

**The Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature;
Members of the Executive Council;
Members of the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces;
Members of the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature;
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**

**Chairperson of the Karas Region, Mr Jan Scholtz
Our Esteemed Judge Williams and Members of the Judiciary;
Heads of State Security Services;
Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Mayors and
Leaders in our system of Local Government;
Our Honoured Traditional Leaders and Veterans of our Liberation Struggle;
Heads of State institutions supporting our constitutional democracy;
The Director General, Heads of Department and Leaders of the Public Service;
Goodwill Ambassadors of the Northern Cape Province;
Government Officials;
Distinguished Guests;
Fellow citizens of the Northern Cape;
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Honourable Speaker

We are presenting the State of the Province address in a year in which we celebrate 20 years of our Constitution which is hailed as one of the best in the world. We are reminded of Madiba's most poignant quote during the signing-in of the Constitution, when this paragon of virtue and compassion declared and I quote **"We give life to our nation's prayer for freedom regained and a continent reborn."**

Honourable Speaker

This year in August we will also be commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Women's March against the inhumane and unjust pass laws. The clarion call of those brave women was premised on the powerful slogan "**Wathint'abafazi Wathint'imbokodo**" which still resonates today.

In the midst of the 20 000 strong group of women who had marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria was Kimberley born Frances Goitsema Beard, an African National Congress stalwart and once National Treasurer of the ANC Women's League, who dedicated her entire life to the struggle for the total emancipation of our people against colonial disposition and apartheid subjugation.

Honourable Speaker

Further to this we will also be commemorating 40 years of the June 16 uprisings. We honour the Class of 1976 who selflessly and uncompromisingly fought against Apartheid's brutal and unjust laws.

The youth will be a focal point in our implementation of the 9 point plan which will be mainstreamed into all our programmes and initiatives:

I would like to specifically highlight the following initiatives:

The Provincial government has recently completed a profile of Young People in the Northern Cape and the Northern Cape Youth Development Strategy is underway which is aimed at responding comprehensively and meaningfully to the challenges facing young people. As part of advancing young people we are providing apprenticeship, learnerships as well as bursaries. More and more of our young people in the Northern Cape have access to TVET colleges and universities. To this end we can report that in the previous financial year we spent over R54 million and we envisage to spend over R69.5 million in this current financial year.

Honourable Speaker

We would also like to focus our energy on building and fostering social cohesion in the Province and in engaging communities to address racism in our country. For this reason we will also be engaging various stakeholders in the NGO's, labour, religious, business and farming sectors in order to ensure that we deal with this scourge of racism. It starts with each one of us to seriously look inside ourselves and realise that there is only one race and that is the human race.

We are sincere in our intention to give effect to the non-racial society envisaged by the African National Congress. We will do so remembering the words of Tata Mandela who reminded us that "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

Honourable Speaker

Our government is committed to expedite the radical transformation of our economy in order to enhance the participation of the masses of our people in the mainstream of the economy. We remain committed to uphold the provisions of the National Development Plan which is our long term Vision for addressing these challenges. One of the key approaches to the implementation of the NDP is through the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). The MTSF has two key themes namely, Radical Economic Transformation and Innovative Service Delivery.

The government programmes pertaining to radical economic transformation must be about doing things differently and effectively to ensure tangible delivery of services to our people.

The principal Objectives of radical economic transformation are to:

- Accelerate economic growth in an inclusive and sustainable path;
- Achieve much higher levels of employment creation and decent work opportunities;
- Reduce inequality substantially; and
- Ensure meaningful black participation in ownership, control and management of the economy.

Honourable Speaker,

It is an accepted fact that the fault-line underpinning the economic structural challenges has perpetuated unemployment and inequality twenty years after the transition to democracy. What is of particular concern is the high levels of youth unemployment. The fault-line band which foundationally directs the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment has its roots deeply entrenched within the confines of the Apartheid regime.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The majority of South Africans were systematically and structurally marginalised. This occurred in two ways, namely spatially, where segregation was engineered to force people to reside far from economic centres and institutionally where the deprivation of people were amongst others denied formal qualifications and access to financial and other market institutions. It is worth noting that it was in this time that the mining value chain lay at the heart of the economy while manufacturing and the services sectors remained relatively underdeveloped.

Mr Speaker

The Northern Cape is already addressing spatial inequality through the implementation of Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, which came into operation the 1st of July 2015. The Province, in collaboration with the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, is supporting municipalities to ensure that all our municipalities are SPLUMA ready. We cannot undo a lifetime of deliberate and unjust planning overnight but we have made great progress and will continue to work towards the realisation of this commitment.

Honourable Members

We will focus on the institutionalisation of long-term planning, integration and coordination capacity within the state to drive consolidated industrialisation and infrastructure development programmes for inclusive growth and job creation, more so amongst the Youth. For they are leaders of tomorrow and we will leave a solid foundation for them to build upon and drive the economy for the benefit of our province and country.

