

**STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE. E.S. MAGASHULE
PREMIER OF THE FREE STATE PROVINCE**

21 FEBRUARY 2017

Speaker of the Free State Legislature

Honourable Members of the Executive Council and Legislature

Honourable Members of the National Assembly and the NCOP

Honourable Judge President and esteemed members of the Judiciary

Leaders of the African National Congress and the Alliance

The Veterans and Stalwarts of our struggle

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

South African Ambassador to Turkey, His Excellency Mr. Pule Malefane and Mrs. O Malefane

The Ambassador of the Russian Federation to South Africa, His Excellency Mr. Mikhail Petrakov and Mrs. Irina Petrakov

The Ambassador of the Republic of Germany to South Africa, Minister Councillor Joots Schmallenbach

The Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to South Africa, His Excellency Andrei Molchan and Mr. Stanislav Ventel

The Consul General of the People's Republic of China to South Africa, His Excellency Mr. Ruan Ping

The Ambassador of the Republic of Haiti to South Africa, His Excellency Mr. Jerry Baril

The leadership of SALGA and the leadership of our municipalities

The Provincial Commissioner of the SAPS, Lieutenant-General Lebeoana Tsumane

Modulasetulo wa Ntlo ya Marena, Morena Ledika Moloji le marena kaofela

Rector of the Bahcesehir University in Turkey, Professor Senay Yalcin and Dr. Sibel Baykut

Members of the Tambo family and all our special guests

Members of Civil and Faith Based Organizations

Comrades, Compatriots and Friends

Viewers and listeners

Honourable Speaker, I am indeed humbled to table the 2017 State of the Province Address, during the year when our struggle hero, President Oliver Reginald Tambo, would have been 100 years old, had he lived on.

This State of the Province Address shall serve as an account of how we, the Free State province, have performed in the implementation of the legacy of President OR Tambo. Not only was President OR the glue that kept the ANC together for 30 years during exile, he was responsible to lead the ANC into a formidable, militant movement ready to defeat the Apartheid system.

This year, The Year of Oliver Reginald Tambo, we honour an activist and a volunteer, whose participation in the people's struggle was not motivated by the desire for personal enrichment, but for the good of the people as a whole.

President OR Tambo was an icon who was opposed to a South Africa divided along racial, gender and ethnic lines. He was a unifier who understood the importance of unity in the struggle for freedom.

We join the President of the country who will today preside over the 100 years commemoration of the sinking of the SS Mendi Vessel, which was carrying a total of **646 men**, most of which were members of the South African Native Labour Corps. In the past, our history did not acknowledge the role played by black people in colonial wars. We honour these fallen heroes.

Ma-Afrika Borwa, na le sa hopola hore re tswa kae...? Moo re leng teng kajeno ha re a fihla feela re thella. Re kopane le mathata, ra kopana le maima, ra tlameha ho suthisa majwe.

Hopola mona;

- **Nakong e fetileng basadi ba ne ba pepela malapeng, mme kajeno ba pepela dipetlele.**
- **Kajeno bana ba rona ba bananyana ba fumana ente ya ho thibela mofetshe wa molomo wa popelo.**
- **Kajeno dipetleleng tsa mmuso batho ba fumana kalafo ya mahala.**

Mapolasing, batho ba ne ba tlangwa ka ankoroto. Ba patalwa ka mokotla wa phofo, ha ba bang ba ne ba patalwa ka veini.

Na o sa hopola ka Sasolburg, moo lekgowa le ileng la hula motho ka vene a mo tlamelletse kamorao...? Na o sa holopla. Fouriesburg, rapolasi o ile a thunya monna pela mosadi wa hae, kamora moo a thula e mong ka koloi ya hae a mmolaya. Na le sa hopola sehloho sa Parys sa maobanyana mo...?

Ha re tadima tsa thuto, dilemong tse fetileng, re ne re sena dingaka. Dingaka tsa batho ba batsho di ne di le mmalwa. Kajeno ho jwang...? Dintho di fetohile. Dikolong teng e ne le mahlabisa-dihlong. Kajeno dintho di fetohile. Bana ba rutelwa diphaposing tsa boemo bo hodimo.

Mane Mpumalanga, maoba mona, makgowa a tswa ho kenya motho ka lekaseng la bafu a ntse a phela.

Mane Limpopo, setsomi sa lekgowa se tswa thunya motho sa mmolaya mme sa re se bone eka ke kolobe-moru.

Mane Eastern Cape, Lekgowa la kenya mosadi wa motho ka hokwaneng ya dintja, le mo beile kamorao veneng. Le se le bale moo re tswang. Ntwa ya tokoloho ha e tshwane le ho ritela kofi... E thata, e kgoro di majwe.

Mane Kwazulu-Natal, Mosadi wa lekgowa ya bitswang Penny Sparrow o ile are batho ba batsho ba ditshila, ke diapi, ke ditshwene. Rapolasi e mong are batho ba batsho ha bana korone hlohong. Ba keke ba tshwana le makgowa.

Na ditoropo tsa lona di sa tshwana le pele...? Qamakang le shebe. Kajeno metse ya lona ha e sa le metsana. E metle e bile e kgabile ka motlakase le pompo tsa metsi.

Kajeno Bloemfontein e ikgantsha ka di-shopping mall, le kahara makeishene. Botshabelo le yona e ikgantsha ka shopping mall. Ha ke sa bua ka Qwaqwa le Thabong. Bethlehem le yona e ikgantsha ka shopping mall le Casino.

Jwale Ma-Afrika Borwa, hopolang hore re tswa hole. Le se ke la lahlehelwa ke tshepo. Moya wa President OR Tambo o re etelletse pele. Tlohelang ho lahlehiswa ke batho ba nahanang hore tokoloho ke potele e kgwathwang ka lehlaka. Re tsamaile mmoho nako e telele. Re keke ra qabana tseleng jwalo ka bana ba Josefa, ba ho fenetha monyane wa bona ba re ke raditoro.

Honourable Speaker, as we honour this great giant, this is a brief account of the achievements of the Free State provincial government in the past year, and also announce our commitments for the coming year.

