Welcome

Speech of the Hon Premier Noxolo Kiviet - 2010-02-19 12:56:00

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker
Members of the Provincial Legislature and Delegates of the National Council of Provinces
Ministers and Deputy Ministers
Members of the National Assembly

Speakers from our sister Legislatures, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State
Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association – Eastern Cape
Executive Mayors, Mayors and Councilors
Traditional Leaders, religious leaders and representatives of civil society
Members of the Judiciary, and Heads of the security services in the Province
Excellencies, High Commissioners of Botswana, Mozambique and India; and US Consul-General,
and Members of the diplomatic corps
Director-General and senior members of our administration
Members of the Media

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

Somlomo, ndivumele ndithathe eli thuba ndibulise kubantu bakuthi abo bamamele kwiindawo ngeendawo, nakwabo babukeleyo kwezi ndawo zilandaleyo: Mandileni Community Hall e Mount Frere e Alfred Nzo, Msobomvu Community Hall e Gcuwa e Amathole District, Pearston Town Hall in Cacadu District, Gqeberha High School in Walmer in Nelson Mandela Bay, Mqanduli Municipal Hall e OR Tambo District, Masakhe Community Hall in Sterkstroom in Chris Hani District nase Bhungu Hall e Sterkspruit e Ukhahlamba District. Molweni bahlali be Mpuma Kapa kwezo ndawo nikuzo. Lumelang ba ahi ba Kapa Botshabela ka kakaretso, bo mme le bo ntate. Dit is vir my 'n eer om julle almal toe te spreek vandag.

As we reflect on the state of our Province, let us take a moment to bow in honour of fallen fellow citizens and comrades, including the Inaugural First Lady of our Province, Mama Dideka MaDixie Mhlaba, Nondumiso Reinett Mantanga, Constance Njongwe, Nopalamente Mvuzo Matanzima, Yolisa Gasa, Luyanda Mabhayi, Sebenzile Msenge Mdyogolo, Afrika Spirit Mahase, Unkosi Mvumeni Makaula, Unkosi Gcinikaya Gwadiso, and Vuyisile Boswell Mpafa, and Nomtyetha Bhayiliyatsholoza Moni.

Honourable Speaker, it is important to acknowledge that it is four months since we buried Siphiwo Mthimkhulu, Topsy Madaka, Sipho Hashe, Champion Galela and Qaqawuli Godolozi, known as the COSAS 2 and PEBCO 3. These comrades were abducted by the apartheid security forces, tortured and brutally killed. Last year in October their families were afforded an opportunity to bury the remains of their loved ones with honour and dignity. These are but few of the leaders that bear testimony to the role of the Eastern Cape in our struggle for liberation.
Honourable Speaker, on this occasion we are proud to recognise some of the luminaries of our Province in the world of sport. The Eastern Province Women’s XV and Sevens are the South African Champions in Rugby. We congratulate Aretha Gatywa, Nosipho Njikweni, Siphokazi Hess and Dumisane Chauke from Nelson Mandela Bay for their selection to take part in the Commonwealth Games in India this year in Basketball. We take our hats off to Mona Pretorius for winning two gold medals in the SA Seniors weightlifting and three silver medals in the Commonwealth Games. Nkosinathi Festile who, after being selected for South Africa in Basketball and having successfully participated in games in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, will be attending Youth Olympics Games in Singapore later this year. In Pool-ball, Tarquin Windvogel and Nicola Roussouw both received Protea Colours in the team and singles events respectively, while Dion Kopke also received Protea Colours as Under 23 Manager. We also hail our physically disabled champions, Micheal Louwrence who received two gold medals for both discus and shot-put in Dubai; Kevin Paul who now holds the World Record in the 100 meter Breast Stroke; Banele Makonco who received 2 Gold Medals and a Bronze; as well as Mncedi Kanti who won two Gold Medals and a Silver in the Czech Republic for athletics. We also congratulate our achievers in softball, table tennis, dance, show jumping, surfing, boxing, cricket, football and netball.

As we formally start the first full year of the current term, we pause briefly to take stock of the ground we have covered. We rededicate ourselves to work together to speed-up effective service delivery to our People!

