

**Address to the Limpopo Provincial Legislature by MEC Soviet
Lekganyane on the occasion of the Budget Vote 11 Speech of
the Department of Local Government and Housing, 18 June
2009, Lebowakgomo Legislative Chambers**

Honourable Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Legislature,

Honourable Premier, Mr. Cassel Mathale

Colleagues in the Executive Council,

Honourable Members of Parliament

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature,

Executive Mayors and Mayors of local municipalities,

Chairperson and Members of the House of Traditional Leaders,

Our esteemed Majesties and Your Royal Highnesses present,

Leaders of Chapter Nine and Ten Institutions,

Leadership of the ANC and other political organisations,

Stalwarts and veterans of our struggle,

Leadership of various religious denominations,

Women, Youth, Business, Labour and Community leaders present

here,

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished guests, comrades, ladies and gentlemen

Our icon, the first President of a democratic South Africa, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela spoke at the funeral of his friend, brother and comrade, Oliver Reginald Tambo and he said:

“A great giant who strode the globe like a colossus has fallen.

We say he has departed. But can we allow him to depart while we live? Can we say Oliver Tambo is no more, while we walk this solid earth? Oliver lived not because he could breathe. He lived not because blood flowed through his veins. Oliver lived because he had surrendered his very being to the people. He lived because his very being embodied love, an idea, a hope, an aspiration, a vision. I say that Oliver Tambo has not died, because the ideals for which he sacrificed his life can never die. While the ANC lives, Oliver Tambo cannot die!

O.R. cannot be consigned to the past, while those who are with us today from the rest of the world remain as they have been, opponents of the apartheid crime against humanity, proponents of the common vision of justice and peace, defenders of the right of the child, the man, the woman and the beast of the forest to live, to be free and to prosper”.

On the 22nd of April, millions of our people went to the polls to exercise their democratic right to vote for a government of their choice. By overwhelmingly renewing the mandate of the African National Congress, our people kept Tambo's ideals alive. In doing this they agreed with former President Mandela that whilst the ANC lives, Oliver Tambo cannot die.

In the last fifteen years our government has made strides and registered considerable progress in the fight against poverty and underdevelopment in pursuance of Tambo's ideals. In the next 5 years we will be putting our shoulders to the wheel and accelerating the pace of service delivery because we are working in the name of the dead. We can never rest when we know that OR Tambo, Chris Hani, Peter Mokaba, Lawrence Phokanoka, Norman Mashabane and Frans Mohlala are watching.

We dare not fail. In renewing the mandate of the ANC to govern; our people are approving what we've done in the past 15 years and are saying together we can do more.

The former leader of Ghana, a Pan Africanist, Kwame Nkrumah said "Revolutions are brought about by men, by men who think as men of action and act as men of thought."

A lot of consultation, thinking and planning has gone into the programme we are unveiling here today. The people's contract we have entered into demands that we must work together to accomplish the goals we've set for ourselves.

We begin this term with the Department of Local Government and Housing rated as the number one Provincial Housing Department in the country. The adjudicators of the Govan Mbeki Housing Awards were particularly impressed with our consistency, innovation, quality and excellence in housing delivery.

A recent Professional Management Review Africa (PMR Africa) survey has placed us as at the top "as the department doing most to improve service delivery in Limpopo". All these attest to the fact that the partnership with our people is bearing fruits and we need to harness that energy and accelerate the pace of delivery.

Honourable Speaker,

We begin this fourth term of a democratic government mindful of the fact that reversing the legacy of more than 300 years of colonialism and apartheid will take hard work, dedication and a lot of patience. Through the various platforms that we have created to keep in constant contact with our people, we have established where the challenges are and we are well on course to bring about a better life to the people of our province and country.

A recent customer satisfaction survey conducted in all provincial growth points between December 2008 and April 2009 shows that Sixty percent (60%) of participants were satisfied with the services they received from their respective municipalities. In welcoming this positive feedback, we also recognize the urgency to accelerate the pace of delivery, particularly at the local level which is the coal face of service delivery. We must rise to this challenge!

