

NORTH WEST STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS

BY

PREMIER LAZARUS KAGISO MOKGOSI

NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

27 FEBRUARY 2025

09:00

Baagi ba porofense ya North West,
Madame Speaker, the Honourable Desbo Mohono,
Deputy Speaker, Honourable Collen Maine,
Chief Whip of the majority party, Honourable Motlalepula Rosho,
Honourable Members of the Executive Council,
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature,
Honourable Members of Parliament present here today,
Our permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces,
The Judge President of the North West Division of the High Court,
Judge Ronald
Hendricks,
Chairperson of SALGA, Councillor Khumalo Molefe,
Chairperson of the House of Traditional and Khoi-SAN Leaders,
Kgosi Thari Maotwe,
Executive Mayors and Mayors of North West Municipalities,
Leaders of Faith-Based Organizations, Trade Unions and Civil
Society,

Vice Chancellor of the North West University, Professor Bismark Tyobeka

Director General in the Office of the Premier, Mr. Paul Mogotlhe,

Head of Departments and CEOs of Public Entities,

Acting Provincial Commissioner of the SA Police Service, Major General Patrick Asaneng

Heads of our Security Services,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

My beautiful wife, Ipeleng Mokgosi and three children, Kagiso, Nthabiseng and Oratile,

Invited guests,

Members of the media,

Fellow compatriots,

Hon Speaker, I am indeed privileged and honoured to stand before this house to present the 2025 State of the Province Address to the people of the North West.

This State of the Province Address sets the tone for the implementation of the **Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP-2025-2030)** in the next five years.

The MTDP is anchored on three strategic priorities: (i) driving inclusive growth and creating jobs, (ii) reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living as well as (iii) building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

Delivering the State of the Nation Address, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa, maintained, to achieve these objectives, a government that works for the people is needed.

“We need a state that is capable and competent, underpinned by a professional public service. South Africans want a state that treats all people with dignity, humility and respect. A state with leaders who are prepared to serve our people with complete dedication, and public servants who are ethical, skilled and properly qualified”.

Hon Members, the 2025 State of the Province Address is a culmination of a broader consultative process with various stakeholders to find consensus on matters of socio-economic concern confronting the province.

I need to out rightly indicate that as a province we are concerned about the high levels of unemployment and poverty confronting our communities.

We are a province endowed with natural resources such as minerals and weather conditions that permit a conducive environment for agriculture to thrive as well as majestic tourist attraction sites that we must exploit to create economic opportunities for our people.

Bagaetsho, the recent Quarterly Labour Force Survey, where our province shed twenty thousand jobs, putting the expanded unemployment rate at fifty-two percent, must galvanize and unite all of us to tackle these issues, head on!

Therefore, aggressive measures are needed to find solutions to these challenges.

Mmusakgotla, re busa mo dinakong tse di thata!

Ka jalo ke rata go dirisa tshono e, go ikuela, ko magosing, baruti, balemi-rui, ditheo tsa poraefete le baagi ka kakaretso go jara joko e, le rona!

Hon Speaker, this SOPA comes two days after we hosted the memorial lecture of Aziz Pahad.

A panel of experts comprising of the wife to Aziz Pahad, Professor Angina Parekh Pahad, Vice-Chancellor of the North West University, Professor Bismarck Tyobeka, and Minister of International Relations in Botswana, Dr Phenyo Butale gave an account on the life and times of Dr Pahad.

Aziz Pahad, an activist, diplomat and native of our beloved province was born in Schweizer Reneke on 25 December 1940 and dedicated his entire life in the struggle for liberation and the creation of a **united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic state.**

Hon Members, I have no doubt that Dr Pahad would have frowned at the recent misinformation peddled by some sectors of our population to cause harm and disunity.

As a nation we have withered many storms and we are a resilient people, and no hegemon must claim authority over our domestic and foreign policies.