We do this because we appreciate the influence of President OR Tambo in ensuring that the Bill of Rights becomes one of the tenets of our Constitution.

Right to basic education

The children and the youth of this province have a constitutional right of access to basic education. We have been consistent in the provision of access to quality education as it forms the basis for an empowered and prosperous society. Our progress witnessed throughout the levels of the education system points to an improvement which reassures prosperity.

The National Development Plan Vision 2030 dictates the expansion of access to Early Childhood Development, and improved education system performance. Through enhancing school readiness we have trained Eight Hundred and Forty Six (846) pre-Grade R educators from registered centres to advance their skills on aspects to educate children, 0-4 years to learn through play. This training will be continued in the next financial year to reach 1000 practitioners.

We have provided access to Thirty Eight Thousand Three Hundred and Fifty Three (38 353) learners from Six Hundred and Forty Nine (649) public schools, and a further Seven Thousand Nine Hundred and Eight (7908) learners from Two Hundred and Sixty Three (263) Community sites, as well as One Thousand and Four (1004) learners from 74 independent schools. This brings the total number of learners accessing ECD programmes to Forty Seven Thousand Two Hundred (47 200).

We will increase Grade R classes in public schools by 80 during the 2017/18. We shall also up-skill 200 Grade R educators towards Diplomas in Grade R Teaching in 2017/18.

The performance of the matric class of 2016 once again placed Free State on the number one spot, making us the only province that broke the 90% threshold. The total number of candidates who registered for the National Senior Certificate in the 2016 examinations in the Free State was **Twenty Eight Thousand Nine hundred and One (28 901)**. It is very satisfying to note that our provincial matric pass rate for the past four years has been consistently above the 80% threshold. We are delighted that the majority of our schools performed above **85%**.

Year	Matric Pass Rate
2009	69.4%
2010	70.7%
2011	75.7%
2012	81.1%
2013	87.4% (No.1 amongst provinces)
2014	82.8%
2015	81.6%
2016	88.2% (No.1 amongst provinces)

We are pleased to announce that three of our districts, Xhariep, Fezile Dabi and Thabo Mofutsanyane, have achieved **90%** and above, and they are in the **top six districts** in the country. The other two districts, Lejweleputswa and Motheo, have achieved above **85%**.

We want to congratulate the Xhariep District for achieving **position one** in the province and **position two** in the country.

It is worth mentioning that our performance in Mathematics, Science and Accounting as key subjects was above 70% in the last year. We are pleased that in the last seven years we have made a lot of strides in these gateway subjects. President OR Tambo, a Mathematics and Science Teacher, would have been proud of this achievement.

Through our Smart Schools Pilot Project, we will explore best ways and practices of deploying ICT to enhance teaching and learning outcomes in our schools. We will host an annual Education Indaba later this year with all stakeholders focusing on e-learning and the support to e-Education strategy.

In partnership with the Central University of Technology we will establish a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Academy (STEM Academy) in 2017. Furthermore with regard to vocational and occupational skills we shall establish one school of skills in Botshabelo at Qelo School. Seven existing special schools will also pilot as schools of skills providing vocational skills ranging from retail management, hospitality services, plumbing, welding, electrical work, hair dressing and panel beating.

Education Development Committees will be established in every town in the province which will create community hubs where unemployed university graduates, retired teachers and principals, will all participate in education programmes and wellbeing of learners. This will help to take learners away from the streets and therefore reduce social ills such as drug abuse, sexual abuse, alcohol and substance abuse. Learners will be helped with school work, social and life skills and career coaching after school. We will work with our municipalities and partners to ensure that this programme succeeds.

We have successfully increased the number of bursaries from 139 in 2009 to the current **Eight Thousand Two Hundred and Thirty Two (8 232)**. **Eight Hundred and Sixty One (861)** students are pursuing various fields of study in different countries in the world, as follows:

Country	Fields of study	No. of students
Russia	Medicine; Agriculture Veterinary Science; Nuclear Science	199
Madeira, Portugal	IT; Engineering; Photography	35
India	Pharmacy	8
Germany	Masters in Mining and Water Reticulation	3
Belarus	Agriculture; IT	44
Turkey	Medicine; Pharmacy; Robotics Engineering; Mechatronics;	84
Cuba	Medicine	196
China	Medicine; Agriculture; Environmental Science Engineering; PhD in	292
Total international students		861

Later this year **Forty Eight (48)** students will be going to Turkey for Vocational Training, and a further **Twenty Nine (29)** to study Agriculture in Bulgaria. **One Hundred and Fifty (150)** students will also be going to Madeira, Portugal to study IT, Hotel Management, Agriculture, Health Sciences and Engineering.

We have reached agreements with some local and international companies to provide experiential training opportunities, internships and learnerships to our students in order to prepare them for industry.

The performance of learners in Mathematics and Science remains an area which needs more attention since it contributes significantly to economic growth. To address this matter, we have initiated a distinctive intervention programme in 100 primary schools through the support of Mathematics specialists from Madeira.

Let us all work together to ensure that as a province we achieve our target of 95% pass rate and 40% bachelors in 2017. **Re Hlasela ka Thuto...!**

Right to have access to health care services

After the passing of both his parents through disease, the young President OR Tambo wanted to be a medical doctor. He appreciated the importance of medicine, quality health especially in the lives of black, rural communities. In later years, President OR Tambo would work together with the likes of Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, Dr. G.M. Naicker and former ANC presidents Dr. A.B. Xuma and Dr. J.S. Moroka, amongst others, to lobby for free and quality healthcare for all.

Quality and affordable health care services and a strengthened public health care system remains key in our endeavour to achieve a health care system that works for everyone. Underpinning this commitment, we identified **Four (4) Strategic Outcomes** to improve the national health system, which is;

- to increase life expectancy;
- to decrease maternal and child mortality;
- to combat HIV/AIDS and TB; and
- to decrease the burden of disease.

To consolidate the gains we have made in managing HIV/AIDS, we have improved TB screening from 65 % to 70%. Currently, 100% of new Multi Drug Resistant TB patients are on the new drug, **Bedaquiline**.