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Honourable Speaker

Nelson Mandela said “Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom”.

Our work within the Local Governance sphere is premised on this understanding, that poverty is not natural and must be eradicated.

The local government sector has transgressed through the establishment phase, consolidation phase; hence the focus is currently on sustainability & stabilizing our municipalities. Since the 2006 elections, we have been hard at work to ensure that “local government works better” for our people.

We have passed the middle point i.e. Mid- Term of the democratic local government. All municipalities have received support from us in critical key performance areas. The Local Government Strategic

Agenda was introduced in 2006, thus we are able to report in line with the 5 key performance areas.

Municipal Transformation

Honourable Speaker, Project Consolidate has shown us that municipalities require more in terms of mainstreaming hands-on support. We have been able to improve on performance management in line with regulations, wherein the signing of Performance Agreements has improved to 90%. The submission of Annual Reports has also improved to 90% as compared to 55% in 2006/07. We can proudly report that top management's filling of posts has stabilized with Chief Financial Officer's (CFO's) posts filled at 70%.

We have further developed programmes that are geared at strengthening institutional transformation and improving capacity such as Leadership and Project Management training offered by the University of Limpopo to our municipalities.

Capacity building programmes remain the key pillar to continuously support municipalities and ensure that innovative

programmes are implemented to improve efficiency. The department has developed a Provincial Capacity Building Strategy covering all the key performance areas.

Basic Service Delivery

Honourable Speaker,

The level of basic service delivery has significantly improved in the province. In 2005 less than 60% of our people had access to water and electricity. Today, more than 82% have access to clean piped water and 83% have access to electricity. However, there is still a need to channel more funding to improve the state of Waste Water Treatment Works in the province. In 2007/08 the province had an allocation of just below R1 billion for Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) and 99% has been spent on infrastructure development. We have been able to align MIG programmes to Extended Public Works Programmes. To date 50% of the MIG allocation has been utilized within the EPWP principles. This will create job opportunities for our people.

Eskom is currently implementing a R121 Million Integrated Electricity Programme in the province. Through this we hope to electrify more villages as we intensify the development of the rural areas. We want to encourage our people to continue to conserve energy to allow us to reach the 17% of the population that still don't have access to electricity. On the 12th of this month (last Friday), we were in Ndindani Village to do an official electricity switch-on for more than 500 households. Ndindani falls within the Giyani Municipality. It's just a stone's throw from Muyexe identified by our government as a pilot project for rural development. Our department will be intervening with other services to further empower our people living there. The Chief of Ndindani is here with us today. He and his people are witnesses that working together we are able to do more.

Good Governance & Public participation

In 2003/4 all municipalities recorded late submission of Annual Financial Statements; in the 2007/08 financial year, we only had 5 late submissions. Our target remains 100% compliance. Working together we will achieve this.

In the line with the Premier's call to root out corruption in the public service, we have supported 50% of the Municipalities to develop anti-corruption strategies. Our municipalities know and understand that this administration has adopted a zero tolerance on fraud and corruption. We would like to urge all our people to work with us and utilize the toll-free number to be set-up in the Premier's office.

Honourable Speaker

My Councillor and I

Our innovative and interactive award winning programme "My Councillor and I" will be extended to cover all the electronic and more print media platforms in our province. We do this because we must continue to enhance our outreach programmes and interactions with our people. Our people must access their leaders and have their queries and questions answered.

In this regard, we want to commend the communities within Molemole and Belabela Municipalities for speaking out when they thought things were not going well in their localities. This is their government and when they "march" they do so because they know

that we will listen and respond accordingly. Ours should be an activist government. We believe in a participatory democracy, and therefore call on all our people not to be spectators but join hands with us because working together we can do more.