Hon Members, the presentation of this State of the Province Address also coincides with the 70th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter as well as the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati Centenary.

Ruth Segomotsi Mompati was born on 14 September 1925 in the small village of Tlapeng in Ganyesa, now Kagisano Molopo Local Municipality.

She was part of the defiance campaign of the 1950s and worked closely with Lillian Ngoyi, Sophie De Bruyn and Helen Joseph to organise the historic women's march to the Union Buildings.

She was one of the first women to go into exile to join Mkhonto We Sizwe, the military wing of the African National Congress, after which she received military training in the Soviet Union.

African American feminist and academic, Angela Davis opines;

“Black women were equal to their men in the oppression suffered; they were their men’s social equals within the slave community; and they resisted slavery with a passion equal to their men.”

Similarly, Mama Ruta epitomized the struggle faced by many women who fought side by side with their male contemporaries such as Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu in dismantling Apartheid and its draconian laws.

It is through the efforts of people like Mama Ruta that today we celebrate and congratulate **Ms Lerato Mataboge** who was born in Rustenburg and recently appointed as African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy.

As Maya Angelou explains; “Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women.”

Bagaetsho, through the Freedom Charter, Mama Ruta envisioned a country and a nation centered on democratic values, social justice and to improve the quality of life of all citizens.

This encapsulates the preamble of our Constitution, which further impresses upon us to heal the divisions of the past through redress and equitable distribution of resources.

Thirty years later, we continue to draw lessons from Mama Ruta and many other heroes and heroines of our revolutionary course to drive a developmental trajectory aimed at achieving a **National Democratic Revolution**.

Later this year we will host a series of activities aimed at preserving her legacy and the contribution of the people of the North West in the fight against Colonial-Apartheid rule.

Hon Speaker, in the last few days, our province, like many other parts of the country, had to grapple with inclement weather conditions that have caused widespread damage to households and infrastructure in many communities.

We appreciate the efforts of good Samaritans such as Gift of the Givers and many others who extended a helping hand to many of our residents whose livelihoods were severely affected by disruptive rains and floods.

The Provincial Disaster Management team is hard at work to profile all the affected areas and to develop a remedial action plan for intervention.

Priority will be given to vulnerable groups such as child-headed households, the elderly and people with disabilities.

These adverse weather conditions have become a frequent phenomenon due to climate change.

This has compelled the government to reprioritize its budget to respond to this calamity, putting a strain on our already limited resources.

Mmusakgotla, **seboba re bata sa mokwatla sa mpa re a mpampetsa.**

Re tsa tshono e, go itsise baagi ba porofense ya rona gore re le khuduthamaga ya puso re samagane le go fetola melao le melawana e maikaelelo a yona e leng go netefatsa gore tekanyetso kabo ya rona e ungwela baagi ba porofense ka bontsi.

The Provincial Treasury will be seized with the responsibility to develop a framework and regulations that speaks to localization through Supply Chain Management Policies related to the new Public Procurement Act without obstructing the country's Constitutional imperatives.

Kgabutle ga a ke a feta gaabo a re go tlala.

Part of our poverty alleviation programmes in rural communities will include working hand in glove with the North West House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders under the stewardship of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development through Agri-hubs in collaboration with the North West University, Agriculture Research Council, and other stakeholders.

This objective is primarily aimed at driving agricultural development to empower emerging commercial farmers while contributing to sustainable economic growth to address high poverty levels at rural communities and in district municipalities such as Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and Ngaka Modiri Molema.

On Monday next week, I will be launching a flagship programme of this initiative at the University's Molelwane farm in Mahikeng.

In the next financial year, we will launch the “**Ntime o Mphele Ngwana Poverty Alleviation Programme**”, which is centred on addressing hunger and starvation amongst children and youth in economically depressed communities.

I want to urge various non-governmental organisations and the private sector to partner with us in executing this initiative.

Hon Speaker, we were the first province to introduce breakfast in three hundred schools across the province to cushion learners in impoverished communities against high poverty levels in their communities through the **National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)**.