Ladies and Gentlemen

President Jacob Zuma, in the **ANC's January 8th Statement** reaffirmed the government's commitment to radical economic transformation when he said:

“The country requires an activist, interventionist and capable State that takes decisive action to effect radical economic transformation. It is our assertion that the country needs a private sector that acts in the national interest and contributes to the attainment of the national goals of eradicating poverty, unemployment and inequality.”

The planning processes carried out by all government entities will have a vital role to play in bringing the National Development Plan to life. It is therefore important to improve the quality of existing planning mechanisms. We have in place a roadmap of methodology, thinking, integrated planning, resource allocation and monitoring and evaluation.

Compatriots

As you know the world is grappling with the aftermath of global economic crisis and South Africa is not insulated against the impact of that crisis.

We are, however, mindful of the Province's heavy reliance on mining and agriculture is especially susceptible to global financial turmoil's. Our province is right in the middle of the storm and we are confronted with the mining industry that is hard hit by a decline in commodity prices and agricultural sector that is confronted by a severe drought. As a result of this a large number of jobs are under threat. We will work with organised labour and the mining sector in our Province to minimise job losses by looking at alternatives rather than retrenchments.

In this respect, the Government is currently implementing strategies and programmes to mitigate the worst economic impacts of the minerals price crash and drought. Approximately 2000 smallholder farmers across the province are benefitting from drought relief of R23 million and we are expecting additional funding to the tune of R19 million from the national department of Rural Development and Land Reform. We must not be deterred from laying the groundwork for a better tomorrow. Food security remains one of the key priorities of this administration and

we will continue to do whatever is required to ensure that our fields and that we produce quality and quantity.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In terms of employment creation the construction, utilities and transport sector were the most notable employment creating sectors with growth rates of 42.0%, 41.6% and 40.6% percent respectively. These increases can be attributable to the burgeoning energy sector in the province and the construction of the Sol Plaatje University. The provincial community service sector continues to be a critical agent of employment with almost a third of those actively employed.

Speaker

This year we will focus our energies on labour intensive sectors as the need to create employment for our people is paramount. In order to address the said economic challenges in our Province we ardently commit to the implementation of the nine point plan.

In this vain the purpose of the nine point plan is to grow the South African economy and at the same time support the NDP. This will be achieved by transforming the economy and increasing investments, among other things. Three interventions have been designed to work together to grow the economy i.e. Job drivers, enablers and cross-cutting interventions. These interventions will be crucial in addressing the unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Honourable Members

We made a conscious decision that we will ensure that the Renewable Energy Sector finds a home in the Northern Cape. Today, over 60% of South Africa's Independent Power Producers have been allocated to the Northern Cape. The Province attracted 66% of the total Renewable energy Independent Power Producers investments to date and has secured a substantial share of the equity for local communities with benefits materialising over the project life.

Eskom Northern Cape has spent R348 million in the 2015/16 financial year to respond to the growth and development challenges in the Province. For the financial year 2016/17 and 2017/18 an additional R760 million will be spend in network expansions.

Clean energy production supported by the procurement strategy of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Programme is also contributing to the NC provincial objective of achieving accelerated sustainable economic growth and development. In the near future the Province will also prioritise small Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Programme (1 to 5 MW) as a contributing factor to the current solar based projects in the Province.

The Province will also host a Renewable Energy Conference in May this year to set the necessary platform for international investors to invest in other alternative energy opportunities in the province.

Honourable Members

The provincial agricultural sector is a key component in the creation of sought-after employment and growing the economy. As such, rural development in the Province has been invigorated with the focused establishment of one Agri-park in each of the five District Municipalities. Sites for the development of hubs were identified and will centre on agricultural value-addition and other related activities.

In order to address the food security challenges in the Province the following initiatives have been supported

- The Vaalharts/ Taung Revitalisation Scheme and Onseepkans Rivervalley Catalytic project will continue to support the smallholder farmers through irrigation infrastructure development.
- The Farmer Training programme - to support smallholder farmers to improve their productivity by enhancing their skills.
- Conditional grant funding in the form of Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) and Ilima/Letsema

In 2016/17 we will continue to support agricultural production particularly the identified value chains that have comparative advantage in the Province and contribute to economic and food security. These are the Vineyard Development scheme, Livestock Production Development Programme, Wheat and Maize Production with the Fetsa Tlala Food Production Programme and small scale fisheries.

This is in response to the call to revitalise the agriculture and agro-processing value chains:

The Province has developed 163 hectares of vineyards under the Vineyard Development Scheme and a further 394 ha is available for development in the ZF Mgcawu District.

