

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature

Honourable Members of the Executive Council

House of Traditional Leaders under Kgoshi Mokoena

Representatives of business, labour and community based Organizations

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Manene namaNenenekazi

Sanibonani, Lotshani, Dumelang, Avuxeni

Good Afternoon, Goeie Dag

1. Madame Speaker it is a happy coincidence that I stand before this august house today, on the second day of what we as South Africans celebrate as Youth Month.
2. Of course, these celebrations have their genesis in the commemoration of the **June 1976 Soweto** uprising, which ended tragically with hundreds of young people killed by the apartheid government when they protested against the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction.
3. As we honour those young people who selflessly fought and died for freedom and the creation of a democratic state, we must also acknowledge the youth of today, whose activism is now trained on the socio economic challenges that confront us all – poverty, unemployment, HIV/Aids, economic freedom and the development of our country and its citizens, in all their diversity.
4. The Office of the Premier, through its Special Programmes Unit, will coordinate a series of events in line with the National Youth Development Agency's Youth Month Programme, under the banner, "**Youth Action for Economic Freedom in Our Lifetime**".

5. Honourable members, some may say it is somewhat clichéd, but we believe that the youth embody our future, and I am sure that no one would consider it ill advised to invest heavily and strategically in securing one's future.
6. South Africa could now be said to be entering its own adulthood as a country. It is an age where those who have come before us, those who have travelled this journey of freedom under a constitutional democracy, can begin to turn to us and ask, "what next?" for this young adult nation.
7. As the Office of the Premier, we will ensure that our youth remain uppermost in our minds as we lead and coordinate our sector departments' efforts to deliver services and drive development.

The Mandate

8. Madame Speaker, we have proved to the world that ours is a democracy that has been built on the will of our people.
9. Our people have seen it all; they have experienced trials and tribulations, and are now also reaping the fruits of our nascent democracy. It has not been easy, and the ongoing journey of building a prosperous South Africa continues to provide us with challenges and opportunities.
10. These growing pains belong to all of us, black and white, as we grapple with and forge a common identity and embrace the brighter future that lies ahead of us.
11. Honourable members, there is no place like **South Africa** and indeed there is no place like **Mpumalanga "The Place of the Rising Sun"**.
12. Madam Speaker on Monday last week, like all people of our continent we were celebrating **Africa day**. We did this with pride and honour remembering some of the prominent and eminent forefathers of this, our continent.
13. We owe our freedom as a continent to towering leaders and trailblazers like **Nkwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Dr Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Sir Seretse Kgama of Botswana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Patrice Lumumba of the DRC, and Samora Machel of Mozambique**.
14. Of course Madam Speaker the list will not be complete if we do not mention some of our own giants like **iNkosi Cetshwayo, inkosi uSobhuza wesibili, inkosi Sekhukhune, inkosi uPhalo, inkosi Albert Luthuli, uDr JS Moroka, u Oliver Reginald Tambo, Walter Sisulu, uTata uMandela** kanye nabanye. Some of these

leaders were detained, tortured and others killed for fighting for our freedoms. We dare not forget them and we dare not betray the course that they were fighting for - the political and economic emancipation of all Africans in the continent.