We can report to the people of the North West that breakfast will now be rolled out to cover all secondary schools while the number of primary schools benefiting from this initiative will be increased from **two hundred and seventy-two** to **three hundred and fifty**.

This means that Government will serve two meals per day in these schools.

This includes Bonwakgogo Primary School in Chaneng in Rustenburg, Gaetsho Secondary School in Boikhutso, Ditsobotla, Saruchera Primary School in Huhudi and Mmokeng Secondary School in Kanana, Orkney.

For the next financial year, more than **six hundred and ninety million rands** will be allocated to NSNP to feed more than seven hundred fifty thousand learners in more than one thousand three hundred schools.

The monthly stipend that we pay to food handlers will be increased to **two thousand one hundred and ninety rands**.

Hon Speaker, through the ILIMA/Letsema Programme and the Presidential Employment Stimulus we are supporting over **five thousand** subsistence farmers in ensuring that no households in the province go to bed hungry.

Sixty million rands has been set aside for the successful implementation of these programmes.

An additional **eighty million rands** of conditional grants will support farming communities in increasing food production across the province.

Bagaetsho, the resuscitation of the Taung irrigation scheme is in full swing following our ongoing discussions and consultations with Bogosi and other key stakeholders.

The collaborative work between the Vaalharts Water Users Association, the Department of Water and Sanitation and the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipality will result in an

increase of water supply to households in areas such as Taung, Pudimoe and Huhudi.

Plans are already afoot to also revitalise the Disaneng, Molatedi, Hartebees and Mooibank Irrigation Schemes.

In giving impetus to these plans, we will host a two-day Irrigation Symposium on the 05 and 06 March 2025 to develop a framework as well as an implementation plan to drive agricultural production in rural and periphery communities.

Honourable Speaker, restoring the dignity of our people remains one of the apex priorities of this government. To date over **six thousand hectares** of land have been restored to communities and rightful owners.

Through this programme **R4,5 billion** was spent on land acquisition with over **R430 million** paid as development grants.

This includes the **Bo-Moshe Communal Property Association**, where over six hundred and seventy hectares of land valued at more than **380 million rands** was restored to the community, which produces berries for export to international markets.

This restoration has culminated in the investment of more than **forty million rands** and has created close to **five thousand** seasonal jobs and **thirty-four** permanent jobs for locals.

Honourable Speaker, the roll out of road infrastructure projects is in line with our rural development strategy.

In the current financial year, **R429 million** was spent on rural and small towns to link rural and farming communities with the province's economic hubs.

These includes the upgrading of the Vragas to Madinonyane road, two roads in Maubane, the special maintenance of Schweitzer-Reneke to Christiana and Ottosdal to Delareyville roads as well as the rehabilitation of the Hartbeesfontein to Ottosdal road.

We take this opportunity to appreciate the collaborative efforts undertaken by the Provincial Government with mining houses to address road infrastructure backlogs in the province.

Subsequent to this, the Impala Bafokeng Resources has funded the rehabilitation of roads at Mafenya, Chaneng and Robega villages at a cost of **R39 million**.

The 10km project was completed in June last year.

The recent investment of **R160 million** by the Anglo American Amandabult Complex gives credence to our ongoing efforts to foster relations with the private sector to address road infrastructure backlogs in the province.

The communities of Manamakgoteng, Sandfontein Dikweipi, Segakwaneng and Ramokokastad in the Moses Kotane Local Municipality will benefit from the 15km roads upgrade due to be completed in October this year.

The company has further pledged to fund a road linking Limpopo and the North West via Ramokokastad at an estimated cost of **R120 million**.

We are hopeful that this pledge will be finalised and signed before the end of the current calendar year to commission the project for design and construction.

All these initiatives amount to more than **three hundred million rands** worth of investment in road infrastructure.

