

Honourable Madam Speaker and all the presiding officers,

Honourable Chief Whip

**Honourable Premier Chupu Mathabatha,
Mahlatjie A` Hlabirwa**

My Colleagues in the Executive Council

Members of the Provincial Legislature,

**Executive Mayors, Mayors and MMCs of Sport,
Arts and Culture,**

Stalwarts of our Liberation Movement,

**The Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders under
the Chairpersonship of Kgoši Malesela Dikgale-
And All Traditional Leaders Present here today**

The Limpopo Sport Confederation,

**Representatives from our respective statutory
and non-statutory bodies,**

Our artists and athletes,

The business community,

Our beloved friends from the Media,

Esteemed Guests, Comrades and Compatriots,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thobela,

Ndimacheloni,

Avuxeni,

Lochane,

**Gooie Dag,
Good day,**

Madam Speaker, as majority of South Africans voted for the first time on 27 April 1994, President Nelson Mandela chose to cast his ballot at a secondary school built by the first ANC President, John Langalibalele Dube in KwaZulu-Natal.

Immediately after he had voted, President Mandela went to Dube's nearby grave and said: ***"MR PRESIDENT, I HAVE COME TO REPORT THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS FREE TODAY."***

Madam Speaker, indeed South Africa is a free and democratic country.

Madiba's vote was the herald of a new South Africa that would be anchored on civil liberties and human rights.

Enshrined in The Bill of Rights, is the right of everyone to use the language and participate in the cultural life of their choice. The Constitution also gives all South Africans the right to enjoy their culture and freedom of artistic creativity among other things.

Part of our mandate as the Department of Sport, Arts & Culture, is to develop sport, promote our cultural diversity and foster social cohesion.

In all these endeavours, the people of Limpopo, and all who live in our beautiful province, are our priority.

Honourable Premier, during your State of the Province Address, you fittingly paid tribute to O R Tambo as the embodiment of unity.

You emphasized our moral responsibility as a people to promote social cohesion, a task O.R lived and died for.

2017 has been declared the year of O R Tambo by the governing party, the ANC.

If he was still alive, O R would be turning 100 years old this year.

In the honour of this gallant revolutionary, we will host a series of activities during April. We will open the O R Tambo Art Gallery at the Library Gardens in Polokwane, where we will showcase the material like books and pictures about his life and times.

The **O R Tambo Memorial Lecture** will be held at the University of Limpopo to remind and educate the people of our province about his role in the liberation struggle.

Madam Speaker

We would like to applaud the majority of the people of Limpopo, for shunning the demons of xenophobia, ethnicity and racism.

The continued tolerance showed towards foreign nationals by the people of our beautiful province, is testament to the fact that the principle of UBUNTU/BOTHO is deeply ingrained in us.

Our province is the melting pot of rich and diverse cultures. We are the home of the VhaVenda, Bapedi, VaTsonga, AmaNdebele, Batswana, the Afrikaners, the Indians, people of Colour and the English.

We are the Heartland of Southern Africa. Ours is the only province that shares borders with three countries: Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

This puts us in a uniquely pole position to champion cultural exchange programmes of mutual interest with our neighbouring countries.

In September last year we visited Xai Xai in Mozambique. One of the shared features of Limpopo and Gaza, is that these two provinces are the homes of Machangana and VaTsonga nations.

Still on Regional Integration, majority of residents of Waterberg District are Batswana. This compels us to strengthen ties with Botswana.

To that effect, late last year we went to Botswana for the **AFRICA WOMEN AND SPORT CONFERENCE**. During our stay in Botswana, we seized the opportunity to meet with the Deputy Minister of Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture of that country to exchange ideas.

South Africa is an integral part of Africa and Limpopo is the gateway to the rest of the continent.

Our Provincial interest in some respects, is naturally reliant on the fellow citizens of the SADC region. To promote the regional cultural integration, during

Heritage Month in September, we have brought the **Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa** on board.