15. Africa Day remains a stark reminder to all of us that we are born of one mother, we are the children of **Mother Africa**. Therefore there is no need to discriminate against our African brothers and sisters.
16. Madame Speaker, the presentation of our budget allows us an opportunity to reflect on the contributions that we continue to make as an office mandated to lead and coordinate service delivery, transformation and development in our Province.
17. More importantly, it provides us with a platform to share the course we have charted for this financial year, in response to the ever evolving needs and demands of our colleagues and citizens.
18. This Budget cannot be divorced from the core mandate of the Office of the Premier, the context within which we are **structured, resourced and managed** in order to ensure an “efficient, effective and development oriented public service.
19. Madam Speaker, the Office of the Premier operates in a context that is informed by National and Provincial strategic mandates, including the **National Development Plan, the Provincial and National Medium Term Strategic Frameworks, the Mpumalanga Vision 2030 Strategic Implementation Framework and relevant Provincial Policies** – all of which are underpinned by the priorities of the **Manifesto** of the ruling party.
20. The central role of the Office of the Premier, within this context, is to inculcate **good governance and effective public service delivery**. To this end, we continue to position ourselves as proactive and professional.
21. Madam Speaker, we cannot presume to lead and coordinate if we do not ourselves have the right systems, the rights attitudes, the right tools of the trade, and of course, the right people in place.
22. As an Office, we embrace the principles of a “learning organisation” and are always on the lookout for improvements that we can make to enhance the performance of our **processes and personnel**.
23. We want to ensure that our **strategic leadership and expert technical support** adds substantive value to the efforts of our provincial government.
24. We are committed to seeing us all succeed in our efforts to facilitate **social transformation, development and economic growth**.

Enhancing Leadership Capacity

25. This financial year, as implicit in our annual performance plan and budget, focuses on improving our ability to **lead and coordinate development** in the Province. In effect, this means that both our outward and inward looking strategies for the year ahead are premised on the pursuit of a “**centre of excellence**”, a hub of technical and practical expertise that characterises the Office of the Premier and the value that it can and will add to progress, transformation and development in the province.
26. This drive starts first and foremost with our officials and their colleagues across the spheres of government.
27. Last year my Office successfully hosted a **Senior Management Services Summit** that brought together senior officials from across the Province. The event introduced our colleagues to approaches and examples of best practice in senior management and culminated in the signing of a code of conduct recommitting us all to **public service** in the truest sense of the term.
28. This year we will repeat the event as one of the many initiatives that we have in place to drive continuous improvement, accountability and delivery in a professional and **results oriented** public service.
29. Honourable members, a results-oriented public service is mindful of its limited resources and thus requires a coordinated effort that guards against the duplication of functions, systems and services.
30. **Rationalisation and the balanced utilisation** of resources is a key theme for the operations of our Office in the coming year. This will become evident when I detail some of the key programmes and approaches that we have adopted for 2015/16.

Rationalisation of staff in the Mpumalanga provincial government

31. It is our mandate as the Office of the Premier to ensure a balance between “well run and effectively coordinated state institutions” and the overall purpose of our government, which is, “prioritising our nation’s development objectives”. We are therefore compelled to ensure that the Office of the Premier, and indeed the entire provincial administration, is structured, resourced and managed to ensure that we embody, “an efficient, effective and development oriented public service”.

32. It is within this context that we have had to confront the reality that our **wage bill** has continued to escalate in an environment where the pool of resources to deliver services and drive socio-economic development continues to shrink.
33. It is often quipped that “**necessity is the mother of invention**”. As a Province, we have embraced this truism and embarked upon a process of rationalising our staff complement. It was a *de facto* necessity that we cut our expenditure on wages in order to ensure that our resources are more effectively and efficiently applied to meeting the needs and demands of our people.
34. Our Executive Council responded to this situation by placing **a moratorium** on the filling of posts and by abolishing vacant posts, with the exception of the Department of Health (1571 posts), and the Department of Education’s school based teaching posts.
35. As a Provincial government we have, as far as possible attempted to accommodate staff members that have been adversely affected by this difficult, but necessary transition. In these cases we have developed contingency plans for alternative placement, reskilling and training to ensure that our valued employees are able to transition into employment elsewhere.
36. Such radical change, of course, brings with it some uncertainty and discomfort, but it also encourages innovation and increased efficiency as we try to **do less with more**. The process continues, and the Office of the Premier in particular has seen it yield positive results in terms of streamlining and professionalising core functions.