Work has started in the development of the 118 ha of land in Onseepkans, with the clearing of invader plants and to plant vineyards on 40 hectares. The scope of this project is to develop 3 200 hectares of high potential arable land in the Namakwa district. This arable land is located in eleven distinct areas.

Each of these have been described, planned and costed individually with the development estimated to cost R1.3 billion. Of the identified land, 2 000 ha have existing water licenses. A further 1 200ha will have to be secured from the remaining water rights of the 4000ha water rights that were earmarked for economic enhancement of Historically Disadvantaged Individuals and communities.

Mr Speaker, the Northern Cape is particularly prone to the effects of climate change and the department of Environment and Nature Conservation is partnering with other role-players including the German government to determine the impact of climate change, risks and the mitigation strategies.

Mr Speaker amidst the downturn in the mining sector there is some good news as well. Vedanta has commenced the development of the long awaited Gamsberg Zinc project. Vedanta has committed substantial investment to this project. Since the announcement of the project, the next critical milestone at Gamsberg was achieved last year July, when Vedanta broke ground on the project. In a time that brings uncertainty to the mining industry, pre development

work is in full swing with about 300 workers on site of which more than 150 are from the Northern Cape.

The project is expected to generate approximately 500 permanent jobs, with the potential to create a further 1,500 temporary jobs during the construction phase.

Similarly West Coast Resources, a diamond mining company with operations in the Namaqualand region of the Northern Cape are now in the full start-up phase. To date, West Coast Resources has created a total of 220 jobs, 146 of which are permanent and 74 temporary (including construction workers and 13 mining trainees still completing their training programmes, out of a total of 28 young trainees recruited directly from the local communities). In the longer term, the Company plans to create approximately 550 jobs, directly and indirectly, by 2021.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As part of moving towards rapid economic transformation in the tiger eye mining industry the Province in conjunction with the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) are collaborating to make the necessary intervention to harness the worth of this commodity and further position it to make it commercially viable.

- Mining of this commodity is prevalent on communal land owned by the municipalities of Prieska, Niekerkshoop, Marydale and Griekwastad and in private land owned by farmers in those areas.
- Over the past decade or more relatively large amounts of tonnage of TE exports are made mostly to China.

In terms of strides made, the following was recorded:

- Groups of people that were mining illegally around Prieska were mobilised into five primary co-operatives, which belong to the secondary co-operative CBZ Tiger's Eye.
- Miners operating on privately owned land will also be assisted to acquire the necessary mining license;
- People engaged in illegal mining around Niekerkshoop were also mobilized into

co-operatives and their registration process is underway;

- The primary co-operatives in Niekerkshoop will also form another secondary co-operative on which the prospecting right will be applied;
- A beneficiation entity named Prieska Loxion Hub (PLH) has been established in collaboration with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and MINTEK;
- This entity is utilizing Tigers Eye for stone cutting products and jewellery manufacturing.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Northern Cape government Interventions together with the Department of Mineral Resources planned for 2016-17 include:

- The CBZ Secondary Co-op and its subsidiaries will be assisted to acquire mining equipment through the Co-operative Incentive Scheme (CIS) grant;
- Likewise primary co-operatives in Niekerkshoop will be assisted to form a Secondary Co-operative and acquire machinery;
- A Trading Centre Model for Tiger Eye will be developed, including talks will be held with Chinese consulate for assistance on export regulations and market positioning; and further research will be undertaken on other possible uses of TE especially benchmarking to tanzanite and other precious stones.
- The Department of Mineral Resources - Small Scale Mining division will assist in compiling a technical report to secure institutional support services, assist in monitoring and directly running these mining projects and conduct inspections and assume accountability for project compliance with regulatory requirements.

It is worth noting that in advancing beneficiation and adding value to the Northern Cape's mineral wealth, the Kimberley Diamond and Jewellery Incubation Centre was launched in December last year.

Revisiting the Mining Charter will ensure that we take advantage of beneficiation and ascertain that the community in the Northern Cape share in our mineral wealth.

The Provincial Government will host a Procurement Indaba in the third quarter of this year so as to provide a platform for stakeholders to engage constructively on the key procurement and transformation challenges and provide solutions that would give rise to real economic

transformation in the province. Furthermore, it will provide a platform for stakeholders to discuss key challenges, opportunities, and repositioning of Public Procurement as a tool for radical economic transformation in the province.

We also committed to implementing the Mining Phakisa as a part of Operation Phakisa in implementing the NDP.

We are cognisant of the challenges and dangers in the mining sector. Our sympathy to the families affected by the recent mining accident – Barberton Mpumalanga – know that you are in our prayers.

