Provide support to schools in implementing promotion and progression policies, and;

5. Implement focussed intervention strategy to improve learning outcomes across the system, in particular, support to progressed learners and other learners at risk.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members

In the past few years, we had given focussed attention to some key infrastructure projects across the province.

These include the construction of the Limpopo Academic Hospital, the construction of the Provincial Theatre, the delivery of housing units for the poor, the relocation of Sekhukhune District Offices from Capricorn to Sekhukhune District, sanitation programme in schools, eradication of pit-latrines in our school and the construction of traditional council offices.

We are making visible progress regarding all of these infrastructure projects.

With regard to the construction of the Academic Hospital, we are grateful to the Polokwane Local Municipality for a piece of land they have since donated which will be our construction site for this state-of-the-art facility.

This will be a site for a 488 bed hospital constructed with associated clinical support. Over R4 Billion has been budgeted for the construction of this facility. I am also in the process of interacting with the national government to expedite the implementation of this project.

In the same vein, the youth of our province and the artistic community at large have been waiting for too long for a visible and meaningful progress with regard to the construction of the Limpopo Provincial Theatre.

I am able to report that the Polokwane Local Municipality is at an advanced stage with the process of Township Establishment at Bakone Malapa which is earmarked as the site for this project.

A total of R123 million has been set aside for the construction of this project. The construction is earmarked to commence in the second quarter of the 2022/2023 Financial Year.

Regarding school sanitation infrastructure, for the period under review, we have managed to complete sanitation infrastructure at 135 schools across the province. Construction of similar infrastructure is still underway at about 27 more schools.

We have re-advertised for the construction of additional 47 new school sanitation infrastructure for the year ahead. These school sanitation projects are being implemented with a budget of R455 million.

In addition, our partnership with Mvula Trust is implementing sanitation projects at around 203 more schools across the province. This project is implemented at a value of R162 million.

Honourable Members

The delivery of housing infrastructure is part of our government's agenda to restore the dignity of our people, particularly the poor.

For the period under review, I am able to report that we have delivered 3 108 houses to the poor and the needy. This means that over 12 000 more people now have a roof over their heads.

In addition to this, we have delivered around 1 948 fully serviced sites for those who are able to build houses for themselves.

The envisaged relocation of the Sekhukhune District Offices from Lebowakgomo to Jane Furse in Sekhukhune is at an advanced stage.

Following the delays in the securing of community resolution, I have appointed high-level task-team of three MECs to lead this project.

I am happy to report that they have since found each other with the traditional leadership and are finalising the necessary community resolution for this project to commence in earnest.

Madam Speaker

Quality road infrastructure is an important enabler for growth and development. It is in this context that building new roads and maintaining our existing road infrastructure is a priority for this government.

Through our Road Agency Limpopo, we continue to build quality roads that make lives of our communities better whilst raising admiration from the rest of the country.

On the 08th February 2022 we hosted the President of South Africa, His Excellency Matamela Ramaphosa, who witness the state-of-the art road constructed using labour-intensive methods.

During his recent State of the Nation Address two weeks ago, President Ramaphosa expressed delight at the manner in which the road was constructed. In his words, the President said and I quote:

“This road was constructed using block paving and other materials, which is a method that enables us to build durable roads faster and more cost-effectively.” Close quote.

Accordingly, I can proudly report progress on some of the road infrastructure projects we committed in the previous State of the Province Address:

- The rehabilitation of 11km on road D1589 from Ga-Kgobokanang to Ga-Makgato and De-Vrede in the Capricorn District; is at 98 per cent;
- The rehabilitation of 7.3km on road D2537 road in Penge in the Sekhukhune district; is at 51 per cent;

- The rehabilitation of 5km on road D4150 in Praktiseer in the Sekhukhune district; is at 65 per cent;
- The rehabilitation of 9km on road D11 from Ga-Mamaila Kolobetona connecting the R81 in the Mopani District; is at 58 per cent;
- The rehabilitation of 27km on road D3840 from Giyani to Phalaborwa in the Mopani District; is at 67 per cent.