Service Delivery Coordination

37. Madam Speaker, let us start with the core function of coordination.
38. During my State of the Province Address earlier this year I indicated that my office was adopting **a new governance model** to support the coordinated implementation of service delivery interventions aimed at curbing social ills, including the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty, the scourge of HIV/Aids and escalating crime and corruption.
39. It is indeed my pleasure to report to this House that we have adopted the **Mpumalanga Development Coordinating Model (MDCM)**. This service delivery model was informed by the realization that some sections of our communities feel left out in the provincial development dialogue resulting in service delivery protests, increasing inequalities and marginalisation.

40. It became clear that despite the successes that were recorded with the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, a lot more needed to be done.
41. The new approach is aimed at increasing **coordination and communication amongst different stakeholders and across sectors**, which in turn will lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. The model also assumes that with increased participation and communication to and from the communities, the understanding of the complexities of service delivery will also improve, thereby reducing the current level of protests and demonstrations amongst our communities.
42. In simpler terms Madam Speaker what we are doing with this new model taking **power back to the people**. We will capacitate communities and develop a platform for the communities in both rural and urban areas, to participate in their own development processes. Nothing **shall be done for the people without their involvement and participation**.
43. All relevant government departments will participate at the community level where services are delivered. The operations of the new model will start at ward level with **“Ward War Rooms” which will be replicated across the Local and District Municipalities and culminate in a Provincial War Room**.
44. Participation of different government sectors reinforces integration of services and also increases synergy amongst different sector interventions.
45. The war rooms will function not only as **sites for the generation of critical monitoring data**, but as platforms for consultation, engagement and the development of **partnerships** that provide comprehensive and integrated services to communities based on expressed need.
46. At the centre of this model is the establishment of a **Monitoring and Information Management Nerve/Command Centre** that will enable access to spatially referenced data and information that will, quite literally, give us **a real time picture** of the needs and challenges faced by communities across the Province.
47. Various community structures, and the private sector, will play a critical role in involving communities during the planning and implementation phases of the service process.
48. This **service delivery and development coordination** model will be implemented throughout the Province in phases, commencing with a 12 month pilot phase.
49. As the Office of the Premier, our role will be to facilitate the incorporation of this innovative model into our Province Wide M&E Framework, System and existing operational systems and processes.

50. We will ensure that the needs of our people find direct expression in the **planning and budgeting processes** of the Province.
51. By supporting **evidence based planning and decision making** and inculcating a **results-based approach** to our operations, we are equipping ourselves to have a more positive, more tangible and more sustainable impact on social development, economic growth and service delivery in the Province.
52. As such, the **research, planning and monitoring and evaluation functions** in the Office of the Premier remain at the core of provincial **public service transformation**, socio-economic development, good governance and improved service delivery.

Macro Planning and Policy Coordination

53. Over the past year, my Office has been central to providing strategic leadership to ensure that we enhance integrated planning and implementation across government, including local government.
54. In the main, we have sought to strengthen strategic alignment and unity of purpose in our response to development and service delivery challenges facing the Province.
55. With regard to macro planning and coordination, we have provided strategic leadership in the following areas:
 - Ensuring that Departmental Plans are **aligned** with provincial priorities
 - Supporting departments and municipalities in ensuring that the **allocation of resources** responds to key development and service delivery needs of communities
 - Providing technical and advisory support to the work of the Executive Council
56. Through the Premier's Coordinating Forum, we have **improved the level of coordination** in addressing challenges facing local government. We are happy that we are beginning to respond in a more coordinated fashion towards the delivery of key infrastructure such as water and sanitation, roads, as well as the provision of integrated and sustainable human settlements.

Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation

57. As part of our efforts to improve performance and accountability, we have led efforts to institutionalise monitoring and evaluation systems across government. It is the role of the office of the Premier, first and foremost, to ensure that the Executive is **appropriately, comprehensively and timeously informed**, so that decision making is relevant, effective and based on **sound evidence**.
58. Over the past year we have worked hand in hand with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, technical support agencies and all provincial departments to institutionalise our **Province Wide Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and System**.
59. This process has included hands on support to departments to develop and align their own departmental **M&E frameworks**, as well as numerous **technical sessions** with subject experts in the fields of performance monitoring and evaluation.
60. We have seen encouraging signs that our officials are honing their **critical analysis and evaluative thinking skills** – and this is evidenced in the robust interrogations and dialogues that have developed during the presentations of strategic and annual performance plans. We are no longer just checking to make sure that we are “doing things right”, we are engaging strategically to ensure that we are “doing the right things”.
61. Honourable Speaker, last year we undertook, as an office, to lead the implementation of the **Provincial Evaluation Plan**. I am pleased to announce that as the Office of the Premier we have completed **two diagnostic evaluations** for the Province.
62. The first evaluation assessed the viability of **community-based HIV/AIDS risk reduction programmes** that complement existing government front line service delivery systems and strategies.
63. The second diagnostic evaluation examined the feasibility of a range of **funding models that could be applied to attract private sector investment to facilitate economic growth and youth employment** in the Province.
64. The evaluations are currently undergoing a process of **peer review** in line with the DPME’s National Evaluation Policy Framework Guidelines. Following this process we will be implementing a programme of events to ensure that the recommendations are extensively communicated and workshopped with all relevant stakeholders in order to ensure **incorporation into future planning processes**.
65. The Office of the Premier continues to employ the DPME’s Management Performance Assessment Tool (**MPAT**) to assess the **management and operations of government** and the Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring Tool (**FSDM**), which

provides insight with respect to the **state of service delivery sites** in our communities. Linked to this, we are supporting the DPME's **Citizen Based Monitoring** pilot programme in the Province, which adds the citizen's individual impression of service delivery to the overall framework of service delivery monitoring in the country.

66. Albert Einstein said, "*Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count: - everything that counts, cannot necessarily be counted.*"
67. In keeping with the coordination theme, a central task for the Office of the Premier this year will be **streamlining the implementation of the diverse performance and implementation monitoring tools that we have at our disposal**. This prevents the duplication of efforts and resource allocation, and thereby further ensures that **reliable information** translates into results driven action.
68. Honourable members, in the 21st century we cannot discuss streamlining the efforts and boosting the performance of government without acknowledging the critical role that ICT plays in this regard.

ICT Master Plan

69. Madame Speaker, it is a common misconception that when we refer to ICT we are merely talking about the smart gadgets that continue to proliferate in our day to day lives. We are also inclined to think about an "IT challenge" as being limited to a jammed printer or frustratingly slow internet connection.
70. Of course we know that ICT, information and communications technology is an umbrella term for **any communication device or application** from the radio to the satellites in orbit.
71. According to the European Commission, "*the importance of ICTs lies less in the technology itself than in its ability to create **greater access to information and communication** in underserved populations.*" By extension, our challenge is the **application of these technologies** to enhance service delivery and leverage economic development in the Mpumalanga Province. For maximum gain we must ensure that we have a focused and consolidated approach to the utilisation of ICT, across the Province, in our offices and in our broader communities.
72. The Office of the Premier has employed the services of expert transaction advisors to perform a comprehensive diagnosis of **how best we can employ ICT** to support the Province's transformation agenda. This diagnosis has culminated in the development of a Provincial ICT strategy / Master Plan that details specific ICT programs and projects that will deliver on the Provincial ICT vision.