Honourable Speaker

It is well documented that manufacturing has a higher labour and output multiplier effect. It is against this background that the Province is supporting potential Black Industrialists to benefit from the DTI initiative which is aimed in creating 100 Black Industrialist in the next 3 years.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the development of industries through SEZs, IDZs, and Industrial Clusters is a key vehicle that can revive stagnant industries, promote and enhance their performance while providing opportunities for new industries to emerge. It is also expected that these opportunities will be used to advance the number of previously disadvantaged possible stakeholders.

In the envisaged Mineral Beneficiation Industrial Cluster which will be based in Ga-Segonyana. Preparatory work of the land is underway; the geo-tech survey studies are being completed, while the EIA and the re-zoning of the land is being carried out.

In the next financial year, a management company will be put in place to implement the cluster over the MTEF period with the main purposes of administering, marketing, trade promotion, skills development and growing the cluster.

The Clothing and Textiles Cluster Management Company has been established which will focus on bench-marking of participating firms and the establishment of linkages with related firms in the clothing industry. A three year business plan has been developed and will be fully implemented over the 2016/17 – 2018/19 MTEF period.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I cannot over-emphasise the importance of encouraging private sector investment in our economy. In this regard, in 2015 we concluded international agreements with Turkey and India to advance beneficiation and value adding in the mining sector. Growing the manufacturing sector will address our unemployment challenges and lead to higher economic growth.

The Province will finalise our Trade and Investment Incentive package in the coming financial year. This will ensure that the Province finds its rightful place as the preferred trade and investment destination in terms of priority sectors.

President Zuma emphasized the pivotal role of the Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises, when he observed that **“One of the most integral parts of advancing prosperity is a society in which small business and co-operatives flourish. The ANC has put together policies to enable the creation of a conducive environment and support services for small and medium enterprises. The ANC encourages government to ensure that government procurement can benefit such entrepreneurs.”**

The past year approximately 199 SMMEs and 87 Cooperatives have been supported in the Province. The Province in collaboration with the national Department of Small Business Development Department will host an SMME indaba in the Northern Cape during 2016. Finalization of the Provincial Incubation Strategy and exploring establishment of renewable Energy incubation centre is underway.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our government has made significant strides in addressing the challenges of roads, as well as the lack of maintenance of infrastructure and public facilities. We have astutely allocated our resources, both financial and human, to maximise our efforts at addressing these challenges.

The Hotazel to Tsineng road where the BHP Billiton contributed half of the cost of the upgrade. Phase 1, 2 and phase 3 of the project is completed with phase 4, between Magojaneng to Gatseke still under construction and expected to be completed soon.

In Joe Morolong, Wyk 10 to Laxey and N14 to Bothitong in partnership with Sishen Iron Ore Community Trust (SIOC): As government we heard the cry of the JTG community and acted with vigour and enthusiasm. And indeed construction is progressing well.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Roads and Public Works will invest a total of R 2,7 billion on road infrastructure development for the 2015/16 MTEF period of which R 900 million will be spent in the 1st year . The focus of the department has shifted from roads construction to the maintenance of roads in order to preserve the assets that we have.

We are a water scarce province and water conservation and demand management is key to ensuring sustainability of our water supplies. As part of the war on leaks program unemployed youth will be trained as water agents, plumbers and artisans to assist with the eradication of water losses within the household and municipal environment. The program will target 740 youth in amongst others the Dikgatlong, Sol Plaatje and Joe Morolong local municipalities.

The bulk water supply projects that are being implemented are not only critical in eradicating the water supply backlogs, but also contribute to economic development and further build our resilience to drought and the impacts of climate change.

Multi-year bulk water infrastructure projects that are currently under construction include amongst others:

- The Namakwa Bulk Water Supply Scheme with phase one now nearing completion, and which have already contributed to a marked improvement in the reliability of water supply in the Nama Khoi municipality;
- the Kalahari East Pipeline Extension Project which will ensure sustainable water supply to seven settlements in the Mier area; it will also serve farms along the pipeline route as well as

Hakskeen Pan which is the location of Speed Week and the Bloodhound Project;

- The Vaal Gamagara Bulk Water Scheme, in respect of which the feasibility study and design for phase one has now been completed, will enter into the construction phase in the first quarter of 2016/17.

Our towns and settlements are very dependent on groundwater resources and several groundwater supply schemes such as the Noupoot Bulk Water Supply Scheme and Kuruman Bulk Water Supply Scheme are under construction. Construction of two further bulk groundwater supply schemes will commence during the first quarter of 2016/17 to improve water supply in Vanwyksvlei and Loeriesfontein – towns which are severely affected by the current drought.

Construction of the Emergency Medical Services in Kimberley; Nursing College; student accommodation and Office Accommodation for the Department of Health is now at planning and design phase.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are pleased to report that the refurbishment of the Northern Cape Theatre is now 100% complete and will be reopened during the year. This theatre will be equipped with state of the art sound and lighting equipment so that we can again stage world class productions and offer performance opportunities for our local arts communities and schools to showcase their talents.