It is important to note that our efforts, working with the **Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)** and all our stakeholders in the **Provincial Council on Aids (PCA)** are paying off. Within a year the TB mortality rate has declined from 9% to 7.1%. In conjunction with the national government, we will host the **World TB Day Commemoration** on the 31st March 2017, in Thaba Nchu. The World TB Day Commemoration will be used to launch the new National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs: 2017-2022.

The appointment of **health care workers** has an impact on service delivery and patients' experience. For this reason, we continually strive to employ people with requisite skills to fill in the vacancies. Some of the appointments we made include Medical Officers; Medical Specialists; professional and staff nurses as well as nursing assistants. These appointments will further improve our capacity to deliver quality health care services and contribute towards attaining the goal of increasing life expectancy for the Free State community.

Building and upgrading infrastructure does not only improve access, but it also creates jobs and transform the economic landscape. We have built health care facilities to bring much needed services to our communities as part of the re-engineering of Primary Health Care. It is with immense pride that we announce the completion of the following clinics:

- **Harry Gwala, Thusanong, Vivian Mangwane, Schonkenville and Viljoenskroon clinics in Fezile Dabi**
- **Senekal and Bolata clinics in Thabo Mofutsanyana**
- **Batho clinic in Mangaung**
- **The Seniorita Nthlabathi Hospital in Ladybrand was officially opened and is fully operational.**

By the 15th of June this year, we will open the **Albert Nzula Hospital** in Trompsburg.

We will extend the operating hours of some clinics, starting with Harry Gwala Clinic in Metsimaholo. Batho Clinic in Mangaung will henceforth operate for **24 hours** to accommodate the growing demand which often manifests in long queues. We will strive to find additional resources to extend the operating hours for other clinics.

In the 2017/18 financial year, there will be a construction of more clinics in Clocolan, Lusaka, Thandanani, and Rhedeerspark. We will commission and operationalize Sasolburg and Volgefontein clinics and continue to refurbish the National District hospital in Mangaung.

With regard to the **National Health Insurance** in the Thabo Mofutsanyane District, we have attained all the key milestones of the first phase. To date we have done the following: appointments of health professionals, personnel training, procurement of equipment, internet connectivity in 42 clinics, registration of households on the database, implementation of the Health Patient Registration system and the Central Chronic Medicine Dispensing and Distribution programme.

To enhance and expedite health service, highly specialized and technological mobile buses will be used to provide services in the rural and remote areas as well as mining towns. **Re Hlasela Mahloko le Malwetse...!**

Right of access to appropriate social security

Speaking at the 8th Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries in Harare, 1986, President OR Tambo said; "The victory of the Non-Aligned Movement in the wider struggle for a new international economic order, radically to raise the material welfare of millions of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America permanently and continuously, would help the peoples of our region themselves to achieve these noble goals sooner rather than later."

The menace of substance abuse poses a terrible threat to our society and also undermines our developmental and transformation agenda. Through various interventions and working with different stakeholders, we targeted and assisted the youth at the substance abuse treatment centers. We will continue to wage a rigorous campaign against substance abuse in our communities.

In April this year, we will open the **Beyers Naude Rehabilitation Centre** in Clarens. After consultations with the family as well the Angolan government, we will rename the Botshabelo Rehabilitation Centre after late Angolan struggle stalwart and former President Augustinho Neto.

Our government continues to spearhead the safeguarding of vulnerable people. Through the **social assistance programme**, we have positively impacted on children, women, elderly people and people with disabilities. More than **Fifteen Thousand (15 000)** people were reached through the poverty reduction initiatives, whilst **Eight Hundred and Sixteen (816)** youth were linked to economic opportunities.

The **Isibindi Model** has provided **Two Hundred and Sixty One (261)** young people with job opportunities after they completed training as qualified **Child and Youth Care Workers**. The **Thirty Two (32) Community Nutrition and Development Centers** across the province employ **Two Hundred and Ninety Five (295)** people. We envisage to create **Five Thousand Nine Hundred (5 900)** work opportunities through the Social Service Support Project utilizing Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

It has been established that many young women are forced to resort to using unhygienic methods because they cannot afford **sanitary towels**. Our government has responded to this plight by initiating a project on production and distribution of sanitary towels in Tweeling. This project was initiated in 2016/2017 and will be fully operational in 2017/2018.

The vision of this project is to ensure that government provides free sanitary towels to young women who do not have material means to live a positive and a hygienic life. The project will also assist with creating jobs for the youth through its value chain of production, packaging, storage and distribution.

Right of access to land and property

As a human rights lawyer, one of President OR Tambo's cases was a dispute among the Bafokeng people over land rights in Rustenburg, (now North West Province). Thanks to his sound knowledge of customary law, he successfully concluded the case to the satisfaction of all affected parties.

We will continue to provide support to producers with high potential to contribute to the economy. We will also focus on commodities with high value chain and high potential to contribute to agro-processing and job creation.

The main commodities receiving support include grain, poultry, ostrich, fish, red meat, vegetables and fruit production. As a result of this intervention, we provided support to smallholder, commercial and subsistence producers. We also offered them agricultural extension advice and training in agricultural skills.

The impact of the implementation of the agricultural projects and targeted support to producers led to the creation of **Fifty One (51)** permanent jobs and **One Thousand Three Hundred and Sixty Seven (1 367)** temporary jobs.

In his 2017 State of the Nation Address, President Jacob Zuma said: "It will be difficult if not impossible, to achieve true reconciliation until the land question is resolved. Only **eight (8) million** hectares of arable land have been transferred to black people, which is only **9.8 percent** of the **Eight Two (82) million** hectares of arable land in South Africa".

The policy of “willing buyer & willing seller” has not brought about equity or a radical shift on the issue of land ownership. We welcome the promulgation of the **Land Expropriation Act** in 2016, which will enable government to distribute the land on an equitable basis to all the landless masses of our people.