A “*Culture & Heritage Train*” will travel from the rolling deserts of Namibia. It will traverse the savannahs and safaris of Botswana, move through the majestic landscape and bushveld of Limpopo province, towards the clean waters of Xai Xai in Mozambique.

The train will end the multi-cultural and heritage awareness journey at the breath-taking Victoria Falls of Zimbabwe.

Madam Speaker, we continue to strive towards meeting the obligations of ASPIRATION 5 of the **AU Agenda 2063** which advocates for the Africa We Want. The charter reads in part: “**An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics.**”

To this effect, during Africa Month in May, we will host a myriad of activities aimed at forging regional integration. These events include Africa Carnival, Africa Food Expo, Africa Lecture and Africa Sport Day.

ON SOCIAL COHESION

Madam Speaker, as the advocate of social cohesion, in the 2016/17 financial year we hosted events that sought to create a sense of belonging for all the people of our province.

We had a fruitful social cohesion conversation with minority groups in December. This saw us

incorporating the Bush Braai element into the **Mapungubwe Arts, Culture and Heritage Festival** and minority groups appreciated the fact the festival was inclusive. Limpopo belongs to all who live in it !

Madam Speaker

The Mapungubwe Festival took place over a two-week period. The event attracted over 20 000 people who came from all corners of our country and beyond the borders.

Last year, the annual event was extended to all the other four districts of our province. The streets of Polokwane were turned into a hive of activity as our Premier led a colourful cultural carnival parade during the opening of the festival.

Mopani District hosted the Arts Awards and Cultural Pageants during which we honoured legends like **Lydia Mokgokoloshi, Irene Mawela, Paul Rapetsoa, Penny Penny, Avhashoni Mainganye, Aletta Motimele and Paradise Nkuna.**

Madam Speaker, **some of them are present in this house and I would like to request them to stand up so that we can acknowledge them.**

In the Sekhukhune district, young people were taught about the traditional court functions. Vhembe District was the home of the choral music concert while the children festival was taken to the Waterberg district.

Our decision to create the craft exhibition centre in the central business district of Polokwane yielded positive results. The crafters and designers who displayed their

products at the marketplace, collectively made income of over R64 000 in few days. They appreciated that they had been placed in an area that was easily accessible for their potential clients.

We also hosted the Culinary Food Festival to promote our traditional food. There were also drama and poetry sessions.

Madam Speaker, those who attended the comedy sessions would attest to the fact that those two nights of laughter were just what the doctor ordered.

On the day of the main concert, revelers were entertained by celebrated musicians. They included the Wombo-Lombo hit-maker **Angelique Kidjo** from Benin, **Sello Galane, Candy, Selaleo Selota**, the **Muso Brothers, Thomas Chauke**, and our man of the moment **King Monada** among others.

I would like to emphasize that 80 percent of the artists who performed at the festival originate from Limpopo.

Madam Speaker, our department has four main programmes and several sub-programmes.

ON PROGRAMME 1, ADMINISTRATION

Since library books became a requirement to be recorded as part of the asset register, the department had continuously received a qualified audit opinion in the past consecutive five years.

Another contributory factor was the issue of irregular expenditure. The department has accepted the marching orders as given by the, Portfolio Committee and Standing Committee on Public Accounts to improve the situation.

As a result, six assistant directors have been appointed in all the six district libraries to specifically address the issue of asset management.

The organisational structure has also been reviewed to capacitate our Supply Chain Management Unit to ensure compliance with procurement processes.

Interviews to appoint permanent Head of the Department have already been held, and we are hoping to make an announcement by the 1st of April. This will bring stability and strengthen management within the department.

This programme is allocated a total of R148.6 million

ON PROGRAMME 2, CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Madam Speaker, the centrality of culture in our lives as a human species is best captured in the preamble of the **AU's Cultural Charter**, adopted by African heads of State and Government in the 5th Ordinary Session in Sudan in 2006.

