



State of the Province Address Delivered by the Honourable S.H. Ntombela, Premier of the Free State Province

**Dr. Rantlai Molemela Indoor Sports Centre
Bloemfontein**

25 February 2020

Honourable Speaker of the Legislature
Honourable Members of the Legislature and the Executive Council
Honourable Members of the National Assembly and the NCOP
Judge President and Esteemed Members of the Judiciary
Members of the Diplomatic Corp
Modulasetulo wa Ntlo ya Marena le Marena kaofela
The Leadership of SALGA and our Municipalities
The Provincial Commissioner of SAPS
The Regional Commissioner of Correctional Services
Leaders of Chapter Nine Institutions
Leaders of the African National Congress and the Alliance
Leaders of Faith Based Organisations
Leaders of Civil Society Organisations
Leaders of the Business Community
All our Special Guests
Viewers and Listeners

Honourable Speaker,

Another decade, another year and another opportunity to stand in this house to deliver the **State of the Province Address**. This occasion places on me, you and all of us the duty to change the conditions of our people. And yes, we can.

As we enter a new decade and a New Year, we are reminded of the progress we have made in the **eight** months of our sixth administration. We look back in the past with pride and praise. Today our people's lives are better than yesterday.

Despite these achievements, we still have many challenges. Unemployment, poverty and inequality persist. Poor service delivery affects many of our municipalities. Corruption driven by greed to feed our needs remains a problem.

These factors are damaging. They erode our people's sense of worth and reduce trust in government. They put strain on our resources and rob millions of our people of their livelihood. This is not the Free State we want to build.

Honourable Speaker,

Last week, I received a note from a visionary young person and I want to share it with all of you today. He said,

"We do not want the children of Free State Province to just be from the Free State. We want them to be in a state of freedom, to live in true and genuine freedom: the freedom to dream and realize their dreams:- the aspirational freedom that knows no boundaries.

The freedom to qualify and work in any profession of their choice. To realise financial freedom and economic freedom.

We do not only want to see the youth participate in the economy but we would like to see a young black child owning the means of production.

In as much as we would like to see the youth become employed, we equally aspire to see them become employers; become the solution to the enormous and historic challenge of unemployment.

It is time to put the youth first, particularly young black women: as government we must put them first in our procurement processes. Each month, each department and municipality must give an account: of all the businesses that we do business with as the provincial and local state, how

many are owned by young people, black women in particular. It starts here with us, with the power we have; let us believe in the youth. To give them a chance, to rise to a better future!"

The writer of this inspiring message is Lolo and he is here with us today.

Honourable Speaker,

Our youth need us. We cannot afford to let them down. I call on all public servants to recommit themselves and work differently.

Free State is amongst the provinces with the highest levels of unemployment and poverty. Women are being raped and killed daily. It cannot be business as usual.

This new decade holds a greater promise of: **#Building the Free State We Want.**

We are more determined to build a thriving province. For this to happen, we need to take hard, but necessary decisions. We need to be focused and capitalise on our spatial potential. Attention will be on few, yet high impact actions.

Honourable Speaker,

We want what is best for our youth. Focusing on our youth, economic growth and employment creation will in this coming financial year be our main priority.

Radical economic transformation is our path to success to unleash our potential.

To all of you young people, those in politics, sports, the arts, business, education and training, we dedicate this **State of the Province Address** to you.

Priority 1: Economic Transformation and Job Creation

Honourable Speaker,

Of the many problems that affect the youth, unemployment is the most depressing. More youth are entering the labour market, but few are getting jobs. We will therefore intensify our economic development activities for their benefit.

Our road infrastructure is important for economic development. Freeways, railways and access roads connect people, cities, towns and rural areas.

We will complete the following roads by the end of this financial year:

- *N8 Airport Road*
- *Bultfontein - Welkom Road*
- *Bultfontein - Wesselsbron Road*
- *Villiers - Cornelia Road*
- *Meloding - Virginia Road*

As we do this, local contractors, our youth and women must benefit. This is not wishful thinking. It is compulsory to give 30 percent to small local contractors.

This 30 percent is not a gift, people must do the work to benefit. We will provide small contractors with a call centre number to communicate their challenges.

Currently, **twenty-three** projects are ongoing, and the following **five** will be completed in 2020/21 at a cost of **two hundred and thirty million rands**:

- *Deneysville - Heilbron Road*
- *Jim Fouché - Deneysville Road*
- *Schonkenville - Koppies Road*
- *Hoopstad - Bloemhof Road*
- *Bothaville - Viljoenskroon Road*

All this work has created job opportunities for the youth and women. It has also contributed in alleviating poverty and stimulating local economic development.