Through the land redistribution programme, we have made some progress in relation to the allocation of land to our people. We have acquired and allocated **Eight Thousand One Hundred and Forty Nine (8 149)** hectares of land. **Seven Thousand and Seventeen (7017)** hectares of land have been allocated to smallholder farmers. **Nine Hundred and Eighty Seven (987)** hectares have been allocated to labour tenants, farm workers and farm dwellers.

Although the land is still in the hands of the few, we call on all of our people to use all constitutional means to access land. Land grabs and all manner of lawlessness will not be tolerated. Such acts must face the full might of the law.

Ke rata ho tsebisa baahi ba mapolasing hore selemong sena re tlo kena ka sefutho ho lwantshana le ditaba tse ba kgathatsang jwalo ka ho lelekwa ka mahahapa (evictions), ho hloka dipalangwang, dikliniki le dikolo.

With increased investment in agro-processing, trade development and improved access to markets and financial services, we have managed to create jobs in rural areas. To this end, **Fifty Thousand and Forty Two (50 042)** work opportunities were created through the Extended Public Works Programme in our rural areas.

We have supported **One Hundred Thousand (100 000)** beneficiaries through our Hlasela Tlala initiative. We have provided nutritious meals to more than **Five Hundred Thousand (500 000)** learners through the national school nutrition programme and established **Three Hundred and Twenty Three (323)** gardens at various institutions.

Addressing poverty and underdevelopment in rural areas remains a priority. We want our rural communities to participate meaningfully in our radical economic transformation agenda.

Part of our development strategies in rural areas include the provision of the necessary infrastructure. In this regard, we have provided **Twenty Nine (29)** schools with sanitation; **Ten (10) rural schools** have been supported and now have access to water; **Forty Three (43)** schools have access to electricity; **One Hundred and Twenty Seven (127)** rural schools have functional ICT infrastructure. **Five Hundred and Ninety One (591)** existing bucket sanitation system in informal settlements have been replaced with adequate sanitation services.

Whilst the recent rainfall might have brought some relief, it came late and will find it difficult to salvage the losses caused by the impact of the severe drought. Our farmers; subsistence, small holder and commercial – were all equally affected.

We intervened by assisting the affected livestock farmers with animal feeds and with the drilling of **One Hundred and thirty Two (132)** new boreholes for the provision of water for livestock. We will continue to support the farmers in the most possible way as there is no end in sight.

In revitalizing primary agriculture and agro-processing, in April this year we will host the **Free State Agro-Processing Summit** to develop a strategy that will empower our people to process our agricultural produce within the province.

Our partnership with stakeholders such as AFSA, NAFU, and Free State Agriculture has assisted us to achieve some of our objectives. We will continue to work closely with all our stakeholders in this sector.

With the radical socio-economic transformation agenda, we also want to address the inequalities in the property sector and unlock its economic potential to benefit the previously disadvantaged people.

Twenty (20) state-owned residential houses have already been transferred to beneficiaries. **Twenty Eight (28)** residential houses will be transferred and **One Hundred and Two (102)** vacant sites and plots will be transferred to beneficiaries in the next financial year.

Government plays a critical and decisive role in realizing transformation in the property industry, which is currently dominated by white business. The lease portfolio of government property is sitting at **74% white** and **26% black**. We will ensure that this skewed pattern of ownership changes to at least 50% share for black landlords by 2020.

More than **Two Thousand (2 000)** human settlement properties including RDP houses will be transferred to Mangaung Metro Municipality to facilitate the final transfer of title deeds to the rightful beneficiaries in Thaba-Nchu and Heidedal areas. We will accelerate the programme of issuing title deeds to our people for both the old stock and the current BNG houses we have built.

Freedom of trade, occupation and profession (radical socio-economic transformation)

Due to intensified political and economic exclusion, President OR Tambo mobilized the international community to paralyze the Apartheid system through economic sanctions. He strongly believed in the importance of a fair, equitable economic system as key to affording equal opportunities for all.

Last year we successfully hosted inward trade and investment missions from **Russia, China, Portugal and Turkey**. These partnership-seeking missions continue to explore cooperation in various sectors to ultimately invest in our province.

The second edition of the **Free State Global Investors Trade Bridge**, which was held during October 2016, bore witness to successful investment stories in various areas of the Free State including the **Special Economic Zone (SEZ)** in Maluti-A-Phofung. We are pleased to announce that the fencing for this SEZ is completed and the lights have been installed on the entire perimeter.

The inaugural **Free State/Madeira Flower Festival** took place in Parys, in November 2016. The primary objective of this festival is to unlock further floriculture and horticulture opportunities for South Africa for both domestic and international export markets. Besides the economic spinoffs it was an illustrious social cohesion platform which brought delegates from all walks of life, united behind a common mission. The Festival had plentiful floral exhibitions and also featured a variety of family-friendly entertainment.

We have concluded an agreement with FILPRO (Filtration Products Corporation), known to provide the highest level of customer service, expert technical support and the most cost-effective filtration solutions. The agreement entails support and training of motor mechanics and panel beaters across the province. Upon completion of the Enterprise Development Programme, some trainees will be awarded with the necessary equipment, and they will be empowered to start and grow their businesses.

As at the 31 January 2017 the Free State Provincial Government had spent **R1.2 billion** on SMME's through our state procurement, as shown below. Two Thousand **Six Hundred and Ninety Three (2693)** SMME's benefited out of Free State Province's State Procurement. Out of these SMMEs, **Two Thousand One Hundred and One (2101)**, or 78%, are from the Free State Province, and **Five Hundred and Ninety Two (592)**, or 22% are from outside the province. **Eight Hundred and Sixty Two (862)**, or 32%, of these SMMEs are owned by women, and **Seven Hundred and Eighty One (781)** are owned by young people.

The Preferential Procurement Regulations in terms of section 5 of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000 (Act No. 5 of 2000), gazetted on the 20 January 2017 is clear on a mechanism to support 30% set asides. We have drafted a provincial tender policy that ensures the following from 1 April 2017:

- Preference on state procurement will be provided to local businesses, which are owned by women and young people, as well as co-operatives
- To address the leakages of sub-contracted businesses benefiting from main contractors, the revised regulations will ensure that the main contractors who get government tenders sub-contract **Thirty (30)** percent to SMME's.