The stake-holder's relationship has improved in municipalities with functional complaints system being implemented in 80% of our municipalities. A comprehensive leadership programme to strengthen political oversight role has been implemented jointly with SALGA. As part of capacity building programme, we are geared towards cooperativeness hence the Premier has been able to continuously meet with Mayors in order to develop a robust local governance strategic agenda.

We have come a long way, a lot of ground work has been covered; we know where we are and we also know where we want to go. We indeed have a plan to make local government work better through cooperative governance.

The following programmes will be implemented over three years:

2010

The department has worked very closely with Polokwane Municipality to ensure that Limpopo hosts a successful 2010 tournament. Through our support, the Polokwane Municipality has developed a disaster management plan for the Peter Mokaba Stadium.

Financial Management and Viability

Honourable Speaker

We have agreed with our municipalities that we want to see a reduction on the number of negative audit opinions in line with the 2014 target. In the past financial year, there has been a significant improvement. Eight (8) Municipalities moved from a disclaimer to a qualification. These are positive result as it shows improvement on disclosures and submission of key documents during audit processes. Furthermore, four municipalities have managed to attain clean audit reports. Such improvements are realized as municipalities have been able to prioritise establishment of internal audit and supply chain units. 96% of municipalities have established those units. We want to take this opportunity to congratulate Musina Local Municipality for having received

unqualified audit opinions for more than four (4) years in succession. This impressive record won them the ZK Matthews Award for the “best performing municipality of the ANC”. That’s not all; Musina is also the winner of the Vuna Award for being the “best local municipality in Limpopo”. The Vuna Award for the “Best District Municipality” was won by Waterberg District Municipality.

Honourable Speaker

The implementation of the Municipal Property Rates Act (MPRA) is critical as it enables municipalities to collect revenue. In the past financial year, sixteen (16) municipalities with the support of the department have been able to develop valuation rolls and thus implement the MPRA.

This year we will be focusing on the following programmes:

- Monitor the implementation of capacity building strategy in all municipalities to develop skills in areas of town planning and accounting.

- Develop retention strategies to minimise staff turnover particularly on scarce skills and strengthen performance management system.
- Continue to implement a dedicated hands-on-support programme focusing on all municipalities in relation to financial management and systems in order to reduce negative audit reports in at least 8 municipalities.
- Support 10 municipalities with the implementation of revenue enhancement strategies.
- Support municipalities to re-prioritize MIG and develop a comprehensive plan to upgrade WWTW in the province, targeting 26 Waste Water Treatment Works.
- Target to implement 60% of MIG budget through EPWP principles to further create jobs.
- Development of Comprehensive Infrastructure Plans in all ten (10) growth points municipalities.
- Develop Spatial Development Frameworks for Modimolle and Mookgopong municipalities, which will form part of revitalization of towns in the province.

Honourable Speaker

We are confident that working together with our municipalities and our people we will successfully implement these programmes. We further commit to a more coordinated planning and acceleration of infrastructure development. In order to accomplish this, we have set aside R3,7 billion over three years through MIG to ensure that we change the face of Limpopo and leave a proud legacy for our children.

Honourable Speaker,

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Raymond Williams said “The human crisis is always a crisis of understanding; what we genuinely understand we can do”.

We know and understand what we need to do to provide shelter for our people. The Freedom Charter enjoins us to create a country where slums are eradicated and in their place, decent, secure communities are created where our children can grow up in dignity to respond to their responsibilities as citizens.

No country in the world provides free housing for its people. None anywhere. South Africa is the only country to do this.

Our government has already built close to 3 million homes across the country. As Limpopo our contribution is over 300 000. It means more than 1.3 million people in this province live in homes built by government. To put in perspective, it means the homes we have built in Limpopo can accommodate the entire population of Swaziland.

Critics will be quick to remind us of the remaining backlog. In addition there is the challenge of incomplete housing projects. We know and understand how we got where we are and that's why working together with our people we will address this.