And today, we are joined by **Mrs Ethen Makgasane, Mr Thabo Moyo, Mr Keaitumela Letebele** who are executives from the aforementioned mining companies.

Kgosi Thari Maotwe we have heard the cries of the people of Ward 1 and 2, in the Moses Kotane Local Municipality over the lack of a trafficable road between Dwarsberg and Pachsdraai.

We have appointed consultants to commence with various investigations for urgent intervention to construct a new **twenty-seven-kilometre** tarred road.

Hon Speaker, phase 2 of Nelson Mandela Road in Mahikeng will commence in the next financial year and will entail stormwater construction, rehabilitation of the road, and non-motorized transportation infrastructure.

This is aimed at alleviating the flooding of the road.

Hon Speaker, we have so far garnered investments of **nine billion rands** by Harmony Gold and China Africa Precious Metals in the City of Matlosana Local Municipality. These investments have collectively created and preserved **ten thousand jobs**.

The Mekgareng Smart City project, which is a collaborative development initiative between the North West and Gauteng, coordinated by the national Department of Human Settlements, will create **20 000** jobs for the people of Madibeng Local Municipality.

The project is estimated to attract investments of between **ten and twenty-five billion rands**.

Hon Speaker, we have allocated **twenty-four million rands** to establish a Development Fund to accelerate development initiatives across the province, with a special focus to stimulate economic growth and creating sustainable job opportunities.

Hon Members, the work of the Economic and Investment Advisory Council is beginning to yield desired results.

The Council is responsible for assisting the province to drive its industrialization programme, lure investments and see to the full

implementation of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS).

We envisage to establish a Regional Research, Innovation and Development Office, which will be in, and coordinated by, the Office of the Premier with a specific focus on Science, Technology and Engineering.

Hon Members, we have also partnered with the South African Defence Force (SANDF) and Phila Jordan Academy (Pty) Ltd to provide training opportunities to **3000** beneficiaries, in artisanal and tooling programmes, through the South African National Service Institute (SANSI) Pilot Programme, which is a SANDF-led National Youth Service (NYS) programme.

This initiative is aimed at providing training skills programmes, through refurbishment of government buildings by young people, as well as providing incubation, mentorship, and market access support to youth-led enterprises.

Furthermore, more than **one thousand two hundred** young people are participating in a National Youth Service programme at the Departments of Public Works and Roads, Human Settlements, Social Development, and Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation.

In addition to the aforementioned figure, a further **seven thousand** young people were provided with skills to enter the job market and placed in various job opportunities.

Moreover, more than **five thousand** youth owned enterprises were supported with financial and non-financial business development interventions by supporting their entrepreneurial skills through the NYDA Grant Programme.

Hon Speaker, more than **3000** young people have been exposed to various employment opportunities as ambassadors of One Stop Centres, SMME development through the Empowerment Fund and as tourism monitors across the province.

Our province will collaborate with the Department of Small Business Development to accelerate government programs to revitalise village and township economies.

As a province, we will drive this partnership through the North West Development Corporation and relevant national entities to realize this objective.

Hon Speaker, the VT Sifora Provincial Bursary Scheme has been allocated **ten million rands** to benefit students from poor and missing middle households, to enroll at various institutions of higher learning across the country.

Moreover, **thirty-one** unemployed young people from across the North West were recruited into the Nelson Mandela Fidel Castro (NMFC) Medical Programme and to pursue their medical studies in Cuba.

They include Matshetshe Rethabile of Ntsweletsoku in Zeerust, Motsokotsi Pholoho of Marikana West in Rustenburg and Mohlala Onthatile of Mathibestad.

In addition to this we have absorbed **one hundred and fifty-seven** unemployed medical officers, who completed community service between January and July 2024.

One hundred and twenty-seven unemployed bursary and non-bursary holders will be offered full-time employment and sessional posts until availability of funded vacant posts.

We will continue to advertise and fill vacant and funded health professionals posts to ensure that adequate service delivery in our facilities.