The **Industrial Park** in Botshabelo has been launched on 14th June 2016. This is a **R60 million** project aimed at revitalising industrial parks in the province, focusing on security infrastructure upgrades, fencing and street lighting and electricity requirements.

We call on young people, in particular black and female entrepreneurs, to take advantage of programmes and related incentives applicable in the manufacturing sector in order to influence the transformation of the economy and create jobs. There are **Twelve (12)** manufacturing companies that are currently housed in this Industrial Park.

As indicated by the President during the 2017 State of the Nation of Address, the manufacturing sector created **Seven Thousand (7 000)** new jobs during the first six months of 2016. Of particular interest in the Free State will be the opportunities offered by the agro-processing sector that is likely to benefit from the Agri-parks.

Although Free State is well-endowed with mineral resources, the people of the Free State have not been accommodated in the ownership of mines. We hope that the passing of the Mineral and Petroleum Rights Development Amendment Bill into an Act, as well as the review of the Mining Charter will ameliorate this situation. The mining sector has been significantly affected by the shedding of jobs.

We remain relatively optimistic of the improvement in commodity prices which will most likely influence our mining sector both in terms of production and preservation of current jobs.

The national cabinet has committed to support the implementation of the Mabele Biofuel Refinery in Bothaville. We will work together with national departments to ensure that this project provides the necessary injection into the economy and creates jobs. We will also continue to provide support to the Xhariep Solar Park project. The adoption and adherence of the energy efficiency specification on all housing projects will result in the training and employment of local people for the installation of compliance elements.

Working together with the Minister of Energy, Hon. Tina Joemat-Pettersson, and the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, we will establish a massive solar plant in the area. We are looking forward to making a contribution in making sure that this project becomes a success.

The **Thanda-Tau** roadside fuel stop on the N3, where we have the pleasure to deliver the State of the Province Address today, was launched on 14th December 2016. This innovative fuel-stop facility has already created **One Hundred and Twenty (120)** jobs. The target is to create at least **Two Hundred (200)** permanent jobs and opportunities for **Ten (10)** or more micro-enterprises.

In terms of upgrading investment and continued maintenance of the resorts in Free State, we intend to create jobs by working with the private sector in the establishment of a **hotel school** at Phillip Saunders Resort.

The Free State Development Corporation will play a stronger role in the empowerment of SMME's, Cooperatives, township and rural enterprises, including selling some of its properties to them. It will also promote these enterprises through incubation, research and development, and match-making with national and international companies.

In order to achieve radical economic transformation, we will partner with the private sector to create relevant skills for industry. With the assistance from the State of Sao Paulo, Brazil, we will establish centres for training and development of Artisans and Apprenticeship (in line with "former Ambag" schools).

We want to have dedicated programmes which will fast track the establishment of a **Skills School**. This year, in collaboration with the private sector, we shall establish a Skills Centre based in Maccauvlei, near Sasolburg.

We will work closely with the Free State Black Business Council, and we will ensure that Black Business Chambers are established in each of our municipalities. We will also establish an SMME Forum at a provincial level to take the small business initiatives forward.

We will convene a Provincial Jobs Summit where all stakeholders will discuss matters relating to job losses, and the impact of the challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment on our people.

The development and maintenance of road infrastructure is one of the pillars of economic development. Road infrastructure is a catalyst for job creation, particularly for the historically disadvantaged individuals.

Last year we announced the construction of critical infrastructure in some parts of the province. We are delighted to report that some of these projects have been completed, such as;

- **Meloding–Virginia**
- **Vrede–Memel;**
- **Monontsha**
- **Hertzogville–Hoopstad**
- **Vredefort-Parys**
- **A57 Meadows (Mangaung)**
- **Kroonstad Through route**
- **Qwaqwa transport route**
- **Thaba Nchu K53 Vehicle testing station**
- **Parys K53 Vehicle testing station.**

On the other hand, the **Shannon Transport Route; Hoopstad–Bultfontein; Bothaville–Kroonstad; Deneysville–Heilbron and Bloemfontein–Dewetsdorp–Wepener** routes are underway. The construction of these routes is expected to create 414 jobs upon completion.

Re utlwile dillo tsa baahi ba rona mabapi le maemo a ditsela tsa rona dibakeng tse ding tsa profensi. Re tlo sebetsa mmoho le makgotla a metse ho beha mebila ena maamong a matle.

Thirty six (36) grass cutting SMME's were appointed for three years and we anticipate to create more than **Two Hundred (200)** job opportunities in the 2017/2018 financial year. Using the EPWP labour intensive methods, we will create more than **Three Thousand (3 000)** job opportunities in roads projects.

As part of our continuation to support SMME's, we have to date **One Hundred and Twenty Four (124)** learner contractors participating in the Contractor Development Programme (CDP), **Forty Six (46)** are placed on exit pool and **seventy eight (78)** will still continue in 2017/18.

We will continue with the learner driver programme starting with **Seven Hundred (700)** young learners in Xhariep, Lejweleputswa and Fezile Dabi, and **Three Hundred (300) public servants.**

We created **Forty Five Thousand Nine Hundred and Ten (45 910)** validated work opportunities through EPWP. Over **70%** of the beneficiaries are women whilst the youth took up **50%** of the opportunities. The job opportunities were created in massification programmes such as township revitalization, cleaning & greening, Community Work Programme and renovation of community halls. In all these activities, the people living with disabilities were accommodated.

We have set a target of **Sixty Two Thousand (62 000)** work opportunities for the next financial year to benefit the unskilled locals. More people will get opportunities through this programme of upgrading township roads when it is expanded to **Twenty (20)** more towns across the province.

We will strengthen working relations with black taxi and bus operators and support the sustainability of their businesses, and to transport the transport sector. We will also strengthen learner transport by doing proper routes analyses and verification of learners benefitting from this transport service.