We have identified developers and contractors who have disappointed and failed us in the past by abandoning projects. The department has built capacity to ensure that all contractors are properly screened and previous performance records are taken into account prior to allocation of new projects. We will not work with people whose action or inaction derails our programme of improving the lives of the poor and needy. The woman in the

shack, the man sleeping on the street and the child walking barefoot to school cannot wait for another day, their situation demands answers today.

Honourable Premier, last week we received a text message (an sms) from Solomon Seunane representing the community of Ga-Mohokone. It reads, “We are still waiting for RDP houses allocation of 2006. We raised it with former President Motlanthe and we made several follow-ups with the contractor. We appeal to you to make an urgent intervention as some beneficiaries are orphans”.

We urge all our people, traditional leaders and stakeholders to act like Mr Seunane. Be our eyes and ears. Wherever you see unfinished projects, alert us, wherever you see a destitute family or orphans that need urgent help, alert us. We have already responded to Mr Seunane’s plea by appointing a new contractor who has been given very clear instructions to complete all the homes allocated to that community.

Of course there are progressive developers who don’t only complete their projects on time but build good quality homes.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their partnership and for always responding to our call for assistance whenever we do. At their own cost, they continue to build homes for destitute families. Indeed, these actions show that our people, specifically our housing stakeholders, understand the importance of partnering with government to accelerate housing delivery. It reaffirms that indeed working together we can do more.

Honourable Speaker

The intention of aggressively pursuing the integration of our communities has been articulated. Through the Breaking New Ground policy, we want to bring people closer to places that offer them better economic activities by building Integrated and Sustainable Human Settlements. We are no longer just building houses but human settlements.

This policy entrenches the idea of sharing settlement space regardless of race, class and social standing, thus promoting social integration. Put bluntly, our task is to plan and build human settlements in a way which is integrated, coordinated and holistic. The settlements we are creating must be centres where people

can play, stay and pray. Places where people will live, learn and leisure.

Despite the economic down turn, Limpopo is among the three provinces whose economies have continued to grow more than the national average. This continues to attract a consistent flow of investments to the province. Rapid urbanization is moving in tandem with the growth. In this regard, forward-planning is very crucial. The Housing Grant investment is informed by the National Spatial Development Perspective and the Breaking New Ground plan. Both emphasize the need to focus on migration of people rather than places. In addition the province has been able to identify provincial growth points in order to channel resources. Accordingly, our key focus will be the revitalization of towns which have economic potential for job creation. We have already initiated the process of revitalizing Motetema whilst our plans for Jane Furse Township establishment are at an advanced stage. This should serve as a catalyst to the economic development of Sekhukhune and there's no doubt that the economic spin-offs will result in the empowerment of our people.

Honourable Speaker

Flowing from our forward planning processes we have taken the approach of multi-year planning and implementation of housing programmes. This approach allows us to acquire land and put services in one year and build houses the following year. This approach has become even more critical as we embark on more integrated and sustainable human settlements projects.

In the next 5 years, this government will not neglect the so called “gap market”. Housing affordability has become a huge challenge for some civil servants, police, nurses, teachers etc. We are constantly innovatively adjusting our programmes to cater for this growing challenge. Despite the delays as a result of the economic meltdown, the servicing of sites is soon to commence on the Integrated and Sustainable Human Settlement in the suburb of Bendor, at Ext 100. We have engaged the Housing Development Agency to provide capacity support for the implementation of the project. In Mokopane, we’ve already completed close to 2000 units of the Presidential Project. Other Integrated and Sustainable Human Settlements are planned for Lephalale, Tubatse and Phalaborwa. With regard to the proposed Ramatlhodi Park in Polokwane, the Land Claims Commission is moving towards the

resolution of that dispute and once the matter is concluded, our department will be ready to begin with the development of an Integrated Human Settlement.

As a developmental state, we know that if we don't intervene on behalf of our people, finding decent shelter in these areas would be impossible for them. We are undoing the legacy of apartheid and integrating our communities. We are thinking like people of action and acting like people who think.