There has been a lot of outcry about the following roads:

- *Kroonstad - Viljoenskroon Road*
- *Kroonstad - Henneman Road*
- *The Koffiefontein Bridge*

We will make sure that these roads are prioritised in the next financial year.

The departments of **Police, Roads and Transport; Public Works and Infrastructure;** and the **South African National Defence Force** will implement a programme to build and repair footbridges. Some of these will include **Ward 46** footbridge in Mangaung and in many other areas in our province.

The **Expanded Public Works Programme** remains our pillar of strength in alleviating poverty and unemployment.

Of the **fifty-two thousand** jobs we said we will create through the **Expanded Public Works Programme**, we have created close to **fifty thousand** job opportunities.

For the 2020/21 financial year, the province will create **fifty-five thousand** jobs with **thirty thousand, two hundred and fifty** of these meant for our youth.

Honourable Speaker,

In the next financial year, we will unveil the Koffiefontein business Hub for small and medium enterprises together with DESTEA, Petra Diamonds, Letsemeng municipality and SEDA. Here too, focus will be on youth in business.

Targeting youth entrepreneurs, the **Tabalaza Programme** that links businesses with potential investors for support and investment will be intensified.

We have offered **one million rands** to the **National Youth Development Agency** to increase financial and non-financial support to the youth. We are pleased that the **Agency** is opening offices in some of our rural areas such as QwaQwa.

Last year I announced the green economy as one of our priorities. We are now rolling out green economy interventions to keep our communities clean, prolong the lifespan of landfill sites and lessen the impact of climate change.

The waste economy will receive special attention through various support programmes. Support will be provided to waste pickers and recycling enterprises.

In 2019, we successfully hosted the **4th Industrial Revolution Summit** to achieve the following objectives:

- *Increase awareness of the utility and input of the **4th Industrial Revolution** technologies in stimulating growth.*
- *Showcase various **4th Industrial Revolution** technologies and investment opportunities.*
- *Enable an interactive platform for stakeholders, especially youth to engage with other technology service providers.*
- *Deploy the **4th Industrial Revolution** technologies to enhance a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.*

We hosted companies such as **Vodacom, MTN, Cell C** and **Microsoft** to help create the necessary human capital to propel the Free State into the future.

Together with the **Central University of Technology**, we have started training young people in artificial intelligence, 3-D cloud computing and data screening.

A detailed programme of action on the **4th Industrial Revolution** has been adopted by the Executive Council.

Honourable Speaker,

Only when we work with the private sector would we be able to create more jobs.

The **Wholesale and Retail learnership** initiative where **thirty-one** youth with disabilities will receive training after which they will be employed by **Shoprite** is welcome.

Some of these young people are here with us today. They include Sam Koloti, Gift Jantjie, Pulane Tswane, Mamokete Phumo, Zonke Vuthela and others.

A company called **NEWCO** will establish a manufacturing mining equipment factory in Welkom. **NEWCO** intends to create **hundred** jobs in 2020/2021.

Another company called **Renergen** has made an investment of over **seven hundred million rands** in developing natural gas wells in and around Virginia. An estimated **four hundred** jobs will be created from this investment.

Eighty-two businesses were appointed for a contractor development programme in the 2019/20 financial year. However, we will also monitor how contractors in this development programme are awarded work.

Honourable Speaker,

We will work with **Bibi Cash and Carry** to revive the concept of developing survival shops. We will use this concept to empower spaza shops.

We have allocated **thirty-three million rands** to assist **hundred** township youth businesses and all districts will benefit.

In strengthening existing mining potential, we will encourage and assist young people to apply for mining licences. Essential technical support in areas such as health and safety, and beneficiation will be offered to small mining companies.

We have met with mining houses in the province who have committed to create procurement opportunities on value chain products for youth businesses.

They have also committed to look at new mining exploration opportunities to expand their operations to create jobs and grow our economy.

To take advantage of our agricultural potential, focus will be on agro-processing. This will see us rolling-out an inland fishery.

Last year in December, we launched an inland fishery in Orangeville, which has created **seven** job opportunities. More jobs will be created from this project.

Under the **Agri-Parks Programme**, we are building a warehouse and service infrastructure in Springfontein. We are also upgrading Thaba Nchu abattoir.

In Sediba, **thirty-two Farmer Production Support Units** with **hundred and sixty-two** members were supported with a tractor and implements.

The **Agri-Parks** and **Farmer Production Support Units** are being established in Mochaka, Matjhabeng, Maluti-a-Phofung and Mohokare local municipalities. We will continue to provide farming equipment to small-scale and emerging farmers to increase agricultural production and ensure food security.