Right to equality before the law

After realizing the gross injustices that the black majorities faced, President OR Tambo, together with late President Nelson Mandela established Mandela & Tambo, the first black-owned law firm, in Johannesburg. Because of its popularity, the firm was consulted by people from the length and breadth of the country. The firm dealt with matters ranging from divorce, criminal cases, and people arrested for pass law transgressions, demonstrations and strikes. Regarding the latter cases, the services were provided for free.

Honourable Speaker, we made a commitment in the previous State of the Province Address that fighting crime and corruption remain key priorities of the Free State government as these two social ills pose a threat to our democratic gains.

On the 02nd of September 2016, the South African Annual Crimes Statistics for the period April 2015–March 2016 has shown a decline in a number of crime categories for the Free State. The Statistics further maintains that the Free State is the **Number 1 province in fighting crime.**

There has been a significant decline in the following categories, carjacking and truck hijacking. And in 2015/16 the trend continued with murder still being one of those stubborn crimes that showed an upward spiral. As government we are still concerned about the rate of contact crimes, particularly murder.

This success is mainly attributed to the collaborative approach that is propagated by the **Provincial Crime Prevention Strategy** as witnessed in the work of the Priority Committees that target specific stubborn crimes. The **Priority Committees** where various stakeholders are represented, target specific crimes such as stock theft, human trafficking, gangsterism and drug abuse, violent protest actions, illicit mining and cross border crime.

We would like to once more use the opportunity to thank the former Provincial Commissioner Lieutenant General Thabethe Mpebe and his SAPS team for the sterling work during his tenure in contributing towards making sure that the province is a force to reckon with in terms of crime fighting.

We also welcome the appointment of the new Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant General Lebeoana Tsumane. We believe that he will take the baton from where Commissioner Mpebe left it.

The **Provincial Crime Prevention Strategy** remains the Province's road map to crime fighting. We will continue to implement crime prevention initiatives such as rural safety, school safety programmes, anti-human trafficking projects and campaigns against gangsterism and drug abuse in a collaborative manner and ensure the safety of all Free Staters.

The Police Forensic University in Virginia will be developed in partnership with **Police and Prison Civil Rights Union (POPCRU)** and Harmony Mines. We are grateful that Harmony Mines has made land available for this important project.

The **One Hundred and Fifty Three (153)** traffic officers who completed their traffic Diplomas and **Sixty Three (63)** examiners who were trained last year have been employed at various districts. This year we will train additional **Ninety (90)** examiners.

To ensure safety on our roads, as well as reduce road fatalities, we will ensure that the **Arrive Alive Campaign** is implemented throughout the year. Reckless, negligent and illegal drivers will not find peace on our roads.

We wish to issue a strong warning to all criminals and gangsters as we will be embarking on serious campaigns against all forms of crime in all our towns.

Re tla sebetsa mmoho le baahi ba Lesotho ba kahare ho profensi ya rona, ba hlomphang molao, ho hlaola kahare ho bona ba bang ba etsang ketso tsa bonokwane jwalo ka dipolayano, maqulwana le boshodu ba dikoloi le diphoofole. **Re Hlasela bonokwane le maqulwana...!**

Right of access to adequate housing

In his stint as a human rights lawyer, President OR Tambo dealt with many cases that involved blacks being evicted from their homes or lands. Because of his compassion and patience, President Tambo would spend a lot of time with each client.

In most cases, he became involved in the clients' cases and in their lives. So the right to adequate housing was very close to the heart of our hero.

In line with the National Development Plan (Vision 2030), we are ensuring land acquisition for further development closer to places of work. **The Sasolburg land parcel in Metsimaholo at 494 hectares** was acquired and is currently being subdivided for future human settlements development. This has the potential of yielding in excess of **Seven Thousand (7 000)** housing opportunities.

In Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, 49 properties in Estoire totalling 192 hectares of land were acquired. Development of Caleb Motshabi in Mangaung will yield **Seven Thousand Five Hundred (7500)** housing units, vesting rights of ownership in many of our people.

Re utlwile sello sa tlhokeho ya ditsha metseng ya rona, mme hona ke sesupo sa hore re se re qadile dibakeng tse ngata. Re ntshitse taelo ya hore makgotla a metse a se shebane feela le matlo a di-RDP, empa ba fe le batho ba rona ditsha tse nang le ditshebeletso.

Selemong sena re nkile qeto ya hore re tlo shebana ka ho otloloha le tlhaboloho ya ditoropo tse latelang; Wepener, Winburg, Marquard, Ficksburg, Zamdela, Botshabelo, Thaba Nchu, Qwaqwa le ditoropo tsa Xhariep.

Baken Park Extensions 5, 6 & 7 Project in Vogelfontein, Dihlabeng, is a key Informal Settlements Upgrading project with potential to yield in excess of **Five Thousand (5 000)** housing opportunities. This project has brought the people of Silahlwe closer to the town of Bethlehem and relocates them in to an integrated settlement with amenities. Literally, they would walk less than 3 kilometres to town. The project redresses spatial disparities of the past and puts our people closer to places of work. Beneficiaries are in the process of taking occupation of completed houses.

The development of **mining towns** is a key programme of government that was identified strategically by the President. Its focus is to redevelop mining towns whose economy has deteriorated due to closure of mines, resulting in slow economic activity and high unemployment. Virginia, Theunissen, Kroonstad and Welkom have been identified for development as part of this initiative. All informal settlements in Matjhabeng and Moqhaka local municipalities have thus been included in the National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP).

Our mega projects, including **Hillside View, Vista Park 2 and 3** will make a significant impact in the lives of our people when completed. An integrated development, Hillside View has progressed well to date. This projects consist of various housing opportunities for rental and ownership and will address much of our backlog.

Vista Park, another integrated development, will yield a total of **Five Thousand and Ninety Two (5 092)** units on completion. The project has a total of ten phases and will be undertaken as such starting with infrastructure followed by housing construction of housing units in the next financial year.

To alleviate the challenge of student accommodation, as well as stimulate the economy and create jobs, we will be refurbishing the Mangaung Nursing College of the Free State (MANCOFS) complex at Pelonomi Hospital.