Leaders of Africa agreed that: **"African culture is meaningless unless it plays a full part in the political and social liberation struggle, and in the rehabilitation and unification efforts and there is no limit to the cultural development of a people."**

They correctly posited that every human society is governed by rules and principles that are influenced by culture.

Therefore, it can be argued that for every nation to fully realize its potential in many aspects of life, if not all, it must first understand and appreciate the role of culture.

Because it encompasses several facets including languages, arts, literature, lifestyle, traditions and customs, culture is often expressed in different forms.

Going forward, the 2017 Mapungubwe Arts, Culture and Heritage Festival will be even better and full of innovations aimed at promoting the cultural richness of our province.

THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY STRATEGY

Madam Speaker, the story of Limpopo shall be told through the music, film, drama, crafts, dance, poetry and theatre.

We have finalized the Creative Industry Strategy. This blueprint will propel the creative sector, which if fully supported, will handsomely grow the economy, create descent jobs for young people and promote our diverse cultures.

R5.1 million has been allocated to develop this sector.

Nigeria has proven that the creative industry can contribute immensely to the GDP.

FILM-MAKING

Madam Speaker, to support the film industry, recently, with the SABC and the National Film and Video Foundation, we hosted workshops for the local filmmakers. A feasibility study has been concluded on the establishment of a film production hub. We will work with the two abovementioned institutions to ensure the production hub is established during the 2017/18 financial year.

We expect **Muvhango, Skeem Saam** and newly planned films to start shooting in our province.

Separately, we had a fruitful meeting with the CEO of M-Net, who also committed to give our locally produced films priority.

PERFORMING ARTS

Madam Speaker, the performing arts in our province is growing exponentially. We have a lot of talent in the drama, poetry, comedy, theatre, music and dance among others.

Working with the Limpopo Arts and Culture Council, the statutory body of the department, we have compiled a database of the abovementioned artists. This database will help the council to implement the skills development programme to empower them.

Madam Speaker, allow me to recognize some of the fine talent in this beautiful Province of ours in the Arts and Culture Industry: Our very own Dr Tumi, who last year won six awards at the SABC Crown Gospel Awards in Durban, and recently, the Best Urban

Gospel Album at the 16th annual Metro FM Awards, is joining us today in the public gallery.

King Monada is making the waves and we are proud of him because he sings in his mother tongue.

ON FASHION MADAM SPEAKER

This month, the department brought internationally renowned fashion designer David Tlale to impart his skills and business acumen to our young fashion designers and models.

We are pleased to announce that two local designers, Koketso Moraba and Frank Ramatsetse were awarded internships by the House of David Tlale.

For the first time, they got the opportunity to have their garments showcased at the **Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Cape Town 2017.**

Koketso and Frank are also joining us today. Can I ask them to stand so that we can acknowledge them?

Madam Speaker, let's all support our local designers. They are really talented.

ON THEATRE

Madam Speaker, the Multi-Purpose Performing Arts Centre is moving in the right direction.

A feasibility study has already been concluded. The Multi-Purpose centre will consist of the following facilities: A 600 seater performing theatre, outside open-air theatre for informal performances, rehearsal

studio, Curio shops for artefacts trading, outside display stands for informal exhibitors, Liberation museum, Box Office, Internet Café, Restaurant, Crèche, covered parking lot, and a park with a public Gymnasium.

According to the feasibility study, this facility will have a positive impact on the socio economic front. It is projected to make a R11million annual contribution to the Province's GDP, sustain 113 job opportunities.

The plethora of performing arts groups in communities around the province, gives credence to the confidence that the multi-purpose centre will not be White Elephant.

We hope that our talented artists will remain in the province and that those who're plying their trades in other provinces will come back home to impart their much needed skills.

The site identified for the centre is at the corner of Grobler and East Streets in Polokwane. The feasibility study has estimated the total construction costs of the centre is just below R100 million.

For 2017/18 financial year, R9.9 million has been set aside to kick-start the project.