Significant progress has been made to implement the **Goat Development Project** meant for youth and women which we announced last year.

We can report that **five** young people in the Mafube municipality have been funded as part of this project and **ten** others have been identified for goat farming training. The municipality donated land and currently a shed is being constructed.

We hosted a successful **Cannabis Expo** in November last year. We brought together experts, industry leaders and regulators from different parts of Africa and the world to discuss the economic benefits of medicinal cannabis.

We agreed to develop the Free State strategy for the development of cannabis industry during this financial year.

Honourable Speaker,

We are hard at work to revive our large-scale manufacturing infrastructure.

There is progress in **Phuthaditjhaba Industrial Park**. The final phase of the **Botshabelo Industrial Park** will be completed by the end of this year.

Through the Maluti-a-Phofung **Special Economic Zone**, efforts and resources will be directed towards investment attraction.

As I indicated last year, we have now reorganised the **Special Economic Zone** and DESTEA will take full control of this entity.

We are encouraged by the projected **one billion rands** investment and **four hundred and seventy-seven** jobs that would be created. Already, **ninety** permanent jobs have been created at the **Special Economic Zone**.

We will use tourism to create jobs. **Seven** of our resorts are being upgraded.

Working with the **Premier's Economic Advisory Council**, we will device ways to increase investment opportunities in the province. During my **Office's Budget Vote Speech**, I will announce the names of members of the **Council**.

We held a successful **Investment Summit** to increase our investment drive. Funding will be sought to finance the projects identified in the **Investment Book**.

We will develop a dedicated **Invest Free State** website. This will provide information on investment opportunities, the ease of doing business and investment incentives.

Priority 2: Education, Skills and Health

Honourable Speaker,

Our education achievements are excellent. We reclaimed our number **one** spot for the third time since the implementation of the **Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement**. No other province has achieved this feat.

The class of 2019 achieved a remarkable pass rate of 88.4 percent with a record 39.1 percent Bachelor pass rate. More pleasing is that all the districts in the province have achieved above 85 percent pass rate.

Re leboha bana, batswadi le matitjhere a rona ka mosebetsi o babatsehang. Re motlotlo ebile re ikgantse ka lona. Re re pele ya pele.

Re mo tlotlo ho le tsebisa hore Lefapha la Home Affairs le tla etela dikolo holo thusa bana ho fumantshwa birth dicertificates le diID ho qala ka kgwedi ya March, 2020.

Honourable Speaker,

The **4thIndustrial Revolution** is here. We have introduced coding as a core-curriculum in 2019 in selected schools.

Aspects of this preparation include the procurement of robotic kits for participating schools, and training of learners and teachers on programming.

Riding on the **4thIndustrial Revolution** wave, a **Robotic League**, which was won by Albert Moroka School has been introduced. They will be representing the Free State at the **International Robotics League** competition to be held in South Korea from 18-23 March 2020. They are here with us.

These learners are Lepelesana Tshidiso, Nkone Karabelo, Madikwe Karabelo and Baisitse Ofentse. Go make us proud.

I can announce that we have completed the construction of the following schools:

- *Grassland Primary School in Bloemfontein*
- *Mooifontein Primary School in Zastron*
- *Silindukuhle Primary School in Warden*

For the 2020/21 financial year, additional **six** schools will be completed.

Motsamaisi wa Dipuisano,

Taba e re kgathatsang haholo ke boradikontraka ba fuwang mosebetsi e be haba qete ho aha dikolo, jwalo ka Caleb Motshabi mona Bloemfontein, Tlholo e Botshabelo, Malebogo mane Hertzogville le Rietpoort e Smithfield.

Re tlo nka mehato kgahlanong le borakontraka ba sa qeteng mesebetsi.

Re itlamme hore re tla fedisa dikolo tse hauweng ka disebediswa tse sa amoheleheng jwalo ka mobu, asbestos le masenke.

Dikolong tse 30 tsa mofuta ona, tse 23 di qetilwe ho ahwa. Ho tse setseng, tse 5 di ntse di ahwa, mme tse 2 sa Itemoheng Primary le Nampo Agricultural Farm School, di tla phethelwa selemong sena.

To provide acceptable and healthy forms of sanitation we have committed **ten million rands** to eradicate all pit toilets in our schools in the next financial year.

Where water and sewer provision is a challenge, alternative forms of sanitation will be used. There are **hundred and fifty-six** schools with pit toilets. **Twenty-two** schools were closed due to reduction in learner numbers.