Hon Members, our job creation initiatives will include the massification of public employment programmes such as the Expanded Public Works, Community Health Workers, Community Works and Labour Activation Programmes.

This will cumulatively create more than **one hundred and fifty thousand** job opportunities in the aforementioned programmes in the next five years, targeted at women, youth and persons with disabilities.

To date, over **nine thousand** people are benefitting from EPWP, with over **six thousand** of them being young people.

Hon Members, we are committed to building state capacity through infrastructure development.

To this end, various infrastructure projects amounting to **R1,4 billion** were implemented to create a conducive environment for learning and teaching in our schools.

This has enabled the North West to be one of the best performing provinces, obtaining fourth position with a pass rate of **87 percent** in the 2024 National Senior Certificate examinations.

The construction of Mokala Primary, Tlakgameng Primary, Chaneng Primary, Gasetisiewe Secondary, Tshedimoso Primary, Kgosi Shope, and Sarafina Secondary speaks to our ongoing efforts to put emphasis on foundational education, which has given impetus to the results we see today.

Collectively, these schools have created more than four thousand two hundred jobs during their construction.

The construction of over **twenty** schools in the next five years will create an additional **fifteen thousand** jobs.

They include Tlamelang Special School, Rysmierbult Mega Farm School, phase four of the Lykso Intermediate School and the Dinokana Autism School, to ensure that designated and marginalized communities have access to quality education as well.

We have rolled out the Early Childhood Development programme at all our primary schools, except eight.

Hon Speaker, we applaud Hoerskool Swartruggens who voluntarily indicated their readiness, in line with the BELA Act, to admit learners who are not first language Afrikaans-speaking.

Bagaetsho, we have established a database of scholar transport service providers, who are able to immediately replace non-performing service providers without affecting and infringing on educational activities of learners.

Hon Speaker, in November last year, **eighty-four-year-old** Lydia Mere became the owner of a newly built house by government.

As tears were running down her face during this important occasion, she had this to say:

“This is one of the best days of my life, I was beginning to worry that I may depart from this world without having a proper house, this is a legacy for my children.”

Hon Members, Ms Mere's story sums up our ongoing efforts to provide shelter to all our people.

Construction of a new house for **the sixteen member Modise family of Ramatlabama Six Hundred** who lived in a two roomed shack has commenced.

During our visit to the village through our Thuntsha Lerole Programme, we committed to Kgosi Gobusamang Shole to build **eighty-four** houses for qualifying residents.

We can report to Kgosi and the people of Ramatlabama that we have fulfilled our promise to build houses for the less privileged.

Hon Speaker, in the next financial year, we will build **three thousand five hundred and fifty-five** houses across the province which will include blocked projects, first home finance and the asbestos removal programme.

The target for catalytic projects for the current financial year was 249 units at more than **eighty-two million rands** and by the end of the last quarter, we had delivered 268 units and for the next

financial year, we are intending to deliver 500 units in mining towns, at a cost of **R90,5 million**.

Honourable Speaker, the Marang Estate Project at Unit 3 in Mahikeng is a blocked social housing project that was planned to have **two thousand four hundred** units and was supposed to be implemented by the Social Housing Regulatory Authority.

However, the project ground to a halt due to findings of irregular sale of land by the Mahikeng Local Municipality to the developer as well as misappropriation and mismanagement of the approved project budget.

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the National Treasury, and the Hawks are now jointly conducting criminal investigations and the preservation of the site.

The NPA secured a forfeiture order from the court, which mandated consultation with an enforcement officer and National Treasury to transfer specific properties to entities such as the North West Department of Human Settlements, the Mahikeng Local Municipality, or the Social Housing Regulatory Authority.

The land parcels and the incomplete Marang project are currently under the control of a Curator. This milestone is significant in the province unlocking this flagship project which has been blocked for more than ten years.

We will continue with engagements with the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA) to ensure that the project is resuscitated, in line with our commitment to complete all incomplete housing structures.