Madam Speaker, I want to send a special word of appreciation to my predecessor and colleague, MEC Nandi Ndalane for zealously leading the efforts to have this Multi-Purpose Performing Arts Centre in our province.

CRAFTS

Our crafts continue to dominate the national and international markets.

In 2017/18, we are going to identify centres in all the five districts to create flea-markets for our crafters to sell their products. We are also finalizing a craft catalogue which will also be available online, to promote our crafters. We urge all government institutions, the private sector and all the people of Limpopo to buy from them when they consider cooperate gifts. We will also help develop emerging crafters to meet the quality assurance standards and have access to the international markets.

ARTS IN SCHOOL

A few weeks ago, myself and my colleague, MEC Ishmael Kgetjepe, responsible for Education, we've signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which will be a guideline on how we should implement arts, culture and school sport programmes.

Every last Friday of the month will be dedicated to the arts and cultural activities in schools.

The focus will be on the performing arts, Oral History, national identity programmes, heritage programmes and crafts.

Bana ba rena ba swanatše ba tsebe direto tša bona! Ba swanetse ba tsebe gore ke bo mang, ba tswa kae.

ON MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE

Madam Speaker, the United Nations has declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

This brings to the fore, the concept of cultural tourism. Speaker, when tourists come to our shores, they are not necessarily interested in our shopping malls.

They want to learn about the heritage of our history, our cultures, our food and our lifestyle.

We must therefore, market our heritage centers like the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site and Makapanstad World Heritage Site as tourism attractions.

The 2017 Budget Lekgotla has instructed our department and LEDET to convene the Culture and Tourism Indaba, with the aim to develop a tourism strategy that will grow the sector.

We will spend R2.5 million to refurbish three Museums, namely, Schoemansdal, Dzata and Muti wa Vatsonga.

ON THE LIMPOPO LIBERATION HERITAGE ROUTES

Madam Speaker, the pivotal role played by Limpopo Province in the liberation struggle should continue to be told.

In 2016/17 financial year, the department made commitment to preserve and promote our rich cultural heritage. This includes developing a Limpopo

Liberation Heritage Routes to preserve sites of struggle and promote the tangible and intangible heritage.

We are proud to announce that in partnership with the Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority (LIHRA), we have identified three Pilot projects for Liberation Heritage Route namely: - Tshitangadzimeni, the University of Limpopo and Tjate Provincial Heritage Site. The impact assessment to establish the existence of material evidence has been completed. This year, we will finalize the process of formally declaring the sites.

In our continuous efforts to honour heroes and heroines, we will work with LIHRA and Freedom Park, among other institutions, to profile and celebrate significant days that shaped their lives.

The Department is pleased to announce that the following monuments are ready to be unveiled.

- The Monument of Josias Madzunya in Vhembe District
- The Monument of Manche Masemola and the statue of Kgoshi Mampuru III in the Sekhukhune District.

Madam Speaker, we want to honour the memories of people who fought for the liberation of this country.

The anti-colonial role played by our warrior kings, queens and unsung heroes and heroines shall be documented. People like King Makhado, King Sekhukhune, King Nghunghunyani, Mmakgoši

Mmakwena Matlala, Kgoši Mmalebogo, Sefako Makgatho, Bra Ike Maphoto, Pharephare Mothupi, Mark Shope, Rashaka Ratshitanga, Flag Boshielo and...and many others who sacrificed their youths for our freedom should be remembered.

The Limpopo Geographic Names Committee is ready to embark on public consultations to rename some of our streets and public institutions. Why do we still have one of the major streets named after Grobler when we have heroes AND heroines we can name these streets after?

Madam Speaker, as part of promoting patriotisms in our society, the Department has set aside R300 000 to install national flags outside 30 traditional councils in the province.

Ultimately, all public institutions should be installed with national flags. We will also rollout an education programme on the national anthem and national symbols.

We will also strengthen our language service Board to continue promoting our indigenous languages. We will train more language practitioners and run number of multilingual promotion campaign.