Honourable Speaker,

Our work in Human Settlements is primarily to give our people their dignity back. In this regard, we have fast-tracked the registration and transfer of houses in terms of the Extended Discount Benefit Scheme. Whereas, the apartheid regime made it impossible for most of our people to own their four roomed houses by subjecting them to a ridiculous 99-years lease agreement over their properties. The ANC government has brought about change to this appalling situation. Close to 7000 title deeds have been given back to our people under the Discount Benefit Scheme. This is what happens when we work together...we can do more.

Rural Development & Massive programme to build social and economic infrastructure

In our effort to address past and current social inequalities we will focus on people and not places. We will ensure that future settlement and economic development opportunities should be channeled into activity corridors and nodes that are adjacent to or link the main growth centres. This means Infrastructure investment should primarily support the integration between rural and urban areas. We will focus on:

- The compilation of a Provincial Housing Demand Database
- The construction of 3000 homes under Rural Housing Programme
- The Construction of 50 units towards the creation of Agri-Villages or farm worker housing.
- Construction of 100 units under Community Residential Housing
- We are planning 250 units under People's Housing Programme
- Under Emergency Housing, we've got 368 units allocated to respond to any emergencies.

- We shall be unblocking over 3 210 blocked projects
- To fast-track the process of Informal Settlement Up-grade we'll complete over 7 000 units in this financial year.
- We have set aside 100 subsidies to build homes for our Military Veterans
- We shall transfer 2 786 title deeds to our people

Honourable Speaker

The toll-free number (0800 NTSHEBELE) continues to give our people access to the department to raise any queries or questions they may have pertaining to matters of housing and service delivery. Currently the call centre averages 900 calls per week and the monthly reports consistently show that 99% of queries get resolved timeously.

Honourable Speaker

Nkrumah said “Revolutions are brought about by men, by men who think as men of action and act as men of thought.”

It took men and women of action to get together in 1944 to form our revolutionary youth movement the African National Congress Youth League to work for the social and economic liberation of young people in this country. As we celebrate the 65th anniversary of the formation of the ANCYL this year, our thoughts are firmly on the actions that we still need to undertake to empower the youth. Through the Sakhasonke programme we have trained 214 youths in construction trades jointly with Umsobomvu Youth Development Program, and the National Home Builders' Registration Council (NHBRC).

We will unapologetically seek to empower young people and rural women as we engage developers and other partners in our programmes.

Honourable Speaker

We are pleased to report to this house that once again we have been able to spend 100% of our Housing Grant Budget, as well as the entire budget of the department. We shall continue to heed President Zuma's call of no roll-overs. We have been able to record this achievement despite some serious challenges.

In the coming five years we will confront all these obstacles head-on. These include:

- Government-owned land which is mostly peripheral – located far from socio-economic amenities;
- Strategically located land that is privately owned
- Some municipalities have no land at all

Working together we can and must find solutions to these challenges.

Honourable speaker,

The increased migration of people to economic growth towns in municipalities such as Greater Tubatse, Lephalale and Phalaborwa poses a human settlement challenge. The search for better economic opportunities, influenced mainly by growth in the mining sector in the province, also means a search for accommodation.

Over the next 5 years, we will work together with our municipalities to address this challenge. In response to the growth in the

Lephalale area, the department has acquired 500 hectares of strategically located land to be developed into an integrated and sustainable human settlement comprising of close to 6000 units. The township has already been declared and work on upgrading the sewer system has commenced. This presents Lephalale Municipality with an opportunity to intensify the infrastructure development with a view to making its local economy sustainable.

It is against this background that the Provincial Cabinet has established a co-ordination structure to monitor and support key fundamental areas such as skills development, Local Economic Development (LED) as well as job creation.

Honourable Speaker,

We believe in public private partnerships to advance the course of service delivery. Through the “Celebrity Build Partnership” that we have established with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), we have assisted several destitute families across the province.