This year marks 20 years since the heady days in early 1990 when political organizations were unbanned; when Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners were released from prison; when exiles returned to the land of their birth; and when negotiations aimed at ushering in a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa became a new site of struggle. No doubt historians will caution that it is still early days to fully comprehend the true meaning of all these events. Suffice to say, the Eastern Cape, born directly as a consequence of the historical events twenty years ago, is growing and maturing, and its people are rising! Whereas we were destroyed by slavery, colonialism and apartheid oppression, today, proudly we declare that each day, and in each moment, through solidarity and unity of purpose, we are rising! Whereas we have had occasion to despair, the words of one born of slaves, the poet Maya Angelou, have rekindled the fire in us to soldier on, especially when she says:

Out of the huts of history’s shame I rise
Up from a past that’s rooted in pain I rise
I’m a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear I rise
into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear I rise
bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise
As we look back to those days when our national liberation was imminent, we know that the struggle did not end. We know that February 1990 only marked the beginning of a long transition between the protracted struggle for national liberation and the dream of a better life for all. As we therefore reflect on our difficult past, because that is where our lessons for the future are stored, we know fully well that we have a responsibility, which affirms the confident assertion we made in 1992, that indeed we are “Ready to Govern!” Therefore, working together, we must rise to ensure that the space created by the events of February 1990 continues to be used effectively to advance the goal of creating a people-centred society. Our principal task as this present generation is not only to inherit the past, but to shape the future for the benefit of the next generation.

Honourable Speaker, informed by the overwhelming mandate we received on the 22nd of April 2009, we announced to this House a Provincial Strategic Framework which outlined priorities for this term. This framework focused on addressing the core structural challenges we face including the structural weaknesses in our provincial economy characterized by a weak primary sector, spatial imbalances and continuing uneven development, poverty and unemployment; capacity constraints within key service delivery departments and municipalities; and growing demand for Government intervention against the significant budget constraints that have arisen.

In addressing these challenges, the Eastern Cape remains firmly on course to achieve the goals set out in the Manifesto of the African National Congress, of eliminating the scourge of crime; of improving access to education; of creating decent jobs for the people of our Province; of improving the health profile of our people; and of developing our rural areas.

As we rise, poised for speedy service delivery, it has been two hundred and ninety days, a mere nine months since we came into office in this term. During this period we have been concentrating, among other things, on processes relating to phasing-in the electoral mandate, as well as concluding the tasks of the previous term. Already we are seeing encouraging signs that the Province is on a growth and improvement trajectory.

As Honourable Members will recall, we informed the people of the Eastern Cape that, in implementing the Provincial Strategic Framework, we would focus on the following areas:

1. Speeding up growth and transforming the economy to create decent work and sustainable livelihoods;
2. Building social and economic infrastructure;
3. Rural development, land, agrarian reform and food security;
4. Strengthening education, and building a skills and human resources base;
5. Improving the health profile of the Province;
6. Intensifying the fight against crime and corruption;
7. Building a developmental state, improving the public services, and strengthening democratic institutions;
8. Building cohesive, caring and sustainable communities.

We wish therefore to report, Honourable Speaker, that our march towards speeding up growth and transforming the economy to create decent work and sustainable livelihoods is progressing well. Like the rest of the world, in the recent months, the South African economy has been hit by a
recession, characterized by massive job losses, a decline in economic activity across a range of economic sectors, and increasing levels of poverty. Needless to say, the Eastern Cape has not been spared as we have also seen job losses in critical sectors such as automotive and manufacturing.

At this stage indications are that we are beginning to recover from this situation. However, we understand that this recovery will be a slow and painful one, thus potentially exacerbating the burdens of poverty and unemployment. We therefore need to marshal our resources to mitigate these burdens, while simultaneously charting a new course toward prosperity, dignity and environmental sustainability. This will require a fundamental realignment of economic focus, and in particular, we will have to prioritize growth of the primary sector. Government will need to lead, support and drive this shift through the provision of investment incentives, trade assistance, access to finance and state investment, particularly in socio-economic infrastructure.

We will continue with the work of the Rapid Response Coordinating Committee as a multi-stakeholder platform for a coordinated response to the effects of recession. Through this committee we have assisted various companies to access SETA funding for up-skilling of employees to avoid retrenchments. More than 1 100 workers benefited from this intervention.

Through the Expanded Public Works Programme, the Province has created more than 78 800 job opportunities. This is in excess of the provincial target of 60 000. These have been largely created through the Household Contractor Programme which mainly benefits women-headed households. The target for the 2010/2011 financial year is 64 593.