LASTLY ON, programme 2, we will continue to work with the Moral Regeneration Movement, a Non-Statutory body of the department to ensure the moral restoration of our society by encouraging good values

and ethics. This body is important to forge social cohesion and nation building

This programme is allocated R66.8 million.

3. LIBRARY SERVICES AND ARCHIVES

Madam Speaker, learning and reading are essential tools for the development of every nation.

To inculcate the culture of reading among our children and adults alike, we must build more libraries.

For the 2017/18 financial year, we have R121-million in the form of a conditional grant for the entire Library and Information Services.

At the moment, we have 77 functional libraries across the province.

Our strategic objective target is to increase the number of public libraries to one hundred in the next three years.

Madam Speaker, an amount of R750 000 has been set aside for the planning and design phase of the four libraries in the following villages Dumela, Seleteng, Runnymede and Mavalani.

The construction of three libraries in Maphalle, Zamani and Mahlabathini Villages is currently underway. We expect practical completion of these R23.3 million constructions in May.

Eight library buildings, Mukondeni, Mutale, Vlakfontein, Makahlule, Shongoane, Mulati,

Timamogolo, and Fedile were upgraded 2016/17 financial year.

Eight mobile libraries will be upgraded in the 2017/18 financial year and R2.8 million has been set aside for these projects. The upgrading includes connecting them to sewer system, water and electricity.

Twenty-Nine Thousand (29 000) additional books to the value of R10.5 Million will be procured to capacitate our libraries.

An amount of R4.6 Million has been allocated to maintain 16 libraries to keep them operational.

During the delivery of his State of the Province Address, the Hounourable Premier Chupu Mathabatha highlighted that our province had entered the era of knowledge economy.

The Premier emphasized education as the basis of our second phase of transition.

Madam Speaker, Information and Communication Technology is therefore a must-have if we want our communities to keep up with the evolution of Information Age and become active participants in the knowledge economy.

In the next financial year, we are going to spend R2.1 Million to equip ten libraries with ICT infrastructure like cabling and networking.

In addition, we will buy ICT equipment such as computers worth R360 000.

R4 million will be spend to provide the continuation of free internet services in all the public/community libraries.

This will connect users, particularly young people, with the rest of the world which has become a global village.

Our libraries must be community centres that encourage book clubs, support pupils with school projects and help job seekers to access government services on internet. We will also work closely with the Library Board, a Statuary body of the Department to ensure we priorities library awareness and education programme to our communities. Communities will not burn libraries if they understand the central role, libraries are supposed to play to help their development.

The project to establish a functional provincial archives building is well underway. An amount of R11.5 million has been set aside to continue increasing capacity in our Provincial archive.

A total of R157.6 million has been set aside for this programme.

ON PROGRAMME 4, SPORT AND RECREATION

Madam Speaker, on 25 September 2015, the **United Nation's General Assembly** adopted the outcome document called "**Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**"

Through this document, which replaced the Millennium Development Goals, nations of the world acknowledge the role of sport to end poverty, create decent work and grow the economy, promote good health and well-being and improve quality of education.

Sport is also an effective tool to eradicate social ills like crime, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy because it keeps young people away from the streets.

As Madiba opined: ***"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to the youth in the language they understand, sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers."***

Madam Speaker,

The win of the 1995 Rugby World Cup by Amabokoboko and the 1996 victory of Bafana Bafana in the Africa Cup of Nations tournament showed the power of sport in society.

The exhilarating atmosphere, fueled by the Madiba Magic, reverberated across the nation, thanks to sport.

Madam Speaker, our province experienced a similar euphoria in November last year when we hosted the 2018 FIFA World Cup qualifier between Bafana Bafana and Senegal at the iconic Peter Mokaba Stadium.

Ahead of the game, we galvanized support for our boys through various social and conventional media platforms.

We took the Bafana team for a meet and greet at Mall of the North to interact with the sport-loving people of our province.

We also visited the team in the camp to encourage them ahead of the clash. Indeed our boys made us proud-they thumped the Lions of Teranga !