Steady progress is being made with the implementation of the Expanded Public Works programme in the Province. Thus far this year 3 546 work opportunities have been created by provincial departments and 511 by municipalities.

Due to the successful implementation of the Garies and Fraserburg brick making projects in the Namakwa region, the department implemented the same project in the John Taolo Gaetsewe district. The project provides bricks to the paving of internal streets in Mentu Village and TM Tlhabane road which form part of the Department's 'Rooting out the dust' programme of 2015/16 Financial Year. A total of 52 work opportunities have been created through this project.

Honourable Speaker

The Provincial Crime Prevention Strategy continues to act positively on the goal of fighting crime as is evident in the reduction of crimes relating to murder and sexual offences. Unfortunately, robbery with aggravating circumstances and property related crimes remains a concern.

We are working tirelessly with Municipalities to establish Community Safety Forums and Street Committees in an attempt to mobilise all our communities to act against crime to create safer communities.

We are developing structured relations with the Wanya Tsotsi Crime Fighting group to integrate their crime combating efforts and initiatives with that of the SAPS to ensure that we collectively contribute towards safer schools, safer homes and safer communities.

After the tragic death of the five children of Kakamas, the Department of Transport, Safety and liaison launched Safety Month and a Campaign focussing on creating a safer environment for children and the public at large. Through this campaign which will be rolled out to all Districts with the cooperation of all Local Municipalities, we will remove old appliances or any objects that may affect the safety of our children in communities.

We will be hosting a Crime Summit next month to strengthen working relationships with all stakeholders and develop a concrete Plan of Action to mobilise all communities to act against crime and reduce the levels of crime in all forms it may manifest itself.

The Northern Cape is challenged with the low number of traffic officers employed to police our roads. There continues, however, to be excellent progress in efforts to address road traffic offences.

In an effort to improve on revenue collection the Department OF Transport, Safety and Liaison is in the process of finalizing an agreement with the South African Post Office, which will be implemented soon, as sole agent to register and collect funds for the renewal of motor vehicle

licences.

The safe transport of learners to and from schools remains a priority. The Department Transport, Safety and Liaison is working to ensure that subsidized public transport is made available to all districts and that learners who reside more than 5km from school are provided with scholar transport.

Speaker

We often underestimate the vast resources bequeathed unto the province. I therefore wish to announce that the project to build a deep sea harbour on the Namaqualand West coast is progressing well and the feasibility study has been concluded. A site was identified 70km north of Port Nolloth called Boegoebaai to build a suitable economic viable port. A commodity mix study for the port is presently being undertaken.

Further studies will determine the inland route plan linking Upington to Boegoebaai; feasibility of such a rail line to match capacity to demand; aligning infrastructure to freight type and ensuring that network connectivity links complementary ports with inland connections.

The expansion of access to communication technology is also important and continuing swiftly in the Northern Cape. We have established the Provincial Broadband Steering Committee, while the immediate task is to ensure implementation of the first phase roll-out with the pilot targeted for Pixley ka Seme District Municipality. The site verification is currently under way.

One of our catalyst projects are the SKA which is a global mega science project, building an advanced radio-telescope facility linked to research infrastructure and high speed ICT capacity & provides an opportunity for Africa and South Africa to contribute towards advance science. It is a long-term project that has tremendous benefits for our youth.

The Sol Plaatje University is also one of our Strategic Integrated Projects in the Province. SPU is emerging from the first phase of its infrastructure development programme. They took substantial occupation of their new academic and residence buildings on the Central Campus. This constitutes the first phase of the R850m infrastructure development of the university. Phase 2 of the construction programme has already started and is intended for completion early

in 2017.

Sol Plaatje Enrolments in 2015 grew to 330 students, from the initial 124 students enrolled in 2014. This year a further 500 new students were enrolled bringing the total enrolment to around 800 students in all programmes.

We are very pleased that SPU students have sustained a high standard of academic performance. In 2015, 75% of students passed all their modules of study and the average course-pass rate was 87%. 90% of the 2015 students (300 out of 330) have returned to continue their studies this year. We believe that this remarkable academic performance derives from the commitment of our students together with the level and quality of our support and attention to the whole student experience at SPU.

Honourable Speaker

The Northern Cape has shown once again why it is rated amongst the best in the world. A recent inclusion of the Province in the Rough Guide's Top 10 regions to visit in 2016 proves the Northern Cape is a desirable holiday destination to both international and domestic tourists. The province has become a mecca for adventure lovers with incredible outdoor experiences enriched by the breath-taking scenic beauty. Awe-inspiring adventure activities such as river rafting on the Orange River, dune-boarding in the Kalahari desert, 4x4 adventures, quad biking, mountain biking, paragliding, abseiling, and cave diving are available throughout the year.