Of the remaining **hundred and thirty-four** schools in the programme to eradicate pit toilets, **thirty-five** projects are at procurement stage, **forty-eight** are at construction stage and **fifty-one** have been completed.

Selemong sena re tla netefatsa hore bana ba banana ba fumana dipads dikolong. E fetile nako ya hore bana ba rona ba sitwe ho ya sekolong ka lebaka lena.

Honourable Speaker,

Of the **hundred and seventy-five** young people that were awarded overseas bursaries in the **Department of Agriculture**, **forty-six** have graduated and were placed in the department and some were retained in agri-businesses.

A further **hundred and twenty** graduates have been placed in agri-businesses.

Working with organised agriculture to build the necessary agricultural skills base, **twenty-five** farmers have completed agri-business training programme, arranged in partnership with the **University of the Free State** and **Standard Bank**.

Shortage of student accommodation is a concern. The demand is high. This has led many students to live in terrible and unacceptable conditions.

We will work with the private sector, higher education institutions and affected municipalities to make land available for the provision of student accommodation.

Honourable Speaker,

The first **hundred and seventeen** Cuban trained medical students have completed their **eighteen** months integration programme. These medical students have been placed for internship in all our district hospitals. Once they have completed their internship, they will be placed in our healthcare facilities.

Additional **forty-four** students from Cuba have started with their integration programme in various medical schools in the country.

Of the **four hundred and fifty-seven** doctors we committed to employ in our health facilities, **four hundred and fourteen** have been employed to date. The number of nurses employed is **nine hundred and eight**.

Motsamaisi wa Dipuisano,

Re ntse re fumana ditletlebo bathong ba rona mabapi le tshwaro eseng ntle dipetleleng le dikliniking. Re ipiletsa ho basebetsi bohle ba mmuso ho fana ka ditshebeletso ka tsela e bontshang hore re a kgathalla.

We have appointed **thirty-one** emergency control centre operators in Lejweleputswa, **thirteen** in Fezile Dabi and **eighteen** in Thabo Mofutsanyana. This will help improve emergency response time.

For the 2020/21 financial year, **thirty** registrars, **thirty** medical officers, **hundred** nurses and **hundred** support staff will be appointed. We will also recruit **hundred and sixty** emergency care officers.

We have acquired **fifty** additional ambulances, **forty** transporters and **ten** light rescue vehicles to improve healthcare provision in the province.

Brick by brick we continue to improve our health infrastructure. I can inform this house that we have completed the upgrading of the following health facilities:

- *Fezi Ngubentombi, Parys and Dr JS Moroka hospitals*
- **Eight** clinics in Mangaung
- **Five** clinics and a nurse's home in Fezile Dabi
- *Doctor's quarters in Lejweleputswa.*
- **Four** clinics and **two** hospitals in Xhariep

Hona le dikliniki le dipetlele tse sa felang ka lebaka la ho phoqwa ke mosebetsi o monyebe o etswang ke borakotraka dibakeng tse latelang:

- *Pelonomi Hospital*
- *Boitumelo Hospital*
- *National Hospital*
- *Rouxville Clinic*
- *Redheerspark Clinic*
- *Thandanani Clinic*
- *Intabazwe Clinic*
- *Matwabeng Clinic*

Ke laetse mafapha a amehang ho etsa bonnete ba hore di projeke tsena di a fela selemong sena sa ditjhelete.

We have met with the parents of the students studying in China and shared with them the latest development with regards to the situation of their children. We are relieved that none of our students are infected with corona virus.

We are pleased with the work of the departments of **Health**, and **International Relations and Cooperation** who are doing everything to ensure their safety.

We will continue to communicate with the authorities, students and parents to ensure we overcome this challenge.

Priority 3: Consolidating the Social Wage through Reliable and Quality Basic Services

Motsamaisi wa Dipuisano,

Re setjhaba se kgathallang. Mosebetsi wa rona ke ho sireletsa bana le batho ba hloakang. Ha ho hlokahale hore bana ba lahlelwe meqomong, dithotobolong kapa yona mekoting ya matlwana.

Leano la rona la “Adopt a Child” le thusa ho fumanela bana malapa a phetahetseng a ba hlokomelang. Selemong sena feela, re kgonne ho fumanela bana ba 45 malapa a mofuthu.

Financial support is now offered to **forty-eight thousand, six hundred and seventy-five** children at **seventeen rands** per child per day.

Assistance will be rendered to conditionally registered facilities providing **Early Childhood Development** programme to obtain full registration status.

Already, **thirty-five** of these centres were assisted to gain full registration level.