This provides short-term relief to households as we continue our efforts to restructure the economy and find long term solutions to the challenge of creating decent jobs.

Accordingly, we will ensure that localization within the auto sector is enhanced by developing second and third tier suppliers, and will work with Original Equipment Manufacturers to develop supply chains. Honourable Speaker, as a measure to broaden economic participation and in our drive to promote an inclusive economy, the Department of Economic Development & Environmental Affairs is leading the implementation of the Provincial Cooperatives Strategy. This is aimed at diversifying the manufacturing sector, the promotion and development of programmes for designated groups, the establishment of a Co-operative Development Fund, and the launch of housing and agricultural co-operatives. It also includes the establishment of Co-operative Development Centres, the development and support of independent Financial Services Co-operatives in the districts, as well as the establishment of multi-sectoral business chambers.

We will support supplier development as part of supply chain management, and we will review procurement policies in order to promote cooperatives and SMMEs. This will include putting in place mechanisms to deal with corruption in procurement processes, particularly with respect to conflict of interest by officials. Furthermore, we will also improve procurement processes to ensure timely payment of suppliers. Notwithstanding our current fiscal constraints, we will ensure that all departments pay service providers within the regulatory 30 days.
Furthermore, Local and Regional Economic Development initiatives will be aligned with government programmes by creating and facilitating an enabling environment for the implementation and support to SMME development.

Honourable Speaker, in line with the Provincial Industrial Development Strategy, we will package active measures to drive industrialization and diversify the economy through new sectors such as capital goods, petro-chemicals and renewable energy, fishing and mariculture. We will also ensure that the Industrial Strategy is localised in LED plans of municipalities based on the spatial competitiveness of local economies, including revitalisation of small rural towns. The rapid impact intervention in the King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality is a case in point. This is a catalytic intersphere initiative that will transform the city of Mthatha as we know it.

In keeping with our previous commitment to rationalise state owned enterprises, we are pleased to report substantial progress in the restructuring of the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Boards as well as the establishment of the Rural Development Agency.

Honourable Speaker, the task of building social and economic infrastructure requires that we pay particular attention to the infrastructure challenges and backlogs that characterize our Province. In the coming year we will firmly position the Department of Roads and Public Works as the coordinating centre to oversee the planning and delivery of infrastructure in the Province.

Central to this task is a programme to eradicate provincial infrastructure backlogs, an initiative which we will pursue in partnership with National Departments and National Development Finance Institutions.

We believe that public transport plays a critical role in facilitating movement of people around the Province. In this regard, we will expand the current number of buses in the former Transkei area, Buffalo City and the Metro. We will do this in line with our Integrated Public Transport Network programme.

The rural gravel road upgrading programme is continuing and we will upgrade 182 km of unsurfaced roads to surfaced roads. The total length of Provincial Roads is 47,816km consisting of 5,493km of surfaced roads and 42,323 km of gravel roads. Our objective is to change this picture such that eighty per cent of our road network is surfaced over a 10-year period. To this end, the Department is using low-cost alternative surfacing methods on low-volume roads, in addition to conventional construction methods for higher traffic volume roads. Unsurfaced roads to provincial hospitals and tourist attractions are currently being prioritised for surfacing.

We remain committed to the creation of integrated sustainable human settlements. In pursuit of this ideal we have identified and commenced with the implementation of multiyear projects for inclusive mixed mode housing development. This will encourage private sector investment in lower income housing and the struggling gap market segments. The mixed mode development projects identified in Thornhill in Port Alfred, Ngangelizwe in Mthatha, Duncan Village, in East London, Hunters Retreat and South End in Port Elizabeth will provide households access to decent and adequate shelter. Through the implementation of the Rural Housing Policy, 29 new multiyear rural human settlement projects yielding more than 10 000 houses will commence in the 2010/11 financial year.
In the quest to provide different housing opportunities we will develop four new social housing projects namely Emerald Sky Phase 5, Reservoir Mews, Southernwood in East London, and Park Towers in Nelson Mandela Bay Metro.

Furthermore, in consultation with Local Municipalities, land parcels for the development of Community Residential Units have been identified in Camdeboo, King Sabata Dalinyyebo, Kouga, Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, Lukhanji, and Intsika Yethu municipalities.