73. To strengthen buy in and to ensure that all sectors participate in the roll out of this strategy, the Office of the Premier will host a **Provincial ICT Indaba** as a platform for dialogue between the provincial government and the communities that it serves.
74. In the spirit of **rationalisation** we are also looking at ways to cut costs and increase efficiencies in respect of the ICT services and licenses currently utilised by government (rationalisation in this regard could yield a 30 – 40% decrease in costs). We have also begun to explore the ways in which appropriately applied ICTs can reduce overall administrative costs for the Province.
75. The proposed development of an **ICT Hub** in the Province will not only enhance our ability to utilise evidence for strategic planning and decision making as we evolve towards **e-government**, but will also position us as a “centre of excellence” in terms of IT services across the public and private sectors.
76. These objectives can only be realised within the context of a supportive telecommunications environment, which includes SA Connect, the country’s broadband plan. In a recent meeting with Telecommunications and Postal Services Minister Honourable Siyabonga Cwele, we agreed to establish a Provincial Broadband Steering Committee to coordinate all broadband initiatives in the province and cooperate in the conclusion of the high-level provincial broadband rollout plan.
77. These developments are encouraging and demonstrate that we are well on our way to delivering **first rate government services** and realising the “dynamic and connected information society” and “vibrant knowledge economy” envisaged in the National Development Plan.
78. Madame Speaker, we have addressed the personnel, the functions and the systems that we intend employing in the coming year to ensure improved performance in the execution of our mandate.
79. Of course, the fly in the ointment, is the ongoing challenge posed by isolated cases of fraud, corruption, maladministration and poor performance that constrain our progress.

Fighting Corruption: Electronic case management system

80. A primary function of the Office of the Premier is that of **coordinating, monitoring and evaluating service delivery** in the Province.

81. This includes tackling, head on, any illegal or unethical activities that directly or indirectly have a negative effect on our ability to serve our people.
82. In past years we have noted an increase in the **number of litigations** against the Province, and an increase in the number of **unresolved investigations and disciplinary cases**. This can partly be attributed to challenges in the administration's **investigative capacity**, but is also attributable to a lack of **consequence management**, which has been reported and emphasised by the Auditor General.
83. As we have noted, information and information management systems are central to the successful execution of our mandate and these applications play a particularly vital role in curbing **maladministration, fraud and corruption**.
84. In the current financial year, the Office of the Premier will take the lead and significantly increase its focus on and **coordination of investigations and litigation matters**. We will work with service providers to assist our integrity management and forensic audit units to address and reduce the backlog of **fraud, maladministration and corruption cases** that currently plagues the Province.
85. To enable the Provincial Government to effectively track and manage the progress with these cases, the Office of the Premier will adopt an **Electronic Case Management System** that will allow for the tracking of trends, improved coordination and effective reporting on and resolution of all pending cases.
86. It is the intention that this secure case management system will support both the reporting of **criminal matters** to the respective law enforcement agencies and the negotiation of **reasonable settlement agreements**, with accurate and dependable evidence.
87. It is envisaged that the **Electronic Case Management System** will radically improve the turnaround time for dealing with corruption, economic crime, fraud and maladministration through the capture and analysis of reliable evidence.
88. Of course, the overall objective is the eradication of these offensive activities, and we acknowledge that an IT system alone cannot relieve us of their burden. As such, the roll out of the System will be accompanied by **training and awareness programmes** for officials and the development of a Comprehensive **Anti-Fraud and Corruption Prevention Strategy** and a **Risk Prevention Plan**.
89. Madame Speaker, I have spoken at some length about the initiatives that we have put in place as the Office of the Premier, to ensure that we are better able to fulfil our mandate.

90. Of course, our mandate also extends to providing leadership in terms of addressing the needs of our most vulnerable citizens – our women, our youth and our older persons.