The anticipated Bloodhound run for 2016 has been postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. Albeit this all the education related projects are continuing across the province.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The transformation of the wildlife hunting industry is being accelerated through initiatives by the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation. The Northern Cape is one of the top three provinces for this industry and we have developed a draft policy on wildlife transformation

which is in the comments phase. This policy provides for Government and the private sector to support black farmers with land and game, while advocating that game removal programmes should be geared towards supporting emerging game farmers.

The objective of the project is to establish successful and sustainable wholly or majority owned PDI game breeders; game ranchers; hunting establishments; outfitters; and operators. Honourable Speaker, in the past two months the Department received registration applications from 11 Historically Disadvantaged Individuals property owners totalling 20 360 hectares for game farm permits. Our communities are eager to enter this industry as owners and not merely as workers.

Fellow citizens

Once more this year our people will be participating in Local Government Elections. The Local sphere of Government is important to advance people centred development. It is therefore important that we encourage our people to go out in numbers to register to vote during the first voter registration week next month and most important to vote during the 2016 local government elections.

In relation to advancing this people centred development at the local level our Province has embarked on the Back-to-Basics programme which is aimed at ensuring vibrant and responsive local government. We have also convened a successful local government summit in 2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The provision of housing remains a priority to this ANC led Government. We are targeting the most vulnerable in our communities and we will be prioritizing the provision of housing to the elderly, disabled, women and child headed households.

In our State of the Province Address last year we committed to deliver Sustainable Human Settlements to better the lives of the people of the Northern Cape. That included upgrading informal settlements; developing mining towns; developing integrated human settlements

through spatial planning; security of tenure; delivery of planned sites; provision of houses with basic services; building Breaking New Ground (BNG) houses, transfer of houses; provision of basic services; consumer education to owners of houses, as well as acquisition of new land.

So far the following have been achieved:

- Basic services have been provided to communities including informal settlements. Including providing basic water services to 97.8 percent of our population, sanitation to 75%, and electricity to 85% and refuse removal 64%.
- Of these 31.9% receive free basic water, 22.7% free basic sanitation, 25.3% free basic electricity and 26.3% free basic refuse removal. Indeed today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will definitely be better than today. We are indeed a caring government.

During April to December last year we managed to build 1085 houses and in that same period transfer 2085 properties.

The allocation for the Human Settlement Development Grant for the coming financial year is R401 million which includes about R87 million for the following Priority Mining towns: Ga-Segonyana, Kgatelopele, Tsantsabane and Gamagara. The Department will also focus on informal settlements upgrade programme for the coming financial year specifically on the provision of basic services.

The department will continue to complete all contractually committed projects in the project pipeline. The Department plans to deliver 5427 planned sites, and provide 2328 households with basic services, and build 2340 Breaking New Ground (BNG) houses. The transfer of property is a challenge for the province like any other, and we have recorded a backlog of 22 383. In order to meet this backlog the province has planned to transfer 6155 title deeds during 2016/2017.

In addition, the province has received a re-allocation of R100m from under spending provinces for the 2015/2016 financial year. The additional funding will be used for the construction of 550 top structures in the Sol Plaatje Municipal area.

Honourable Speaker

Addressing health issues in general and providing better health care services to the people of the Northern Cape is a key priority. This will be achieved through improvement of management and leadership of the Department, the implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI) and Primary health care re-engineering in all districts, reduction of HIV/AIDS, TB and maternal, child and infant mortality and morbidity, improved human resource management and health information management system.

As part of the Operation Phakisa: Ideal Clinic initiative to systematically improve efficiencies of Primary Health Care and quality of care in public clinics a status determination report has been conducted for sixty selected clinic facilities identified throughout the province. This development must be viewed in the context of the Re-engineering of Primary Health Care and the introduction of the National Health Insurance (NHI). The NHI pilot site in the Northern Cape is Pixley Ka Seme District.

The National Department of Health has committed to assist the department to purchase half of the medical equipment in order to ensure full Operationalization of these identified facilities and the provincial department to purchase the remaining equipment.

Our Province is part of the initiative of the National Department of Health which envisages that by 2020, 90% of people living with HIV will know their status, 90% of people who know their status are treated for HIV and 90 % of people who know their status will know their Viral load.

Honourable Speaker

As part of the strategy to intensify TB case finding and management, the Provincial Health Department has entered into partnership with nine mines in order to strengthen the provision of TB, HIV and STI services.