I have agreed with the Premier of Gauteng, Hon. David Makhura to embark on the development of "River Cities" along the Sasolburg-Vaal River area in order to stimulate the economies of both provinces. An inter-provincial team led by the Premiers of both provinces and MECs responsible for Human Settlements will ensure the implementation of this project.

Completion of incomplete houses is a priority we are carrying through in the next financial year and giving it much attention to ensure that our people are housed in dignity. We will demand quality and commitment from our contractors to complete the work they are given.

In Vrede, Thembelihle Extension 4, we are applying **alternative building technology** through timber boarding and polystyrene infill concrete. A total of **128** houses have already been completed here. Once the project is completed, and the technology proven to be effective, the method will be replicated in other projects in the province.

To date, we have ensured that 30% of the housing allocations go to women contractors. This is in line with government's women empowerment and development policies and overall redressing the imbalances of the past. Most women contractors have more than 10 years of continuous experience in construction of houses. This is indeed a significant achievement in development of women contractors.

We are already employing locals for construction and are consciously biased towards youth and women development. Major contractors are mentoring and developing emerging contractors.

Township establishment for a mixed-race development in Ventersburg, Matjhabeng, will be completed during 2017/18 financial year as part of our contribution to social cohesion. Installation of water and sewer networks is in progress in Refengkgotso, Excelsior, Wesselsbron and Harrismith resulting in installation of services in 2429 sites.

We will continue with the installation of water and sewer networks in Phumelela, Dihlabeng, Maluti a Phofung, Ngwathe, Metsimaholo, Matjhabeng (including K10), Nala, Tswelopele and Mangaung in the next financial year. A services' audit has been completed in Caleb Motshabi and the installation of services is in progress.

We will continue supporting Dihlabeng, Maluti a Phofung, Metsimaholo, Moqhaka and Matjhabeng towards **Level 1 accreditation** for human settlements development. Mangaung will be supported towards **Level 3 accreditation** in order to handle the human settlements development value chain including housing construction.

Good governance (Back-to-Basics)

We have vowed to act decisively against crime and corruption as they destroy our democracy. To address possible fraudulent activities, we developed a Provincial Anti-Fraud Strategy and ensured that all Fraud Prevention policies and Fraud Prevention plans of all departments and public entities are aligned to this strategy.

In line with the **Provincial Anti-Fraud Prevention Strategy**, the Provincial Treasury co-hosted four Anti-fraud seminars during the International Fraud Awareness Week in Bloemfontein, Reitz and Parys. Twenty people attended the Certified Fraud Examiners (CFE) training course.

Nine people successfully completed the exams and are qualified Certified Fraud Examiners, while others are expected to complete this year. This will result in building the province's capacity to use own resources for investigations in future. More officials will be identified to register for this course this year.

The province managed to spend 99% of the allocated budget and managed to generate 97.2% of the estimated revenue for the 2015/16 financial year despite the sluggish economic growth.

For the 2016/17 financial year, we invested more than **R3 billion** on social and economic infrastructure development. The province will continue to ensure that projects are implemented to contribute towards economic development and job creation. We successfully complied with and implemented cost containment measures and managed to reduce spending on non-core items by 8% over the previous two financial years; thus unlocking funds for other key provincial priorities/service delivery.

A Municipal Support Program (MSP) was established within the Municipal Finance Management Unit in Provincial Treasury to assist and provide technical support to delegated municipalities in financial distress. The impact of the Municipal Support Programme program has resulted in significant qualitative reporting at municipalities.

In line with the national government's decision to implement Free Basic Services, all our municipalities are providing free basic services to the needy. Most municipalities are in the process of aligning their Indigent policies and registers to the National Framework thus ensuring that only qualifying households have access to free basic services.

Our municipalities are showing progress in terms of aligning their IDP's with NDP despite few challenges identified. Our strong partnership with SALGA on municipal support continues to promote joint planning, alignment and support.

Our top priority is to strengthen the administrative and financial capability of municipalities. We have implemented various initiatives in support of the objectives of Operation Clean Audit and viable Municipalities. These include the deployment of suitably qualified and experienced teams to identified municipalities. As part of the financial Turn-around Programme, we assisted Maluti a Phofung; Matjhabeng; Metsimaholo; Moqhaka and Ngwathe.

We are pleased that there is a gradual improvement in the audit outcomes of our municipalities. We congratulate Fezile Dabi for attaining a clean audit opinion in 2015/16, Moqhaka and Phumelela for progressing from qualified and disclaimer opinions to unqualified opinions respectively. We are also pleased that 15 Municipalities received Unqualified Audit Opinion in 2015/2016, and that Disclaimer Audit Opinions reduced from **9** in **2012/2013** to **3** in **2014/2015** and now to **2** in **2015/2016**.

We are pleased that, working together with ESKOM, we were able to ensure that there were no electricity disconnections due to debt owed by municipalities. We have established a Task Team between ESKOM, the provincial government and SALGA to resolve any outstanding matters in this regard. We have already resolved that CENTLEC should play a more crucial role in the value chain of electricity supply in the province, including skills development.

We will convene a **Service Delivery Expo** to showcase and highlight our service delivery achievements for both our municipalities and the provincial government. We will work with our municipalities to ensure that we intensify our Friday Cleaning Campaigns in all our localities. We will also launch projects involving pruning of trees and cleaning of rivers.

We have made significant progress in eradicating bucket and VIP toilets in all formalized townships. We are aware that there are outstanding areas in Botshabelo, in particular. We will focus on this area in the new year to advance towards the full eradication of this inhumane system.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Cllr. Olly Mlamleli, the Executive Mayor of Mangaung, on her election as the Provincial Chairperson of SALGA, as well as Cllr. Sebenzile Ngangelizwe on his election as the national Deputy President of SALGA.

Our government will continue to work closely with the traditional leadership in the province.

Batlokoa ba Mokgalong, under the leadership of Morena Nkgahle Tsotetsi, are currently regarded as landless. As a result, the government within the next financial year will purchase two pieces of land in Vrede that have been identified by the interim council of Batlokoa, allowing for further practice of the community cultures and traditions. Furthermore, this will conclude the issue of landless traditional leaders and communities in our province.