As a society, we will be judged by how we treat our elderly. Provision of old age pensions, social relief programmes and old age homes are but a few of the interventions we provide to our elderly to show that we are a caring government.

Maemo a dibaka tsa bodulo ba maqheku ha a kgotsofatse. Re tlo lokisa dibaka tsena ho dibeha maemong a matle, a shebahalang.

Setjhaba sa rona se shebane le bothata ba tshebediso e mpe ya dithetefatsi. Bana ba rona ba fetohile makgoba a dithetefatsi tse kang bo nyaope, tik le tse ding ditoropong tsa rona.

We are implementing a programme to prevent, treat and rehabilitate users to end this disease. Users undergo treatment, rehabilitation, life skills development to ensure their productive functioning in society.

Forty-one thousand and thirty-eight people were assisted through this programme. In addition, **three hundred and eighty-seven** service users accessed substance use disorder treatment, and **two hundred and six** were provided with re-integration and after-care services.

The rehabilitation centre in Botshabelo will be completed this year and will create **hundred and four** permanent jobs.

Honourable Speaker,

We continue to provide basic services to our people. By December 2019, over **three hundred and five million rands** had been spent through the **Municipal Infrastructure Grant** to fund water, sanitation, roads and storm water projects.

One thousand nine hundred and fifty-one job opportunities that benefitted mainly the youth and women were also created as a result of these interventions.

Maemo ao batho ba phelang ka hara ona Botshabelo le Thaba Nchu ha a re jese ditheohelang. Batho ba ntse ba ithusetsa matlwaneng a mekoti. Ba bang ba sebedisa matlwana a diVIP tse tletseng tse sa hulweng.

Ho kgutlisa serethi sa batho ba rona, ha nakwana re tla fana ka makoloi a hulung matlwana ho fokotsa ho tlala ha ona. Empa morero o moholo wa rona ke ho aha matlwana a ho ithusa a metsi.

Maemo a ditsela tse ding le ona ha a re kgahlise. Ho utlwisa bohloko hore ba bang ba batho ba rona ba ntse ba sena mangolo a mobu (Title Deed).

Re tla kenya paving ditseleng tse ding tsa rona Botshabelo le Thaba Nchu. Re itlama hape ho fana ka mangolo a mobu (Title Deed) ho baahi ba Botshabelo, Thaba Nchu le provinsi ka bophara.

Leano lena la ho pheiva diterata tsa rona le se le phethetswe mane Parys, Koppies, Jagersfontein le Villiers. Dibaka tse ding di tla phethelwa selemong sena sa ditjhelete.

Priority 4: Spatial Integration, Human Settlements and Local Government

Honourable Speaker,

Government remains committed to spatial integration. Spatial planning will be done in accordance with our development imperatives.

In order to ensure that land development applications are approved on time and spatial integration is maintained, we have directed **COGTA** to develop a dedicated training programme for **Municipal Planning Tribunals**.

Human settlement will be geared towards the integration of low-income families into urban centres that offer the same opportunities to high-income earners.

Of the **four thousand, seven hundred and eighty-five** housing units we committed to deliver, **one thousand, two hundred and three** were completed.

Ha re thabiswe ke monyebe o phano ya matlo e tsamayang ka yona ka lebaka la borakotraka ba sa qeteng mosebetsi wa bona ka nako. Re re ho bona, phahamisang dikausu, kapa le emelle ka thoko.

We planned to deliver **five thousand, six hundred and seventeen** serviced sites. **Four thousand, two hundred and twenty-three** were part of upgrading informal settlements. Others were for new developments in green field areas.

I am happy to announce that we have exceeded this target and serviced **five thousand, nine hundred and forty-seven** sites.

Honourable Speaker,

Our informal settlements have increased from **hundred and forty-three** to **hundred and seventy-three**.

To date, **nineteen** have been upgraded, which means they are complete with internal basic services and people have security of tenure.

We are currently busy with internal reticulation in **forty-three** informal settlements and the projects are at various stages of implementation.

Eight township establishment projects in these **six** municipalities have started:

- *In Masilonyana - Slovo Park
Winburg Baipeing*
- *In Nala - Khalinkomo
Vergenoeg*
- *In Mantsopa - Marikana
Palamenteng
R1, R2 and R4 Green Fields*
- *In Mohokare - Refengkgotso
Ezibeleni*
- *In Setsoto - Masaleng (Senekal)
Clocolan*
- *In Kopanong - Ipopeng
Riverside*

These projects form part of the informal settlements upgrading programme.

Our last year's commitment to accelerate land redistribution in the province is well underway. Land represents our existence, culture and prosperity.