As at the end of December 2009, the Department of Housing has completed 10 455 units against the 19 000 units originally planned. An additional 11 721 units are anticipated to be completed by the end of the financial year. In proactively preparing for delivery of houses, the Department has completed the servicing of 6 914 sites as at end December 2009.

The programme aimed at eliminating mud structures in the Province is also progressing well. In the current financial year we have replaced 62 mud schools and 40 more will be finished by the end of March 2010. We are revising our approach to the programme of mud schools eradication. The focus of the new approach is on broadening the scope and standardising the quality of delivery systems.

We will, through the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, establish disaster management infrastructure and services along provincial strategic routes. This will enable a well-co-ordinated and speedy response to disasters and related crises.

Honourable Speaker, let me address myself to the issue of rural development, land, agrarian reform and food security. To this end we have adopted a Rural Development Strategy, and an implementation framework which calls for integrated development effort by all Departments, spheres of government, and civil society. We believe that successful implementation of the strategy will ultimately result in the transfer and redirection of resources by all sectors towards the rural poor in particular.

Robust interventions will include revitalising agriculture in rural areas through mass production for food security, commercialisation to boost primary production, as well as agro-processing; paying attention to rural infrastructure including roads, health facilities and eradicating mud schools; commercialisation of livestock farming; and building skills to uplift the rural economy.

We will continue working together with the national Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to address outstanding land claims and betterment redress that negatively impact on development. We will conduct a comprehensive land audit to identify available land for agricultural production as well as suitable land redistribution.

Honourable Members will recall that last year we celebrated the inaugural Mandela Day by launching the Provincial Rural Development Pilot programme at Mhlontlo. This initiative is producing valuable lessons. Esikwenzekile ke eMhlontlo, Somlomo, ngeli thuyana lingephi, kuquka oku: kulinywe igadi ezilikhulu elinamashumi amane anesibini (142); kwaze kwalinywa i-akile ezingamakhulu amathandathu anamashumi asixhenxe amasimi (670); kwabiywa umgama ongange 36km weegadi kwakunye nomgama ongange 12km wamasimi. Akwanelanga nje apho,
nemisebenzi ivelile – sithetha nje sekuveliswe imisebenzi elikhulu elinamashumi amathandathu anesithathu (163); kufuywe ke, Somlomo, ibhokhwe ezingamakhulu amathandathu anamashumi asixhenxe anesibhozo (378), iigusha ezingamakhulu amabinini aneshumi (210), kwakunye neenkukhu ezizalela amaqanda ezizingamawaka amane anamakhulu amahlanu (4500). Akuphelelanga apha ke Somlomo, kukho nophando olwenziweyo malunga neemeko zokuhlala oluncedisa ekuqulunkqeni inkqubo eyiyo neyondeleleneyo yokuncedisana nokulwa intupheko kwezi wadi, kuba lo ngumsebenzi wobambiswano kumasebe onke kaRhulumente kwakunye nezigaba zontathu zikaRhulumente. Re kopa marena arona akhuthatse sechaba hore se eme kamaoto re lemeng masimo le lijarete tsa rona.

In the coming financial year, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will lead a province-wide rollout of this integrated approach to rural development.

Honourable Speaker, strengthening education, and building a skills and human resources base remains one of our key focus areas in this term. Of critical importance is that society must take responsibility for the education of their children.

As Government, we aim to ensure that children receive a solid foundation in preparation for subsequent schooling through the Early Childhood Development programme.

We realise that the abject poverty faced by a significant portion of our learners often militates against effective learning. We are pleased that the School Nutrition Programme has built momentum and its overall management has improved. In 2009 the total number of beneficiaries increased by 140 000 to approximately one and half million learners.

Our determination to broaden access to education remains steadfast. We have made substantial progress in the implementation of the No Fee Schools Policy, bringing the number of these schools to 5 134 and benefitting 1 686 573 learners.

Honourable Speaker, and Honourable Members, the Matric results for the Province this year, while at 51%, far from what they should be, tell the story that the tide is turning; that we are rising! Through the implementation of the Learner Attainment Improvement Strategy we are strengthening the effectiveness of our schooling system. In this regard we re-iterate the message coming from the State of the Nation Address that education and skills development are at the centre of our policies, and that learners and educators must be in school, in class, on time, learning and teaching for seven hours a day. We will pay particular attention to supporting those schools which achieved a less than 50% matric pass rate.