Bagaetsho, re utwile selelo sa baagi ba Ramosadi mo masepaleng wa Mahikeng morago ga go thubega ga peipe ya kgelelo leswe.

The construction of a **one hundred and one-million-rands** new sewer pipe will start in earnest following the introduction of a contractor to the community two weeks ago.

Various water and sanitation projects are at different stages of construction and completion in Moretele, Moses Kotane, Ramotshere Moiloa, Mamusa, and Naledi Local Municipalities with a total budget of **four hundred and fifty million rands**.

This includes the construction of a pipeline from Bloemhof Dam to Mamusa Local Municipality due to be completed in June this year.

Several more projects of a similar kind are underway in Bodibe, Ramosadi, Signal Hill and Lobatla among others.

Sixty-five million rands will be spent in finishing incomplete water projects in Ntsweletsoku, Dithakong and Deelpan, among others.

Construction of phase two of the Pilanesberg Water Augmentation project is continuing and will alleviate provision of water challenges in Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality.

Hon Speaker, in the last two years, we embarked on a massive investment drive initiative which culminated in hosting two investment conferences, as well as our international trip to the Henan Province of China and South Korea.

We are excited to announce that the interest to invest in the logistics hub to revitalize the George Dick Montshioa Airport is back, following our concerted investment drive.

This investment is in the region of **one hundred and seventy-six million rands**.

We are cognisant of the potential of both the Pilanesberg and George Dick Montshioa Airports and we have since issued a Request for Proposals (RFPs) to resuscitate and commercialise them.

A successful bidder for the running of the two Airports will be appointed before the end of the current financial year.

Honourable Speaker, the NTI remains a critical entity of the state through the provision of efficient and safe transport solutions to South Africans, who rely on public transport to access economic hubs and markets, social institutions and the broader economic opportunities.

It was placed under business rescue and a Business Rescue Practitioner (BRP) was appointed but in the process, the BRP failed to resuscitate the NTI, and we went to court to have him removed.

The court ruled in our favour, but the victory was short lived as the BRP has appealed that ruling.

We are awaiting finality on this matter as we are convinced that the current BRP is not fit to resuscitate the NTI.

We have appointed a replacement operator in Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati, and commuter bus services have resumed.

In Ngaka Modiri Molema, commuter bus services have collapsed due to the inefficiencies by the service provider.

Government is currently finalising a procurement process to appoint a replacement operator to start in April this year.

Hon Members, earlier this month, I attended the Africa Mining Indaba in Cape Town with members of the Economic and Investment Advisory Council.

Part of promoting investments in mining, which is one of the key economic drivers in the North West, will be to lead a delegation to this Indaba next year to promote the province to access the full cycle of the mining value chain.

Furthermore, we aim to bring back the Provincial Mining Investment Summit in close collaboration with the Department of Minerals and Petroleum Resources.

Hon Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the South African Police Service, for their ongoing efforts in halting illegal mining activities in our province.

Through **Operation Vala Umgodi**, police managed to thwart all illegal mining activities in Stilfontein, in the City of Matlosana Local Municipality.

Our crime combatting initiatives have proven effective regarding stock theft, gangsterism, gender-based violence, robberies and illicit mining, among others.

The Pudimoe Specialized Stock Theft Unit was able to reduce incidences of stock theft in the Greater Taung Local Municipality and surrounding areas.

This has been achieved through the implementation of the Rural Safety Strategy.

The establishment of the Anti-Gang Unit in Dr Kenneth Kaunda District has helped to reduce contact crimes.

The seventh administration is committed to nip corruption and malfeasance in the bud, by working with all law enforcement agencies such the Hawks, SIU, Asset Forfeiture Unit and Chapter 9 institutions.

I have received reports from law enforcement agencies on cases that are under investigation and some high-profile cases that are before the courts.