I am also happy to announce progress with regard to:

- The construction of a New Bridge on Road D2219 in Steelpoort which is in the preliminary design stage;
- The construction of bridge 6116 in Makuleke; is at 99 per cent practical completion;
- The rehabilitation of 5km on road D3200 Lebaka - Mohlabaneng; is at 56 per cent;
- The rehabilitation of 9km on road D11 – Ga- Mamaila, Mopani; is at 58 per cent;
- The rehabilitation of 30km of road D4 Elim Malamulele; is at 59 per cent;
- The rehabilitation of flood damaged road D4240 Maseven in Sekhukhune; is at 49 per cent;
- The rehabilitation of 40km on road D1483 Musina to Pondrifi in Vhembe; is at 40 per cent;
- The upgrading of 13km on road D2922, D2919 from Keerom to Tshikanosi; is at 99 per cent practical completion;

- The upgrading of 7.5Km D3727, D879, D1356 Mashamba to Tshitale to Morebeng; is 100 per cent complete
- The upgrading of 3km on road D3688 from khubvi to Tshidzivhe in Vhembe; is 100 per cent complete;
- The upgrading of 5km on road D4253 in Ga-Masemola in Sekhukhune; is 100 per cent complete;
- The upgrading of 3km on road D3187 and D3843 from Mageva to Makhuvha, Mopani district; is 100 per cent complete;
- The upgrading of 3km on road D3200 from Mokwakwaila to Mawa, Mopani district; is 100 per cent complete;
- The upgrading of 3km on road D3377 from Limburg to Matlala, Capricorn district; is at 98 per cent;
- The upgrading of 32km on roads D3232, D15 and D3150 from Morebeng to Sekgosese; is at 93 per cent;

Honourable Members

During the 2022/2023 Financial Year and the 2023/2024 Financial Year, we will commence construction work on some of the following roads:

- D4180 Atok Mine to Ga-Selepe to Modimolle in Sekhukhune;
- D3278 Blouberg Hospital to Buffelshoek in Capricorn;

- D3561 Segole 1 & Segole 2 (Masebe Nature Reserve to N11 Waterval) in Waterberg;
- D4260 Malope to Phokwane in Sekhukhune;
- D3669 Mavhunga access road in Vhembe;
- D3734 Tshatshama road in Mopani;
- D4090, D4093, D4094, D4096 Malimate Roads in Capricorn;
- D4199 Apel to Ga-Nkoana to D4190 in Sekhukhune;
- D3436, D3428, D5007 Ga-Ramoshwane, Ga-Rammetlwane, Ga-Ramotlwana in Capricorn;
- D3248 Thapane access to Namitwa in Mopani;
- D4283 Glencowie to Malaka in Sekhukhune;
- D3671 Musekwa to Maranikwe in Vhembe, and;
- The upgrading of the 10 kilometers road D4109 from Mmamatonya to road D885 in the Capricorn District. Currently the engineer has completed the designs and ready to hand them over, as soon as RAL has appointed a contractor.

Madam Speaker

The complementary relationship between quality road infrastructure and reliable public transport system cannot be overemphasised.

It is with this in mind that we are continuing with the implementation of the Great North Transport (GNT)'s Turnaround Strategy.

This strategy is aimed at repositioning GNT as the most reliable, affordable and sustainable public transport entity for the people of Limpopo.

A vast majority of the people of Limpopo depend on GNT buses to commute daily to various destinations and for various reasons.

During the year under review, we have approved additional recapitalisation amount of R216.5 million to support GNT's financial and operational recovery.

Honourable Members

The relationship between quality outcomes and a supportive schooling environment is inseparable.

It is for this reason that we are proceeding to deliver on our commitment to build high quality school infrastructure. In this regard, I am able to report that:

- Construction work is progressing well at the Alldays Primary School in Blouberg, progress on the project is at 54 per cent completion stage;
- Construction work is at 55 per cent for Leduma Mahume Primary School in Phokwane;

- Progress on the construction of Marude Primary School in Thulamela Municipality at 30 per cent;
- Construction is also proceeding well at Gidela Primary School in Giyani, Naledi ya Meso Secondary school in Dikgalaopeng and Mahlagaume Primary School in Bothashoek.

All these projects are expected to be completed in the 2022/23 Financial Year.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members

For a rural province such as ours, which is blessed with abundance of arable lands, agriculture has to play a leading role in the growth and development of our economy and ultimately, in creating more jobs for our people.

Our plan for the revitalisation of agriculture and agro-processing value chain is anchored on four objectives which include the task to:

- Increase production through revitalisation and expansion of key commodities;
- Ensuring the transformation of the agricultural sector through the promotion and support of Black producers in key commodity industries;

- Increasing the participation of black producers in the domestic and export markets, and;
- Broadening and increasing the participation of black producers in the agricultural value chain.

Last year we spoke about the programme of the revitalization of irrigation schemes, as part of our task to increase agricultural production and improve food security, we have since made meaningful progress in this regard.

The Mogalatšane Irrigation Scheme has planted over 80 hectares of cotton and 30 hectares of dry beans in 2020/21 planting season. The 2020/21 production season created 50 seasonal jobs.