We will also establish a provincial Maths and Science Academy to spearhead teacher development and capacity building. W also welcome the support for Maths and Science teaching in rural areas to be provided through the American Embassy.In this regard let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of Her Excellency, US Consul-General, Dr. AJ Mayberry accompanied by Minister of Public Affairs in the Office of the US Consul-General, Mr. Mark Canning.

Honourable Speaker we will continue with our skills initiatives targeting the youth. The implementation of the Provincial Strategic Skills Programme, funded through the National Skills
Fund has gone very well. The programme is geared to assist the province to establish efficient training and education systems that will enable the youth in all parts of the province to access further education and employment opportunities. The first phase of the programme, which is nearing completion, has seen 2 013 unemployed youth accessing learnership programmes across the province. Of this number, 1 693 learners have completed with an 88% competency rate. The programme focussed on building skills in the areas of Agriculture, Infrastructure, Manufacturing, Tourism and Business Development. Our challenge is to make sure that these learners find employment and continue to access workplace training to ensure that they qualify as artisans. We commend the Department of Public Works for absorbing 158 of these learners as Trainee Artisans.

In this regard we would like to acknowledge the role played by our partners in skills development. These include Tertiary and FET institutions, SETA's, in particular MERSETA, East London and Coega IDZs as our implementing agents, as well as community projects and local businesses for hosting learners. We would not have succeeded in this programme were it not for your contribution.

Furthermore we have established a joint initiative between the Department of Education, MBSA/Daimler in Germany, and MERSETA to enhance employability of FET College graduates by exposing them to further training and workplace experience. Honourable Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge the four-member German delegation, amongst us today, led by Mr. Hartmut Mattes, Head of International partnerships in vocational education and training in the Ministry of Education in Baden. This is a true testimony that our partnership with the Province of Lower Saxony is maturing.

In our endeavour to improve access to tertiary education, we have also reviewed and are implementing our provincial bursary policy to ensure that it addresses the plight of the poor and the disabled. The policy, which is implemented through the National Students Financial Aid Scheme, caters for support to students studying in fields of scarce and critical skills required for provincial growth and development.

Honourable Speaker, the Manifesto of the African National Congress and the Provincial Strategic Framework call on us to work together and double our efforts to improve the health profile of the Province. This should result in a long and healthy life for all South Africans. This outcome is highly dependent upon us ensuring that we live and promote healthy lifestyles.

It is therefore against this background that as a Province we commit ourselves to ensure an efficient and quality public health system as the majority of the inhabitants of the province currently make use of these facilities. To this end, we have accepted the National 10 point plan as a strategy, and have already incorporated this into our provincial transformation plan. We have already started funding the health mandate on an incremental basis so as to address previous funding shortfalls. In this respect, the Department of Health will also be looking at Preferred Provider arrangements with medical schemes and thus embark on revenue generation. We are improving governance, management and stabilization of the Department in order to improve delivery efficiency with a particular focus on Primary Health Care and the District Health Model.
We are implementing the national mandate announced by President Zuma on the occasion of International AIDS Day in 2009 regarding combating of HIV and AIDS through the Comprehensive HIV Plan. Through the Eastern Cape Aids Council, the Province has adopted the Provincial HIV and AIDS Strategy in line with the National Strategy. In this regard we will be launching our HIV and AIDS Counselling and Testing programme in OR Tambo District in April this year. This will include increasing access to ARVs. Other communicable diseases like TB & measles have also been prioritized. In line with our call to improve the health profile of our nation, we call on the community to act responsibly. We already face a huge burden of disease with HIV and AIDS; TB; treating people injured in road accidents; substance abuse especially alcohol; high circumcision mortality. Most of these diseases and deaths are preventable.

We will improve our public health infrastructure provision through the revitalization program using public private partnerships; and incremental increases to the infrastructure budget to improve maintenance of the existing infrastructure. Also included in this year's plan is a pharmaceutical management improvement programme, and a plan to address the Emergency Medical Services.

Honourable Speaker, in the coming financial year, we will also, under the guidance of the national Department of Health, prepare for the implementation of the National Health Insurance system. This system will, among other things, help to give everybody more equitable access to healthcare services.

Over the medium to long term, we will continue to address the attitude of staff, replace and maintain our health equipment, ensure sufficient levels and the on-time supply of essential materials and drugs, build strong management teams and ensure more delegation of authority to those who need to make quick decisions.