Target Groups/Special Programmes

91. Honourable members, as a Province, we cannot achieve our objective of a radical transformation of the economy if our youth and women are not actively involved in the mainstream economy. To this end I expect all departments to ensure that their programmes cater in some way for our women and youth's socio-economic development. My office will provide strategic guidance in this regard, and monitor and evaluate progress made in this area by all departments.
92. The Office of the Premier hosted a successful **Youth Summit** early last year and the resulting resolutions have been developed into a Provincial **Youth Programme of Action** that incorporates initiatives linked to job creation and youth empowerment, entrepreneurship and SMME development, education and skills development, and the eradication of social ills.
93. This year we will host a **Women's Economic Empowerment** Summit in August under the banner, "*Opening Doors and Developing Networks for the Sustainable Economic Empowerment of Mpumalanga's Women.*"
94. Once more, in keeping with the principles of the National Development Plan, we will use the Summit as a platform to **forge partnerships with our social partners** in business and civil society to facilitate the economic empowerment of women in the Province.
95. Madam Speaker the welfare of our older citizens sits very close to my heart. The province successfully hosted the **National Golden Games** in October last year. These were hosted at Mbombela Stadium from the 27th till the 31st of October 2014. These games were aimed at promoting active ageing in older persons.
96. We also hosted the **National Senior Citizens Parliament and the National Persons Forum**.
97. Over and above this the **Premier's Dialogues with Older Persons** were hosted in 2014 in the three districts. The primary objective of these Dialogues was to identify issues that concern senior citizens in the province and to come up with solutions – based on these interactions, we now have a comprehensive programme of action to address the needs of these valuable members of our society.

Establishment of commission of inquiry: socio economic conditions of farm dweller in Mpumalanga

98. Madame Speaker, as we are speaking of our efforts to address the plight of our most vulnerable citizens, allow me this opportunity to shine a light on one of the most afflicted, misunderstood, and often unheard sectors of our population, our **farm dwellers**.
99. Allow me too, to provide some background. In 2005, AFRA, the **Association for Rural Advancement**, succinctly defined for us, the often misunderstood moniker / label of “farm dweller”

"Farm dwellers are often perceived as farm workers. They are not — they are rural families who have their homes on someone else's land. And they often have a history on the farm on which they live — their grandparents were born there, their family graves are there. In many cases they are not employed by the owners of the land. They make a life for themselves with limited resources.

100. As the Office of the Premier we have undertaken the establishment of a **Commission of Inquiry** to investigate and report on the living conditions of the farm dwellers in our Province. It will be the duty of this commission to identify critical areas requiring our intervention, including, but not limited to issues related to the protection of human rights, safety, security of tenure, employment, access to housing and basic services, and working conditions.
101. The Office of the Premier will ensure that the appointed Commission has access to the resources necessary for it to conduct its work in a **thorough and professional manner** – including the support and expertise of all relevant officials in the Office.
102. The inquiry and the ensuing reports and recommendations will be utilised to identify the interventions required by the Province to address the livelihoods and living conditions of these rural families. By extension, recommendations will be used to inform the planning processes of our various sector departments in order to ensure that the needs of these citizens are adequately addressed in the medium to long term.

Partnerships with the Private Sector and Foreign Investors

103. Madam Speaker, we have detailed this Office's role in elevating and addressing the needs of our citizens in a strategic and coordinated fashion. We have also mentioned

the systemic and organisational changes that we will effect to improve our performance as an organ of the public service.

104. Let us turn now to another of our core functions, development “**facilitation**”.
105. South Africa is suffering from **structural problems of low economic growth, high unemployment, inequality** and poverty because of the policies of past successive Apartheid regimes.
106. In line with the ideals of the **National Development Plan** (NDP), the province understands that it cannot tackle the triple challenges of poverty; unemployment and inequality alone. It needs to partner with the **private sector**.
107. The Office of the Premier has a pivotal role to play as a **facilitator of strategic socio-economic development projects** and partnerships in the Province.
108. To this end, the Province has **developed a sector approach to development** that is being driven through the **establishment of partnerships** across the various economic sectors.
109. The approach **interrogates sector value chains** to identify bottlenecks and opportunities that will underpin the development of focused strategies, plans and programmes tailored to leverage economic growth.
110. Following this approach, in each sector a handful of programmes with **maximum potential impact** on the goals of the NDP will be isolated and prioritised.
111. The implementation of these programmes will be executed on a project by project basis so that projects are collaboratively identified by both government **and its private sector partners** for joint implementation.