The **Land Use Task Team** has finalised packages of available land parcels for distribution.

Of the **four thousand, nine hundred and two** land parcels, **two thousand, six hundred and twenty-eight** have been earmarked to be transferred to the rightful beneficiaries. Already, conveyancers have been appointed for this purpose.

We have had a conversation with our municipalities to release land and allocate sites to our people. This work will be accelerated in the coming financial year.

Re ipiletsa ho setjhaba sa rona hore ba tlohele ho sala bophepheletsane morao ba inkelang mobu ka sheshe. Re ikemiseditse ho nka bohato bo matla kgahlanong le diketso tsena tse seng molaong.

Re ananela mosebetsi wa komiti ya palamente ya ditaba tsa mobu ya ho fetola Section 25 ya Molaotheo ho tlisa kgonahalo ya ho fumana lefatshe ka ntle ho tefo (land expropriation without compensation).

Ke fela ha re ka fumana lefatshe moo re tla fihlellang phethoho e potlakileng ya moruo (radical economic transformation).

Priority 5: Social Cohesion and Safe Communities

Honourable Speaker,

A divided society is doomed to fail. We have come too far to see that happen. We need to celebrate and respect our diversity as the province.

We will use sport, arts and culture to cherish our diversity and unite the province.

Last year we hosted the **Social Cohesion Summits and Dialogues**, and **Moral Regeneration Prayer Services** with various partners.

We undertook **Youth for Social Cohesion** and **Moral Regeneration** events that entailed various sport activities. These activities will continue to unite us.

We also proudly celebrated and observed the days of national importance such as the **Freedom Day**, **Mandela Day**, **Heritage Day** and **Human Right's Day**. We call upon all Free Staters to embrace these efforts to unify our communities.

Mass sport participation initiatives meant for the youth, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities to enhance healthy living are embraced by communities.

Honourable Speaker,

The provincial **Mustang Wheelchair Rugby Team**, which won the **South African Wheelchair Rugby League** in 2019, has made us proud.

We congratulate Ms Fredoline Mantjies, the 16-year-old from Koffiefontein, who was declared **Miss Teen United Nations South Africa** and **Miss Teen United Nations** in 2019. She is here with us and is the pride of our province.

Revitalisation of the **Charles Mopeli Stadium** is work in progress. **Forty-six million rands** have been allocated for this purpose. A contractor has been appointed and we hope to complete Phase 1 of this project in May of this year.

Offers for Phase 2 of the project have been advertised and will start immediately after completion of Phase 1. Work in this regard will include major upgrades of the stadium to the tune of **hundred and thirty million rands**.

We have moved rapidly to increase the number of our **Mzansi Libraries Online** equipped with computers and Wi-Fi to **forty-four**.

I have instructed the relevant department to ensure that unfinished libraries in Smithfield, Soutpan, Luckhoff, Weppener and Van Stadensrus are completed.

MACUFE will always remain an avenue of our human expression. With this festival, we celebrate and pass on our heritage through creative expressions.

Nine hundred and twenty-one temporary jobs were created and **twenty-six** businesses offered opportunities during **MACUFE**. We expect the festival to grow from strength to strength.

We will officially open the Winnie Madikizela-Mandela museum and unveil her statue in Brandfort in the new financial year.

Honourable Speaker,

Our people are entitled to safety and security. To live a peaceful and secure life far from harm and violence. To flourish and achieve their dreams unhindered.

We welcome Lieutenant-General Baile Motsoenyane, the new Provincial Police Commissioner. We wish her well and pledge our support in the task ahead.

We want to extend our appreciation to Lieutenant-General Moeketsi Sempe for having served our province with dedication and commitment.

We have appointed **hundred and one** police officers to strengthen the fight against crime. We are pleased to say that they are here with us. In the new financial year, we will appoint **three hundred and sixty-five** police officers.

Last year, we laid the marching orders to end the brutality of the **Zama Zamas**. Today I am proud to report that the task team led by the **South African Police Service** has made crucial strides in dealing with the **Zama Zamas**.

Many unused shafts were closed, reducing the number of murders. Similarly, equipment was also confiscated and many **Zama Zamas** arrested.

We also said that gangsterism has no place in our society. We are winning the fight against gangsterism. Many of the gang leaders who were awaiting trial have been successfully prosecuted and are serving long-term prison sentences.

Fifty-six of these gang members received sentences that ranged from **twenty** years and above. Another **sixty-five** were sentenced to life imprisonment.

I hope this is good lesson to our youth that gangsterism is not cool and crime does not pay. We warn these gangs to leave our children alone.