Primary health care remains the frontline of improving the health profile of the Province, and we are accordingly committed to work together with the local sphere to ensure successful implementation of the provincialisation of primary health and the devolution of municipal health services.

Honourable Speaker, the fight against crime and corruption is being intensified on all fronts. We will continue with vigorous oversight of the South Africa Police Service to monitor transformation and to ensure greater accountability. To this end, we will evaluate 85 Police Stations to measure effectiveness of service delivery.

It is critical for all of us to be patriotic South Africans in the fight against crime as our success depends on partnerships with the community. Thus our Provincial Crime Prevention Strategy is centred around assisting municipalities to promote 25 Community Safety Forums; establishing and supporting village and street committees; and strengthening the 191 Community Policing Forums in the Province. We congratulate the community members who were elected in November 2009 to serve on the Provincial Community Policing Board for the next 5 years, under the Chairpersonship of Mr Ray Maqutyana. We commend their spirit of voluntarism and for responding when duty calls.

During 2010/11, we will mobilize communities to participate actively in 85 crime prevention campaigns and 45 safer schools projects to create a conducive environment for learning and teaching for our children and educators, and to reduce crimes against women and children.
Our province has in recent times experienced incidents of high road accident fatalities. We appeal to our people to heed the call of Arrive Alive. We will show zero tolerance to drinking and driving to promote road safety, using the 12-point driving licence demerit system as a key tool when this comes into effect on the 1st of April this year. Rural safety is also critical, and strong measures will be introduced to reduce cross-border crime, particularly stock theft.

Reducing the number of fire-arms and ammunition in circulation is an important part of our strategy to combat violent crime. We support the fire-arms amnesty declared by the Minister of Police and hence we call upon our people to make use of this opportunity to surrender illegal fire-arms by 11 April 2010.

The fight against corruption has gained momentum in the last financial year, particularly with the resuscitation of the Provincial Anti-Corruption Forum. In implementing the Anti-Corruption Learning Network resolutions, we will ensure that the financial disclosure framework is extended to all the categories of employees that are involved in the supply chain management processes. We will intensify our efforts to uproot this scourge through awareness programmes to inculcate a culture of intolerance towards corrupt activities. Active participation and commitment by politicians and senior officials in driving the fight against corruption is key to achieving this outcome.

Honourable Speaker, building a developmental state, improving the public services, and strengthening democratic institutions is also one of our priorities for this term.

Accordingly, we have developed a Public Service Transformation Strategy which aims at creating a developmental, caring, accountable and responsive government. In this regard we are reviewing the orientation of our Human Resource Development model so that it puts more emphasis on areas of training that are of relevance to the posture and tone that our government is seeking to portray. Part of this endeavour will be to ensure that all positions of Heads of Departments are filled early in the new financial year.

As Provincial Government we remain focused on realising our equity targets in relation to gender and disability in particular. We will continue to engage our social partners in the disability and women’s formations. In this regard we are engaging with a broad coalition of women’s organisations and the national Ministry for Women, Children and People with Disabilities to sharpen our mainstreaming efforts.

Honourable Speaker, the House will recall that we announced last year that a Provincial Planning Commission would be established in the Office of the Premier in order to improve coherence in Government planning and policy coordination in the Province. A conceptual framework for the Provincial Planning Commission, outlining its vision, character, critical tasks and basic structure has been developed. Following our stakeholder consultation process, our intention remains that this capacity will be in place in Government in the next financial year.

We are encouraged by the Outcomes and Outputs approach to service delivery introduced by our National Government, and announced by the President in his State of the Nation Address last week. We are engaging with other spheres of Government and we have moved quickly to review our coordination arrangements to ensure that we are in line with the outcomes approach.
Our success as Government depends on the effectiveness of local government as the key site of service delivery. To this end, a diagnostic assessment was conducted and a Local Government Turnaround Strategy has been developed. The Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, supported by the Office of the Premier and Provincial Treasury, will lead the implementation of this Strategy in the Province.

The Provincial Government is also implementing a “Clean Audits by 2014” Campaign spearheaded by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. We are working closely with Municipalities in making sure that we strengthen and instil good financial governance. This will go a long way in restoring people’s confidence in the sphere that matters most, Local Government.