To extrapolate further on this, we have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the SIU to investigate alleged corruption and related cases in our State-owned Entities. **This will not be limited to these entities only.**

Hon Speaker, we remain committed to promoting clean governance, eliminating malfeasance, and preventing financial leakages, ensuring that scarce financial resources are effectively utilised to benefit the residents of our province.

I am happy to share that we have seen notable improvements in the audit outcomes, which provides a strong foundation for further progress.

We are proud to report that we achieved two clean audits at Provincial Treasury and the Department of Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation, eight unqualified audit outcomes and one qualified audit opinion with less material findings at the Department of Education.

This marks a significant milestone in our efforts to enhance accountability and transparency.

The implementation of the Local Government Turnaround Strategy and Financial Recovery Plan is gaining traction and there has been relative improvement in the audit outcomes of some of our municipalities.

These includes provision of services through the roll-out of the Accelerated Service Delivery Programme, called Thuntsha Lerole Reloaded.

The collaboration with the National Treasury through mandatory interventions has enabled us to implement financial recovery plans as well as skills audit, resulting in improved audit outcomes in our municipalities, and in particular, Dr Kenneth Kaunda and Bojanala Platinum District Municipalities as well as the Moretele Local Municipality.

Hon Speaker, the equitable distribution of fiscal resources is essential in bridging the gap between our rural and urban areas and ensuring that all regions can grow and thrive.

Currently, the Equitable Share formula that guides the allocation of fiscal resources is under review.

A Technical Committee on Finance (TCF) has established a dedicated task team to investigate this formula and ensure that it accurately reflects the developmental needs of rural Provinces such as the North West.

As a province, we lobbied strongly for this and we will be making submissions in this regard.

Hon Speaker, we are on track to turn around the current state of the North West Parks and Tourism Board.

We must reposition and revitalize the entity to allow it to derive adequate revenue to sustain some of its affairs and to adequately manage the State Protected Areas and biodiversity network.

We will continue to implement cost containment measures and introduce additional measures where possible, while identifying partnerships and stakeholders to assist in achieving the entity's legislative mandate.

Among the most immediate plans is to invest in upgrading and maintaining the Protected Areas Network Infrastructure.

We will also establish Public-Private Partnerships to fund infrastructure restoration and modernization within Protected Areas.

This includes, among others, the upgrading of the Kgaswane National Botanical Garden that will be made possible by the Glencore R15 million fund.

We will issue Expressions of Interest for the management and commercialization of non-viable parks.

Hon Speaker, we have conducted investigations into the traditional leadership disputes of the Banogeng, Bakubung Ba Ratheo and the Bakwena Ba Mmatau.

The outcomes of these investigations will be made public in due course.

The investigative committees into the Bahurutshe boo Manyane, Bahurutshe boo Moiloa and the Bakwena Ba Mogopa disputes will start soon.

We have handed over the last batch of 17 vehicles to Dikgosi to help them carry out their statutory and customary duties.

We will make funding available to establish a Commission of Inquiry to probe the Barolong boo Ratlou boo Moshoeite traditional leadership dispute as directed by the Mahikeng High Court, so that we do not find ourselves in contempt of court.

We are reviewing policies on traditional authorities in the province which will result in the development of one policy for traditional authorities. This support will include coronation, burials and tools of trade.

Hon Speaker, the process to build new and refurbish old clinics is on track and in the current financial year we opened three new clinics in Ngaka Modiri Molema and the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, as well as a bulk pharmacy in Ventersdorp and the Phokeng Forensic Mortuary.

Added to this, we given dilapidated clinics in Uitkyk, Magogoe, Koffiekraal, Mothanthanyaneng, Shiela, Cokonyane, Lobatla, Logageng, Kabe, Matshepe and Welverdiend a facelift.

All these clinics will be officially opened this year.

We have spent **seventy-six million rands** to buy 75 red fleet vehicles, which are **thirty-nine** planned patient transport vehicles and **thirty-five** ambulances, for distribution across the province and will continue to inject new vehicles into our health system.