Honourable Members

I can report today that despite resource constraints, the department in its quest to improve

health care services in the province amongst others attained the following highlights during the past year and I will mention only a few:

- Introduction of Laparoscopic Surgery at Dr Harry Surtie Hospital that reduces the risk of post-operative complications associated with open surgery;
- Phase 1 of the Operationalisation of Kimberley Hospital Orthopaedic and Ophthalmology Centre (KHOOC) commenced on the 1st June 2015 and included the Ophthalmology and Orthopaedic specialised clinics;
- Kimberley Hospital received a donation of thirty one (31) wheelchairs from Airport Company of South Africa (ACSA) of which thirteen (13) were for children. An official ceremony was held on the 29 July 2015 where the wheel chairs were handed over and four (4) recipients were present to receive their chairs;
- So far the Department of health in the Northern Cape has sent 155 medical students to Cuba for training
- In this financial year, 30 medical students were recruited to be trained in the Cuban programme.
- The Kimberley Hospital Basic Life Support Training Centre was established and accredited by the Resuscitation Council of South Africa with five (5) Instructors successfully completing the training. The Training Centre achieved a Platinum status by the Assessor and the centre is also a first in the Public Service.

People of the Northern Cape, it is widely acknowledged that Education is the cornerstone of any growing economy, and as such we will continue to invest in the promotion and provision of quality Education to our children. In this regard, the provisioning of school infrastructure remains a high priority for the achievement of the provincial basic education objectives. The construction of 3 new schools in Jan Kempdorp, Roodepan and Homevale as well as 2 Hostels at Lesedi and Batlharo Tlhaping are set for completion in the first quarter of the 2016 financial year.

Furthermore, there is now not a single school in the province that does not have sanitation, electricity or water supply. We continue to upgrade these basic services to provide an enabling environment for the delivery of quality education.

However, the school infrastructure backlogs in the province are still a challenge. The province remains fully aligned with the National Departments Policy directive for the full eradication of all infrastructure backlogs by 2030. The province is still faced with the pressures of asbestos contamination at schools. About 80 of our schools are currently on the asbestos belt, a provincial challenge, now led by the Premier's Office.

Forging and strengthening of strategic collaboration with key stakeholders' remains a means to assisting government in realisation of provision of adequate school infrastructure. To this end, the Northern Cape Department of Education has put a particular focus on our learners with special needs and has concluded a strategic relationship with the Maphalane Disability Trust for the provisioning of Inclusive Education infrastructure.

One of our key priorities this year is the rollout of sufficient accommodation for our learner growth that we are experiencing in the province. Amongst others, a total of 85 additional classrooms, 12 specialist rooms, and 22 Grade R classrooms will be built. In addition to this will be routine maintenance is scheduled at 68 schools.

The rehabilitation of school hostels and the usage of alternative building material will be pursued to expedite delivery thus ensuring that teaching and learning occur in a physically conducive environment.

The provincial government continues to investment in infrastructure related ICT and GIS technologies. This investment enhances data driven school infrastructure planning and provisioning.

Honourable Speaker, in keeping with government's commitment to enhance social cohesion through promotion of indigenous African Languages, the Incremental Implementation of African Languages (IIAL) in selected schools is being strengthened.

We call on Parents and Guardians of all racial groups to henceforth seize this opportunity to ensure that our children are empowered to interface meaningfully in the two provincial official indigenous languages. Indeed, as Nelson Mandela said: **“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart”**.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) with emphasis on Grade R remains one of the key flagship programs of government. Major strides continue to be registered in both expansion of access and improving overall quality in the provision of Grade R within the province. Out of a total of 416 Public Primary Schools, 383 are offering Grade R.

Honourable Speaker

We are concerned by our matric pass rate which decreased to 69.4% in 2015/16 whilst emphasising, henceforth we will strive to reverse the trend, ensure that the province occupy a spot as part of the top three in so far as the matric results are concerned. In this regard we will convene an education summit which will involve all stakeholders to ensure that our schools become centres of excellence. This will be done in context of improving the quality of public education in all grades.

In an effort to contribute to the achievements of the priority towards a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path, as committed by government to support the NDP's vision of ensuring that by 2030, South Africa should have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes.

The province has partnered with the SETAs, TVETs Colleges and some employers which led to the successful implementation of the following programmes and projects:

- 308 Artisans registered for various trades;
- 2233 learners benefitting from Learnerships opportunities.
- 496 Learners placed in Work Integrated Learning programmes;
- 458 graduates placed in Internship programmes (Youth)

The Province also established and opened the Okiep Trade Test Centre in the Namaqua District. This initiative was made possible through collaboration and financial contributions made by Anglo America who contributed R14.6 million, Namaqua District Municipality R5 million and the National Skills Fund contribution towards the acquisition of the necessary machinery, tools and equipment necessary for the training and testing of students

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Department of Social Development continues to make inroads in tackling the many diverse

social ills which beset our communities from tackling the scourge of poverty, ensuring youth development, provision of services to the elderly and disabled, the off-set of crime and drug and substance abuse.

Approximately 2 444 zero-income families will be targeted this year with a basket of services, as per the War on Poverty programme. The department will also be targeting 35 000 households translated into 600 000 meals to address food insecurity as part of the Household Food and Nutritional Programme.