With regard to our commitment to develop value chains in respect of grain and cotton in Sekhukhune, vegetables in Mopani, red meat in Waterberg, and potatoes in Capricorn, I am able to report that:

- Red meat farmers on Tweefontein communal land under Mogalakwena red meat cluster, were assisted with livestock infrastructure, which include fencing, animal handling facilities and water source development;

- Immerpan farmers under Modimolle-Mookgopong red meat cluster, operating on a total 5,415 hectares received support to address the water problem on the farms.
The support included water abstraction system and reservoirs, reticulation lines across the farms, and a multi-purpose facility for the storage of animal production inputs;
- The Witpoort Farmer Production Support Unit is expected to expand the support for these red meat farmers. The Farmer Production Support Unit will provide a cluster of services which include, livestock auction facilities, mechanisation services and training centre for the farmers;
- We have completed phases 4 & 5 of infrastructure support for vegetable farmers in the Gravelotte, Selwane and Prisca cluster under Ba-Pahalaborwa Municipality;
- Masala Farmer Production Support Unit is currently at 90% completion, and it is expected to provide services to the farmers in this cluster and surrounding areas. The service relates to production inputs, mechanisation, value adding, training, marketing and technical advice, and;

- In Capricorn District we have provided support to four potato farming projects to support agricultural production and job creation.

Madam Speaker

With regard to the revitalisation at Zebediela Citrus Estate, we have since concluded a partnership agreement between Bjaladi CPA and Humansdorp Cooperative for the revitalization of the citrus orchards.

We are working in partnership with the Impact Catalyst to develop a master plan for the sustainable development of the Zebediela Estate.

It is envisaged that the master plan will be completed in the new financial year to support several enterprises with various private investors.

Honourable Members

As part of our programme to introduce and support young people into the agricultural sector, we have placed 120 young unemployed agriculture graduates on commercial farms to equip them with practical experience.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members

There can be no denying to the fact that there is a close relationship between the health of our people and the attainment social and economic goals. A healthy nation is a progressing nation.

Our government is therefore committed to the task of health promotion, prevention of diseases and providing rehabilitative services to those who are ill.

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has presented itself as the biggest public health threat of our time. Defeating COVID-19 is therefore a task at the apex of our priority list.

Currently, vaccination is our most effective weapon to fight against this killer pandemic. We are simply not spoiled for choice when it comes to weapons against Covid-19.

Our province has done fairly well when it comes to the assignment of rolling out life-saving Covid-19 vaccines.

As things stands, Limpopo has managed to administer 2,9 million Covid-19 doses, this represents an adult first dose coverage of 52 per cent.

The more pleasing news is that with regard to the age population of 60 and above, we have managed to fully vaccinate 68 per cent of that vulnerable group.

I need to commend the municipalities of Thabazimbi, Molemole and Letaba who have done extremely well with regard to the task of vaccination.

Letaba has recorded 69 per cent full vaccination, followed by Molemole at 75 per cent and with Thabazimbi leading at 81 per cent.

Except for the three, all other municipalities have equally performed well, averaging from 50 per cent to 67 per cent. The worst performers are Collins Chabane at 36 per cent, Fetakgomo-Tubatse at 39 per cent and Ephraim Mogale at 41 per cent.

I want to challenge leaders in these municipalities, from political leaders, religious leaders, traditional leaders and business leaders, to work together in driving the vaccination message.

There is no better defence against Covid-19 other than being fully vaccinated.

We have since expanded our vaccination program to the Primary Healthcare Centres. In this regard, we have 200 Primary Healthcare Centres which are offering COVID-19 vaccination on daily basis.

It is because of our aggressive vaccination campaign that we have managed to reduce COVID-19 mortality rate and admissions in our facilities.

This has helped to lessen the impact of Covid-19 in our facilities and on our provincial economy. I call on those who are not yet vaccinated to go out and take their jabs. Evidence has proven that vaccines save lives.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members

When this government was inaugurated, I promised the people of Limpopo that we were to embark on an important journey of building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

In this regard, we committed to fight against corruption in government, wastage and mismanagement of public resources. We also committed to fight against inefficiencies and red tapes in the system.

We believe that a capable, ethical and developmental state will enable us to realise the developmental objectives contained in the Limpopo Development Plan.

When we are called upon to act against corruption, maladministration and mismanagement, we do so without fear or favour, we do so without regard to a person's social standing or status in government or in society.

Recently, the Special Investigating Unit, the SIU, has released a report relating to the probe on the allegations of misuse of COVID-19 funds across all spheres of government, including in our province.

We commend the SIU for the work done in exposing corruption, maladministration and mismanagement of public resources.

I also wish to commend all whistle-blowers across our provincial government departments who sounded the alarm and provided information to the SIU investigators. We commend you for your patriotism.