We strongly condemn the killing of our police officers. We would like to send our condolences to the families and colleagues of the deceased.

One thousand eight hundred and sixty-three security officials in the province have been insourced and will be appointed at Level 3 from April this year.

Road fatalities fell by 35.47percent during the festive season. We thank our traffic officers. We will employ additional **thirty** traffic officers in the next financial year.

Honourable Speaker,

Cases of violence against women and children leave deep emotional scars in our hearts. This needs to stop. We need to breakdown the cultural, institutional and societal practices that continue to imprison our women and children.

We have opened a shelter for victims of violence against women and children in Wepener and another one will be opened in Bothaville next month.

Nine million rands has been set aside for the appointment of additional **sixteen** social workers to be placed in the districts linked to **Thuthuzela Care Centres, Safe Houses, Shelters** and **Victim Friendly Centres**.

We recognise social workers and social caregivers who are present today.

Forensic nurses will be placed in all **Thuthuzela Care Centres** to respond to gender based violence. We also provide services to the **LGBTIQ** community.

Over **three million rands** has be allocated to establish a new shelter in Xhariep, and improve **one Safe House** and **six Shelters** for victims of crime and violence.

We have set aside **ten million rands** to intervene and enhance programmes against gender-based violence in the province.

Bontate, re kopa thuso ya lona twantshong ya tlhekefetso ya bomme le bana. Maemo ana a ya re swabisa. Re kopa re tshwarisaneng bothateng bona. Setjhaba se bolayang bomme le bana ha sena bokamoso.

Priority 6: A Capable, Ethical and Developmental State

Honourable Speaker,

We acknowledge the need to strengthen the capacity of the state to accelerate and improve service delivery. Without state capacity, our people will be condemned to a life of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

To ensure a skilled workforce, the **Free State Training and Development Institute**, working together with the **National School of Government** will be enhanced to be a leader in the provision of quality and accredited training.

We have placed a number of municipalities under Section 139(1)(b) and 139(5)(a) and (c) of the Constitution because of the challenges ranging from maladministration, poor financial management to poor service delivery.

Earlier, Maluti-a-Phofung was affected by instability. Now the tide is turning. Recent developments are a source of reassurance. Improvements include timeous payment of salaries and third parties, billing and revenue collection.

The provision of water remains a challenge in Maluti-a-Phofung due to lack of maintenance of water resources including severe drought.

Selemong sena re bile le koduwa e kgolo ya ho hloka metsi ka lebaka la komello. Pula eo re e fumaneng ebile e fokolang haholo. Freistata e ile ya hlwauwa e le sebaka sa koduwa ya komello ke mmuso o bohareng.

Sebaka se amehileng haholo ke Maluti-a-Phofung. Mmuso o behelletse ka thoko two hundred and twenty million rands ho lwantsha koduwa ena.

Re thabile haholo ebile re rata ho leboha Modimo ka pula hobane letamo la rona la Fika Patso le ntse le kolla metsi.

Ditakatso tsa batho ba rona tsa ho bona metsi pompong di tla phethahala. Re lokela ho lokisa marangrang le dibaka tseo metsi a hlwekiswa ho tsona hore a be maemong a lokileng pele metsi a ka Bulelwa.

Ho hlola bothata bona ha moshwelella, letamo lena la Fika Patso le lokelwa ho thuswa ka phepele ya metsi ho hlaha Metsi Matso ka peipi ya qholwaqwe ho ya Mphatlalatsane.

Tshebetso ya ho phahamisa mothamo wa phepele ya metsi ho tloha letamong la Sterkfontein ho kena marangrang aneng a fepelwa ke letamo la Fika Patso e qadile.

Ho ntse ho na le mathata a metsi dibakeng tse ding tse kang Masilonyana, Mohokare, Dihlabeng, Nketoana, Moqhaka le Mafube. Re tswela pele ka maano a rona a ho tlisa botsitso ba phepele ya metsi dibakeng tseo.

Motsamaisi wa Dipuisano,

Ka ha pula ke mahlopha a senya, re bile le dikgohola mo batho ba ileng ba senyehelwa ke matlo le thepa ya bona dibakeng tse mmalwa e ka sita le ho lahlehelwa ke bophelo.

Re fitisa kutlwelo bohloko ho ba ileng ba lahlehelwa ke maphelo a bona.

Selemong sena, re beile tjhelete e kana ka six million rands ho e tsa bo nnete ba hore, re thibela le ho lwantsha dikoduwa.

We are concerned about the ineffectiveness of the intervention in Mafube. Service delivery is falling short of our expectations. We hope the new administrator will turn the situation around.