Similarly, the audit outcomes of departments in the province have been highlighted as an area requiring attention, particularly in the Departments of Education and Health. While we have noted good progress made in this area in the last financial year, with the majority of Provincial departments having achieved unqualified audits, we will not rest until all departments are able to fully account for all resources placed in our hands.

At the core of our programme for transforming the public sector is our effort to strengthen coordination and integration of all government programmes. This includes strengthening coordination within Provincial Government and coordination among the spheres of Government. In that regard, at the end of last year we adopted a Provincial Inter-Governmental Relations Strategy. The Premier’s Coordinating Forum will monitor that the Protocols agreed to in the Strategy inform the nature of our engagements across government spheres.

Honourable Speaker, last year, following the decisive renewal of our mandate to govern this Province for a fourth term, we embarked on an Executive Council Outreach, where we listened to the concerns of our people. We will undertake a similar campaign during April this year.

The House will recall that in December 2009 we passed a Bill repealing the Promotion of Youth Affairs Act, effectively dissolving the Eastern Cape Youth Commission. Following discussions between ourselves and the National Youth Development Agency, we are currently finalising the transfer of ECYC staff to the NYDA. The Provincial Government will, of course, ensure that youth development remains a key service delivery concern. To this end, a Youth Desk will be established within the Office of the Premier. I must take this opportunity to thank the Commissioners of the ECYC for the sterling work they have done in leading youth development in the Province.

Our commitment in the 2009/10 SOPA was that we would be enrolling 1000 young people in the National Youth Service programme. Today I am happy to announce that we have already recruited 500 with the remaining 500 to be recruited in the 2010/11 financial year.

Honourable Speaker, part of the work we have done over the last twenty years includes the development of policy and legislation aimed at ensuring that traditional leadership is given its proper place in our system of democracy. Today, I am pleased to announce that, on 05 March 2010, we will be opening the new state-of-the-art premises of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, which is the first of its kind in the whole country.
Honourable Speaker, the task of nation-building and national identity requires that consistently we build cohesive, caring and sustainable communities. Work in this priority includes a response to the challenge of social fragmentation as manifested through high levels of poverty, domestic violence, criminality, teenage pregnancy, decline in social values and declining levels of social solidarity.

Part of social cohesion is the responsibility of each person to develop a common attachment to the country, the Constitution and national symbols. In advancing this message, the Province has initiated a range of activities, which will contribute to the development of a national identity.

Through the Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, we have facilitated the establishment of significant structures for the preservation of the provincial heritage, such as the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority and the Provincial Geographical Names Committee, with a view to fast-tracking transformation of the province’s cultural landscape in a manner that promotes nation-building whilst at the same time deepening and strengthening national identity.


It is of great concern to us that there are many orphans and vulnerable children in the Province. Of these children, we have provided 3271 with full school uniforms. We have placed 552 children in 83 community-based Cluster Foster Homes, and 173 children were re-united with their families through alternative care institutions. We will redouble our efforts in seeing to it that there are no destitute children, that the causes of children being on the streets are progressively eliminated.

Honourable Speaker, the fact that we are a mere one hundred and eleven days away from hosting the biggest spectacle in the world confirms to all who doubt, that we are rising! Whereas we were held, twenty years ago, as the “skunk of the world” according to Madiba, it is us today who are ready to embrace the multitudes of soccer fans to our shores. As a Province we have done particularly well in preparing for the successful hosting of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup. Our stadium in Nelson Mandela Bay Metro was the first to be finished in the whole country and this was far ahead of the schedule. Work is also progressing well in the other towns like East London and Mthatha for the practice pitches.

Our country and our Province will not be the same again, because we have done everything to ensure that in their wake, these games leave a legacy upon which even more advances to a better life can be built. Let us therefore rise in support of the FIFA 2010 Soccer World Cup. Let us all support the Football Friday initiative by wearing soccer jerseys on Fridays. Let us show the peoples of the world as they converge in our country the true spirit of Ubuntu. Let us support out national team Bafana-Bafana and pray that they overcome Mexico on the 11th of June 2010, that they
prevail on Uruguay on the 16th of June 2010, and that they defeat France on the 22nd of June 2010. Let us rise on these days and say “Makwedini! Niyabasaba na?!!

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members and fellow citizens of the Eastern Cape, as with Maya Angelou, I ask you to rise and take charge of your own destiny.

Accordingly, the order of the day is that let us work together to speed-up effective service delivery to the People!

I thank you