I agree with President Ramaphosa when he said “The submission of the final report is an important step in our fight against corruption in the public and private sectors, and against maladministration”.

For our part as Limpopo Provincial Government, we are committing to the full implementation of the recommendation made in the SIU Report.

In this regard, we will work with the National Prosecuting Authority to support all envisaged prosecutions of wrongdoers.

We will support the Asset Forfeiture Unit in their mandated task of recovering every single cent which was stolen from our government.

We will ensure all recommended disciplinary proceedings take place swiftly and without undue delays. No one will be shielded from accountability and resultant consequences.

The theft or misuse of public resources is a cancer that we are committed to uprooting. Like I always say, we are winning the fight against corruption, fraud and maladministration. Our fight against the toxic mix is serious, and we will never be deterred.

Honourable Members

Limpopo Provincial Government is committed to promoting better accountability, prudent and effective utilisation of public resources.

We are committed to enhance the performance of government departments and institutions, for better and improved service for the residents of Limpopo.

We made a vivid commitment to the people of Limpopo to continuously improve the financial performance of our Provincial Government.

Evidence is showing that we are living up to this commitment. The financial performance of our government is improving for the better.

In her own words, the Auditor General said this about some of our departments and entities:

“A culture of basic accounting disciplines embedded at the provincial treasury, the Office of the Premier, the provincial department of transport and community safety and the Limpopo Gambling Board enabled them to sustain their

clean outcomes. We also commend the provincial treasury, which achieved a clean audit outcome for the fifth consecutive year.”

It is against the above mentioned background that, we have adopted special measures, including the sharing of best practices, and targeted support, to assist the Limpopo Economic Development Agency, the Department of Health, Department of Education and Gateway Airports Authority Limited to improve their audit outcomes.

Honourable Members

We need to recognise the role played by military veterans in our struggle for freedom and democracy. In honouring their sacrifices, I have established the Inter-Ministerial Task Team to deal with the plight and welfare of Military Veterans.

We have already had fruitful engagements with various organisations representing military veterans. The Provincial Government is finalising a plan aimed at programmes that would uplift and enhance the living conditions of our military veterans.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members

Limpopo is known and revered across the country and beyond for being a peaceful province. We are indeed a province of peace, stability and tranquillity.

It is our goal as government that no one in this province should walk in fear of violence or any form of criminality. Working with the South African Police Service, and our community policing structures, we continue to make life unbearable for criminals.

Our particular attention is focussed on Gender Based Violence. Gender Based Violence has reached unprecedented levels of brutality and barbarism. Perpetrators of this violence are becoming more vicious with each day that passes.

We have seen women being killed in their homes, women are killed on the street, women are victimised at workplaces and women are even killed at police stations while reporting Gender Based Violence incidences.

We simply cannot afford to fold our arms and watch as women of our country become endangered species.

I am inviting all sectors of our society, from the religious community, traditional leadership, NGOs, political parties and everyone, to join hands with government in confronting this vicious monster called Gender Based Violence. This is a fight we cannot afford to lose.

There is also a strong relationship between violence and substance abuse. The fight against the abuse of alcohol and drugs is also a fight for a peaceful and orderly society.

This war will be taken to those who proliferate drugs in our communities. Working with the SAPS, we will continue to hunt those who manufacture and distribute these deadly substances to our children.

We have seen what drugs such as nyaope have done to our children, we cannot continue to watch this episode unfold as if we are helpless. We will fight back and we will fight hard.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members

Limpopo will continue to rise. We have started a great journey of rebirth and renewal. We are emerging from the ashes of yesterday into the glory days of tomorrow.

Like a phoenix, Limpopo will rise again, rejuvenated, reenergised and refocused.

However, our rise will not be mythological, our rise shall be real and tangible. We will rise and arrive at a desired destination of a better life for all.

Limpopo will rise to live up to the promise of our constitution, the promise of equity and equality, the promise of social security, the promise of dignity and indeed, the promise of prosperity.

The signature mark of our rise shall be social development, economic growth, the creation of the much-needed jobs and the reduction of unemployment, inequality and poverty.

The residence of Limpopo will feel this rise when they all have reliable access to water, when they all have access to decent sanitation facilities, when they are guaranteed food on the table every single day, when they go to sleep without a fear of crime or violent attacks, they will feel this rise when they all have a roof over their heads.

Through our collective effort and hard work, we will make Limpopo to rise from a desert of hunger and want, to an oasis of abundance and prosperity.

Let us continue the partnership to build the Limpopo we want, a reborn and a rejuvenated Limpopo, a Limpopo which will rise high to the promise of freedom.

I thank you!