The inability of Metsimaholo to execute its executive and legislative mandate has led to governance collapse. We have therefore placed the municipality under Section 139(1)(b) of the Constitution.

We are confident that the administrative team that we appointed will return Metsimaholo to good governance and service delivery.

Financial challenges in Mangaung, which has seen it being downgraded twice by **Moody's Rating Agency** is not what we want and what our people deserve.

When the Metro failed to implement a voluntary financial recovery plan, we invoked Section 139 (5)(a) and (c) of the Constitution for a mandatory recovery plan and for the provincial government to oversee its implementation.

Some strides are being made by the intervention team to turn the Metro around.

Honourable Speaker,

Municipal audit outcomes for the 2018/2019 financial year show regression as the most common feature. This is worsened by declining national allocations, and inability to raise revenue because of the prevailing economic climate.

Provincial Treasury is providing technical support to municipalities in distress. Positive results to ensure compliance with the **Municipal Finance Management Act** are being realised.

Training is also being provided to municipalities in areas such as strategic planning and management, municipal budgeting, supply chain and finance.

Setjhaba se lokela ho lefella ditshebeletso tseo ba di fumanang hore maemo a ditjhelete a dimasepala a tsebe ho ntlafala.

Government has adopted the **District Development Model**. This will ensure that provinces, national and municipalities do work together in delivering services to the people. We plan together and deliver together.

We will establish offices in each ward to serve as a link between government and communities in implementing the **District Development Model**. President Cyril Ramaphosa will in April launch the **District Development Model** in the province.

Honourable Speaker,

Our democracy is a product of our historic setting. Tradition continues to play a major role as a bridge between the past, present and the future.

The **Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act** that recognises the Khoi-San leadership will now be implemented. We will amend the **Free State Traditional Leadership and Governance Act**, and the **Free State Provincial and Local Houses of Traditional Leaders Act** to recognise the Khoi-San leadership.

Honourable Speaker,

We sadly lost **three** members of the royal families, Princess Manapo Mopeli, Morena Mathealira Mopeli and Morena Dirahadibonwe Sekonyela. **Re re meya ya bona e phomole ka kgotso.**

Re behelletse ten million rands ka thoko bakeng sa ho reka lefatshe la Batlokoa ba Mokgalong mane Vrede. Re tshepa hore morero ona wa bohlokwa o tla phethelwa selemong sona sena sa ditjhelete.

Honourable Speaker,

Corruption is a disease that eats on people's livelihoods. It starts from what seems to be a small act of taking bribe for a cool drink to manipulation of procurement processes. In any other name, corruption is immoral.

Last year we held a successful **Anti-Corruption Summit** in partnership with various stakeholders. We resolved to collaborate in fighting corruption both in the private and public sector.

Priority 7: A Better Africa and World

Honourable Speaker,

We congratulate President Cyril Ramaphosa for taking over the chairmanship of the **African Union**. We want to pledge our support to working with him in ensuring peace, stability, security, integration and development in the continent.

As an **African Union** self-monitoring instrument, the **African Peer Review Mechanism** is anchored on the principles of stability, growth and development.

The Free State is part of the **African Peer Review Mechanism** process. As in the past, we will participate and provide progress in the implementation of the **African Peer Review Mechanism's** objectives.

We have appointed MEC Gadija Brown as the provincial champion for the **African Peer Review Mechanism**.

Honourable Speaker,

As the province, we will take advantage of economic opportunities offered by the **African Continental Free Trade Agreement** to a market of more than **one billion** people. The **Agreement** creates a single African market.

Focusing on distinct agricultural products and agro-processing such as cherries, apples, cut flowers, sorghum, asparagus, venison and wine, we will explore export opportunities to other African countries under this **Agreement**.

We will also encourage, organise and support our emerging farmers to work with the **National Agricultural Marketing Council** to benefit from this **Agreement**.

Conclusion

Honourable Speaker,

Looking back, a lot has been achieved to change the living conditions of our people. Ours is progress filled with attainments, determination and courage. So many success stories, so many developments and so many achievements.

However, challenges remain. We need to do more. The road ahead is not going to be easy. Hopes are high, needs are increasing and resources decreasing.

As we look into the future, we need to turn our challenges into opportunities for growth and development of our province. Guided by the wishes of our people, our energies shall be on the implementation of the priorities we have identified.

We look forward to your wisdom and guidance to continue to shape and enrich our growth and development path.

I know I can count on all of you. The urgency of the moment requires of us to work together. **#Building the Free State We Want – Amandla!!!**

I Thank You