We have also hosted an international friendly between Amajita, South Africa's Under 23 national football team that squared off with Mali.

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate our provincial Men's Softball Team for winning the National Provincial Championships in Gauteng over the weekend. Our boys will be flying to Canada, to represent South Africa, in the Softball World Cup in July this year. We are confident they will bring the cup home.

Madam Speaker

We have two teams representing the province in the PSL teams. This ANC led government will continue to provide them with necessary support.

Speaker, indeed ours is the Province of stars.

We pride ourselves with the likes of like Caster Semenya, Hlompho Kekana, Benny's Care Academy, Amogelang Mudau and Lennies Potgiter, to mention a few.

Madam Speaker, I would like to make a special mention of our heroes from Tshilwavhusiku Special School in Makhado.

These youngsters continue to represent us well in the international competitions.

On Sunday they returned from the Special Winter Olympics in Austria with gold medals after defeating Canada in the finals.

These youngsters deserve a standing ovation.

In the 2013 Special Olympics in South Korea, they drubbed the United States of America and came back with a gold medal.

Madam Speaker,

We are the custodian of sport in the Province. We have a duty to develop and promote it.

In the 2017/18 financial year, we are going to prioritize the development of seven sporting codes.

R2.7 million has been set aside to support 40 club development leagues in Basketball, Volleyball, Rugby, Cricket, Netball, Boxing and Softball, particularly in previously disadvantaged communities.

Last year we supported 35 club development leagues and we will continue to work together with federations in this regard.

Madam Speaker, Limpopo has been identified as one of the provinces to pilot the Rural Sport Development

Programme by Sport & Recreation Minister Fikile Mbalula.

In our province, Moletjie in the Capricorn District and Ga-Seopela in the Sekhukhune district are the two areas where the rural sport development programme is being rolled out. We are currently focusing on Athletics, Netball, Football and Rugby.

I would like to express a special gratitude to Kgoši Moloto and Mmakgoši Seopela respectively, for their full support of the rural sport development programme in their jurisdictions.

Madam Speaker, while the rural sport development programme is being piloted in two areas in our province, as the department, we still have an obligation to support clubs in other areas.

An amount of R300 000 has been committed to purchase movable football and netball poles in areas that are under the leadership of at least **50 traditional councils across the province**. This project will be rolled out in partnership with Traditional Leaders

A total amount of R2.8 million will go towards supporting 225 clubs that are taking part in the league system and the rural sport development programme with attire and other necessary equipment this in 2017/18.

We will spend R2.1 million to establish new 140 clubs in all the four sporting codes to bolster the rural sport development programme in Moletjie and Ga-Seopela.

Early this year we handed sporting gear and equipment to 310 athletics, football and netball clubs in the Mopani district.

The Mopani Club Development Pilot Project is the brainchild of the national government to professionalize community clubs. They were workshopped on club governance which include administration and financial affairs.

We have R2.1 million to train 1 200 technical officials, among them will be coaches and team managers to capacitate skills in the areas of sport management and administration.

Madam Speaker

R5.8 million has been allocated to the Limpopo Academy of Sport, a statutory body of the department, to carry out its mandate to develop athletes. Late last year we started talks with the national Department of Defense to allow our sport academy to utilize their sporting facilities.

We are happy to announce that the Memorandum of Understanding in this regard will be signed between our two departments to seal the deal in April. Limpopo will have a fully-fleshed Sport academy to produce elite athletes.

Madam Speaker, an amount of R1.7 million will be allocated to the Limpopo Sport Confederation primarily to support and capacitate federations and to grow sporting codes in the province.

ON SCHOOL SPORT

School sport remains the bedrock of sporting activity in every society.

All over the world, school sport is the launching pad for athletes to establish their professional careers.

Research has showed that sport can improve quality education as it encourages healthy competition and discipline. Madam Speaker, earlier I talked about the MOU I signed with MEC Kgetjepe. Wednesdays in schools will be dedicated to sport.