In Giyani (Homu Village), we were alerted to a plight of three (3) homeless children whose parents had died. We responded with

our partners to not only deliver a house, but ensured that it's fully furnished and becomes a comfortable home. The Rikhotso children are here with us today.

The SABC team led by Regional Manager Mr. Victor Ravhuanzdwo is also here.

Honourable Speaker,

These homes that we built for the poor and needy are not meant for black people only. Poverty knows no colour and we would like to urge the other sections of our population to come forward so that they can also benefit from our programmes. We are pleased that in Polokwane the beneficiaries of our housing programmes reflect the rainbow nation that we are. Mr. Johan Jonker and Ms. Edna Van Rooyen, proud owners of homes in Polokwane ext 75 are here with us today.

We are counted among the best performing departments today because of the sterling work done through the leadership of my predecessor, my comrade and sister, Mme Maite Nkoana-Mashabane. On behalf of the people of Limpopo, we would like to thank her for the contribution and wish her well in her new

responsibilities as Minister for International Relations and Co-Operation.

Allow me to pay tribute to a distinguished and dedicated servant of our people, Mme Mihloti Hetisani. She tragically passed away on Sunday the 14th. Our department is where it is today because of her leadership. At the time of her passing, she was the Acting Head of our Department. Though she is no longer with us, she has left an indelible mark that will not be erased by time. History and the people of Limpopo have recorded her contribution and will remember her kindly.

Honourable Speaker,

During the state of the province address, The Honourable Premier Cassel Mathale spoke about “the creation of no less than 5000 public service job opportunities”. This is critical if we are to improve the capacity of the state to deliver on its mandate. Our department is determined not only to attract the best skilled personnel but we are also taking steps to capacitate the current cadreship.

Under Sector Specific Training and Coordination, Senior Management Members attended an Executive Management

Course through the memorandum of understanding with the University of Limpopo. This will enhance their management skills and thus improve service delivery. It's also an investment on the skills pool of the province. The course is at NQF 7 which is an honours degree level. Our Middle Management Service is also attending a senior management course at NQF 6.

We have awarded Fifty (50) bursaries to thirty one (31) internal and nineteen (19) external students pursuing scarce skills fields i.e. Town Planning, Regional Planning, construction management, Bachelor of Science in Property Studies and Quantity Surveying. Awarding previously disadvantaged students especially external students curbs the poverty gap and creates a rich skills base in the Province. We look forward to increasing the number of bursaries in the next five years.

We will focus on the inculcation of a culture of service excellence as we implement Batho-Pele programmes because we want to improve on service delivery, client satisfaction and resolution of clients' enquiries.

Our budget will thus look like this for the year 2009/10:

**LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND
HOUSING BUDGET FOR 2009/10 FINANCIAL YEAR**

BUDGET SUMMARY BY PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME	VOTED AMOUNT R'000
1. Administration	186,063
2. Housing	1,069,581
3. Local Government	145,590
Total	1,401,234

BUDGET SUMMARY BY ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION

ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION	VOTED AMOUNT R'000
Current Payments	389,413
Compensation of employees	250,578
Goods and Services	138,835
Transfers and Subsidies	1,008,848
Provinces and Municipalities	9,672
Households	999,176
Payment of Capital Assets	2,973
Buildings and Other fixed structures	393
Machinery and Equipment	2,580
Software and other intangible assets	-
TOTAL BUDGET	1,401,234

Honourable Speaker,

In the last 15 years we made major progress in executing our mandate. We can confidently say that indeed today is better than yesterday and tomorrow shall be better than today. In the next five years we will accelerate the pace of delivery. Fraud, corruption and laziness have no place in our administration.

What we do today determines what will happen tomorrow and how we'll look back at yesterday. It is what makes tomorrow a vision of hope.

In the words of former President Mandela concluding his tribute to Oliver Tambo, "As you strived, we will restore the dignity of the dehumanised. As you commanded, we will defend the option of a peaceful resolution of our problems. As you prayed, we will respond to the cries of the wretched of the earth. In all this, we will not fail."

I thank you