For the current financial year, we received an allocation through the NHI grant that was used to expand Health Care Services Benefits, through strategic purchasing of services from health care providers and strengthening mental health care delivery in primary health care and community-based facilities.

Hon Speaker, we congratulate the Klerksdorp/Tshepong Hospital Complex for successfully performing the first ever off pump cardiac bypass surgery for two patients at the newly built catheterization laboratory at Tshepong, supported by a team from India and Johannesburg's Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital.

Our gratitude also goes to the Job Shimankane Tabane Hospital for a successful cancer operation, for tumor evacuation removal in conjunction with the private facilities.

Hon Speaker, this demonstrates the capacity of the State to ensure the rollout of adequate provision of quality primary and tertiary health care services in our facilities for the benefit of the poor and economically disenfranchised.

Hon Speaker, we continue to implement substance abuse prevention and early intervention programmes amongst children and youth in schools and in partnership with community-based organisations and other stakeholders.

We are mitigating the impact of substance abuse by providing psychosocial support, treatment, rehabilitation services at the JB Marks Treatment Centre while the Taung Treatment Centre provides outpatient, community-based and after care programmes and interventions in collaboration with Department of Health. The in-patient treatment section will be operational this year.

Hon Members, through the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) programme, over **ten thousand eight hundred** people have received food parcels, while over **six thousand seven hundred** received dignity packs. They include needy families, child-headed households, people with disabilities, the homeless as well as people affected by disasters.

We have established three fully functioning shelters for GBV victims in Vryburg, Mahikeng and Rustenburg. We will open another shelter in Potchefstroom this year, in our fight against the scourge of gender-based violence.

Hon Speaker, one of our Child and Youth care centres has been home to 26 undocumented, unaccompanied and migrant children who were rescued at the recent illegal mining episode in Stilfontein. We are working on their repatriation and reunification with their families in their countries of origin.

Hon Speaker, we have introduced a flagship programme called **'Re thuse, Re go Thuse'** with the aim of taking Social Development services to communities at a much faster pace.

The MEC for Social Development will provide more details on the programme when tabling the Department's Budget Vote.

Hon Members, **"the doors of learning and culture shall be open"** and in living up to this commitment by our forebears, we are on course to deliver libraries in Wolmaransstad, Matlosana, Coverdale/Boitumelong and Bodibe. The Wolmaransstad library is almost complete and will be opened soon, while a site has been allocated for construction in Ganyesa, and work will commence very soon there.

For Matlosana, Coverdale/Boitumelong and Bodibe, we are still at the design stage and progress will be provided in due course.

Hon Speaker, we have completed refurbishments at the Moshana Cultural Village.

The Matloding and Kudungwane Cultural Villages. will be completed by the end of next month, while the Tseoge and Sione Cultural villages will be re-prioritized for the 2025/2026 financial year.

Furthermore, we have set aside **four million rands** to refurbish the Mahikeng Office of the Mmabana Arts, Culture and Sports Foundation.

Hon Speaker, we recently repatriated the remains of the late liberation struggle hero Aaron Tiro, for reburial at Lekubu village in Ramotshere Moiloa.

His spirit shall live forever and serve as a reminder of the sacrifices endured in the course for liberation.

Our special thanks go to the ordinary peoples of **Zambia** who hosted Aaron Tiro and many of our compatriots and leaders.

They delayed the enjoyment of the benefits of their freedoms so that our country can be free.

In his memory we will continue to forge ahead with our national democratic project.

For a revolution, as Fidel Castro once remarked, **“is not a bed of roses. A revolution is a struggle between the future and the past”**.

Ours is a skewed past centred on exploitation, exclusion and oppression but we remain hopeful about the socio-economic prospects of our province, and we are unflinching on our commitment to create a better life of all, irrespective of race, class, gender or creed.

**I thank you! Baie dankie! Ndiyabulela! Ke a leboga
Bagaetsho!**