A provision of R2,3 million is set aside to ensure that learners participate in the School Sport programmes in 2017/18.

In 2016/17 the Department rolled out the School Sport programme in the form of Winter, Summer and Autumn School Sport National competitions in 19 sporting codes. To encourage schools to participate in the School Sport programmes, this year we will support 160 schools with sport equipment and attire. This marks an increase, from the 150 schools that were supported in 2016/17. An amount of R2,2 million has been allocated for this project.

We will empower 550 educators with coaching, technical officiating, team management and sport administration skills

The Department will stage 5 Indigenous games programmes in every District.

Once again, Limpopo will be the host of the national indigenous games. R3,7 million will go towards this competition.

Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge two athletes of the Nchuba game Lina Mawila and Job Malesa.

They took part in the international exchange programme of the Indigenous Games in Indonesia.

Madam Speaker the game of chess is known to be best activity for the exercise of the mind. In April this year, we are going to launch the Chess Board Programme in Waterberg District. This will see us give 300 chess boards to schools in that district. We will also give training to teachers and pupils in those schools to administer the pilot project.

We are building a generation of intellectually gifted youth. Two hundred more chess boards will be distributed in other four districts.

Madam Speaker, Boxing is Back! Minister Mbalula has relaunched this programme and as Limpopo we are going to hit the ground running. Limpopo is the home of prolific boxers and we will reclaim our top spot.

ON SPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Our province still has a massive sport infrastructure backlog. During the Limpopo Sport Symposium, we agreed with SALGA and federations that we need to move with speed to address this historical backlog.

Available sporting facilities should also be made accessible to the federations and communities so that they don't become white elephants.

ON SPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Madam Speaker, this year we hosted the National Schools Athletics championships for the intellectually impaired.

We also want to congratulate team Limpopo which came second at the National Deaf Sport Competition in Durban last week.

We are the first to admit that more still need to be done to support this sector.

This sector continues to make us proud by collecting more gold medals in both national and international competitions. Next year, as Limpopo we are hosting the Special Olympics SA competition. We are honored indeed!

ON RECREATION

We are striving towards creating a healthy Limpopo. To achieve this, the province will launch **ACTIVE WEDNESDAYS** to encourage citizens to live an active life.

We will continue to support national programmes like the BIG WALK on the 2nd of October every year and we will work with the department of Health on health awareness programmes.

To encourage a healthy lifestyle among the elderly and children, we are working with the Department of Social Development to develop guiding document to realize this.

This programme has been allocated R87 million.

IN CONCLUSION

Last year we hosted the Sport Business Breakfast with the aim to galvanize support. The Premier pleaded with the business community to support Sport in the province.

Through this initiative, there is evidence that Public Private Partnership has potential to effect positive change.

The department was able to bring over 120 private companies under one roof to discuss sports development. We are pleased to confirm that a partnership with 18 companies has been sealed. Selaki Sport and Leisure has already donated a number of sporting equipment to parts of the province.

De Beers Group of Companies has already donated sport gears particularly in Blouberg and Musina and we still expect more from other companies.

Madam Speaker, Government alone cannot eradicate the sport infrastructure backlog.

I am pleased to inform the people of Limpopo that through our engagement with the private sector, we

are working on a very exciting “Mini Sports Complex” project led by McDonald’s South Africa.

The Mini Sport Complexes will each accommodate six sporting codes, a library and community center. The designs for these buildings are at a final stage and soon we will start talks with Traditional Leaders and Mayors to identify places where these buildings are needed most.

Madam Speaker, let me take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Premier and the entire Executive Council for the continued guidance and support, TEAM DSAC led by The Acting HOD Mabakane Mangena for always going extra mile.

I also want to thank the portfolio committee on Sport, Arts and Culture led by Honorable Shaaida Shaick and members of this august house for their oversight role.

Madam Speaker, 2017 is the year of athletes and artists! While it always seems impossible until it’s done, **WE ARE DOING IT!**

I thank you.