Ladies and Gentlemen

A new approach in the coordination and implementation of Sport and Recreation in the Province kicks off on 1 April when the Sport and Recreation Act of 2015 kicks off in the province.

This will have a profound impact on the Sport Academy programme in the Province in terms of providing services in all Districts and advancing scientific support services which assist athlete and club development in the expression of talent and advancing excellence in Sport and Recreation.

We are proud to announce that two (2) young athletic and vibrant girls from the Province have been selected to be part of the National U/17 Girls Football team for 2016 namely Precious Solomon and Refiloe Kubute.

In our efforts to advance sport and recreation development through the provision of the requisite infrastructure the Department constructed and launched five (5) sport and recreation Multi-Purpose facilities throughout the Province. We will continue to intensify this approach by ensuring that we provide our athletes, clubs and communities with these facilities. In 2016 we will construct another sport and recreation Multi-Purpose facility in Laxey within the John Taolo Gaetsewe District in response towards poverty eradication and rural development. An amount of R2.8 Million has been set aside for this project.

In the advancement of Social Cohesion we will continue to implement programmes and projects

that will contribute to the quality of life for the people of the Province in the form of Youth Camps, Big Walks, youth at Risk, Recreation, play in the parks, schools sport leagues, District and Provincial eliminations, National Championships, support to clubs and federations, capacity building of the sector and provision of equipment and attire.

The infrastructure development remains a high priority as construction continues in local communities. Handovers of libraries in Sternham, Churchill, Cassel, Olifantshoek (Welgelee), Danielskuil and Homevale are scheduled for 2016. The community of Lukhanyisweni in Phillipstown has joyfully received the opening of a dual service library which will serve as hub for development and learning.

We plan to construct community libraries in Kamassies, Askham, Carolusberg, Petrusville and Tsineng.

We continue with our project of reuniting our Heroes and Heroines with their loved ones by repatriating the remains of fallen cadres and reburying them close to their next of kin to resuscitate their memories and relive their gallant legacies within our communities.

We will be forging very close relationships with the Missing Persons Task Team located in the Department of Justice's TRC Unit, the National Department of Arts and Culture and other key stakeholders as we set about bringing this important chapter of our liberation struggle history. Among the projects we will be embarking on, is research into the burial of Kgosi Toto and his Son who are believed to be buried on Robben Island after the Langeberg war of 1897.

The Provincial Administration will also intensify our programme of honouring the heroes and heroines of our liberation struggle to the renaming of Government-owned buildings as well as street names and other features.

Financial management remains a focus area for the provincial government. We will continue to work towards improvements in delivering quality services to the people of the Northern Cape within the confines of the financial management prescripts in ensuring better transparency and accountability. We will intensify efforts that are currently under way in all Departments to root out corruption and wastage in the provincial administration.

The Province prides itself in the fact the Department of Education that has the largest budget in the Province showed major improvement. It obtained an unqualified audit opinion with findings after years of being in the qualified category.

The Provincial departments maintained the trend of having no audit disclaimers. Auditor general expressed major improvements in the performance reports of departments. This is very important as good performance reports have a correlation with the betterment of service delivery.

In audit outcomes that regressed, there were minimal findings. In departments that were qualified, qualification findings decreased.

We continuously strive for improvement of audit outcomes in local government through monitoring mechanisms. Stakeholders such as COGHSTA, Provincial Treasury, OTP, SALGA and others are continuously coordinating interventions to local government in financial management in order to improve audit outcomes. We are very proud that Sol Plaatje municipality, the single biggest municipality in the province, which received a financially unqualified audit in the last 2014/15 cycle. This is a major achievement after 12 years of successive audit disclaimers (the worst audit one can get) and 3 years of qualified audit outcomes. We wish to congratulate Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has won the 2015 Southern African Institute of Government Auditors annual reporting awards.

As the Executive, we continue with our oversight and regular monitoring exercises to assess progress on the resolutions made on improving the audit outcomes.

To stimulate local economies, Provincial Treasury is leading an ongoing campaign to assist departments to pay creditors within thirty (30) days through monthly compliance returns. Regular follow ups are undertaken in those returns. The Executive council is regularly assessed on progress on the interventions by Treasury on behalf of Provincial government to ensure that departments comply with the 30 day payment.

Citizens of the Northern Cape, as I conclude allow me to re-echo the remarks of our most revered Father, Tata Madiba, and say

“The past is our lesson. The present our gift. The future our motivation.”

Working together we can do more to move South Africa forward through a radical economic transformation programme.

The Northern Cape, its growth, its economy and its wellbeing is in good hands. We have a capable and dynamic Provincial Executive that will continue to dedicate their entire being to ensure that every citizen of this glorious Province has that better life they want and deserve.

I thank you all.