The **Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims**, led by Commissioner Bagudi Tolo, has finalized the report on Barolong Boo Seleka traditional leadership and submitted it to the provincial government. We will, during the month of March, meet with all concerned royal families and communities in Thaba Nchu.

Government hosted the inauguration of the principal traditional leader, Morena Montoeli Mota of Batlokoa Ba Mota in Tsheseng, Qwaqwa, in September 2016. We want to congratulate Morena Montoeli Mota on assuming this important responsibility in his community.

In our endeavour to strengthen traditional leadership in our province, we have provided tools of trade to Marena. We purchased **five (5)** sedan vehicles for the executive members of the house and **thirteen (13)** Ford Ranger vehicles for traditional councils to assist with service delivery in our traditional communities.

We will accelerate the decentralization of government offices in all our Districts with the goal to bring services closer to our people and enhance economic development.

To further deepen good governance, we are in the process of establishing Operation Hlasela Centres in each ward. Each of these Centres will have a Hlasela Co-ordinator (formerly Community Development Workers) who will make sure that government services are brought closer to the people.

Freedom of religion, belief and opinion (Social cohesion and nation building)

President Oliver Tambo envisioned a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous nation. Acts of racism, discrimination, violation of human rights, ethnicity and tribalism threaten social cohesion and nation building.

As we pay tribute to this giant, we call on all members of society to unite in defence of the gains we have made. Through the commemoration of days such as Freedom Day, Heritage Day, Day of Reconciliation and Africa Day, we continue to encourage all members of our society to contribute in building a caring and united society, in our diversity.

In promoting arts and culture, we have employed artists in our schools to develop learners on performing arts, visual arts and crafts. Last year, **Five Thousand Five Hundred and Sixty (5 560)** learners from **one hundred and sixty-two (162)** schools participated in the local zonal competitions in preparation for the **Free State Arts in Schools Festival**, scheduled for May 2017.

In our quest to develop new artists, we are building studios in the following town; **Parys, Ficksburg, Welkom and Bethlehem**, to help artists to record their music, poems and comedy so that their work can reach the broader creative sector market. The main hub for recordings will be in Kroonstad.

We have forged partnerships with community media, particularly the radio stations. We are currently in a process to procure the relevant operational equipment for these community radio stations. We also hosted the National Community Radio Week on 15-17 February 2017 to appreciate the informative role they play in our communities.

Once declared as a national heritage site, we will submit an application to UNESCO's World Heritage Convention Committee to consider declaring the Wesleyan Church in Waaihoek, the birth place of the ANC, as the world Heritage Site.

In addition, the Wesleyan Church and Winnie Mandela House in Brandfort have been submitted to national Cabinet to be listed and to form part of the **Resistance and National Liberation Heritage Route**.

This year we will begin with the construction of the Heroes Parks in Thaba Nchu and Tumahole, and do the unveiling of the O.R. Tambo and Fidel Castro statues at OR Tambo House and Fidel Castro Building respectively.

In honouring President OR Tambo this year, we will host a variety of OR Tambo games, marathons, tournaments, arts and cultural events together with our municipalities.

In our endeavor to take transformation forward, we gazette the name changes of Harrismith to Intabazwe and Petrus Steyn to Mamafubedu.

After consultations with the families involved, we will also identify historic and heritage sites for renaming after late icons like Samora Machel, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Che Guevara, Chris Hani, Joe Slovo and others.

Working with our municipalities, we will continue to enhance social cohesion through joint initiatives like Macufe, Matjhabeng Carnival in partnership with Brazil, the Bethlehem Airshow, Cherry Festival, Madeira/Flower Festivals, Food and Wine Festivals and Dipontsho tsa Qwaqwa.

We also wish to congratulate Olympian Wayde Van Niekerk, who broke the 17-year world record of Michael Johnson at the recent Rio Olympics. Van Niekerk receives scientific support from the Free State Sport Science Institute. We also further acknowledge the respected rugby player Seabelo Senatla; the man on fire. These sportsmen continue to raise our flag high, and make the Free State proud.

There shall be peace and friendship

President OR Tambo was responsible for the development of a strong anti-Apartheid sentiment throughout the world. He ensured that his organization, the ANC, had more foreign missions than the then Apartheid South Africa. In many nations, he got the reception only reserved for diplomats. He was an internationalist of note.

In taking forth his legacy, we will continue to build those necessary relations that would produce positive results for the Free State province in particular, and the country in general.

The Free State government has signed about **Thirty Three (33) Bi-lateral Agreements** with various states and governments in the world. We have used these people-to-people relations to harness opportunities in the areas of education and economic development. As part of these cooperation arrangements, we have more **851** students studying in various universities across the world, and some of the international companies have established operations in the country, and are partnering with local black businesses.

The Global Investors Trade Bridge, the Free State/Madeira Flower Festival, and other such events, continue to manifest the results of these co-operations.

We will proactively address issues of xenophobia through teaching our youth, in particular, about the role of the international community and African countries in particular, on our struggle for freedom and democracy.

To this end, we will send our youth and students to places of remembrance and historical significance in Angola, Tanzania, Mozambique, Cuba and other countries which played a role in the fight against Apartheid.

Conclusion

Honourable Speaker, we join the President in declaring 2017: **The Year of Oliver Reginald Tambo: Let us advance and consolidate unity.**

President OR Tambo's journey in pursuit of international cooperation, peace, solidarity, justice and equality did not perish in 1993 when he passed on. "I say that Oliver Tambo has not died, because the ideals for which he sacrificed his life can never die" (Nelson Mandela, 1993). The legacy of President Tambo shall never perish before our eyes. To honour his legacy, we will continue with the quest for unity in purpose; for a common vision, towards a fully democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous South Africa.

Let me also thank the African National Congress, Members of the Executive Council and Legislature, the Director-General, Heads of Departments and our public servants for the commitment to ensure that we move the Free State and South Africa forward.

Re a leboha! Dankie! Siyabulela! Siyabonga! Re a leboga! Thank you!