Premier’s Mining Forum

112. The mining sector continues to pose both challenges and opportunities as a fundamental sector for socio economic transformation in the Province.
113. Mining is, for all intents and purposes, the backbone of our economy and as the Office of the Premier, it falls to us to ensure that the **sector is aligned** with the service delivery and socio-economic growth objectives of the Province.

114. The establishment of the **Premier's Mining Forum** has seen us take a purposeful step towards the realisation of the recommendations of the 2012 Mining Summit. The Forum will work to cement productive partnerships, with multiple stakeholders in Provincial and Local Government as well as the private sector. These partnerships will directly benefit local mining communities, and our unskilled and unemployed youth in particular.
115. Unemployment and poverty is paradoxically rife in the areas surrounding the mines that generate so much of our country's wealth.
116. Mines have always symbolised an opportunity for prosperity, but as fortune seekers crowd into the municipalities that are home to our mines, so the burden on infrastructure and basic services escalates.
117. The development of integrated human settlements and sector skills are chief amongst our priorities. Water reclamation and the rehabilitation of mining land are also central programmes envisaged by the Forum.
118. The Forum will develop and implement an institutional model that promotes collaboration and guards against efforts that are fragmented or that fall outside of the development plans of government – together, with a common vision for the sector, we can do more.
119. Many of our planned projects are already underway and their **implementation will be coordinated** by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.
120. The Forum's technical committee is chaired by the Director General, and this structure will further strengthen the implementation capability of this ground-breaking collaborative platform.
121. A prime example of **what is possible** is the **water reclamation project developed in partnership with BHP Billiton, now known as South 32**.
122. The project is almost complete and will be providing the community of Steve Tshwete with an extra 20 mega litres of water per day. This will serve as a catalyst for the attraction of foreign investment to this municipality. Already, **negotiations for a steel investment** company are at an advanced stage because of the availability of water within this municipality.
123. Madame Speaker, as I have mentioned, investment and growth alone cannot suffice. We must make every effort to develop a cadre of skilled, professional and productive youth to drive the development of our priority sectors.

124. I am pleased to report that as a result of numerous partnerships, approximately **three thousand four hundred** learners are identified for vocational and artisan training in the hospitality, construction, engineering and manufacturing sectors.
125. A further one thousand learners, primarily in the hospitality sector, will benefit from learnerships and work placement programmes
126. The multiplier effects of **multi-stakeholder collaboration** and the positive results of strategically **facilitated** partnerships underline the important role that the Office of the Premier has to play as an **apex structure** coordinating Provincial development and delivery efforts.

Strategic Partnerships

127. Madame Speaker, the partnership approach remains central to the core mandate of the Office of the Premier.
128. My office will be establishing similar partnerships within the Agricultural sector; the Forestry sector; the Finance sector, the Tourism sector and the Energy sector. As stated earlier, within each sector, specific projects will be identified, developed and implemented in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders.
129. Let me say at this juncture that as a Province, we are very grateful to our private sector partners who continue to contribute greatly towards the fulfilment of our vision of creating a **National Democratic Society** founded on core values of equality and freedom, human dignity and the progressive realization of socio economic rights.
130. Honourable members, the Province continues to assess the potential gains inherent in the establishment of socio-economic development partnerships and twining agreements with **international provincial governments**.
131. These arrangements are especially beneficial in respect of generating **foreign investment** for our infrastructure projects.
132. Madam Speaker, to ensure that we realise the maximum developmental benefits of the proposed partnership approach, I will be visiting countries overseas to **woo foreign investors**, but also to observe and learn more about the benefits of **public private sector** collaboration.
133. I recently undertook a trade and investment promotion mission to Italy accompanied by a delegation of MECs and officials in the Health, Agriculture and Economic Development and Tourism sectors.

134. The primary objective of the mission was to **attract investment into the Province** and to conclude **bilateral agreements** with the Italian provinces of Puglia and Lombardy – which is the centre of business activity in Italy.
135. Based on the various meetings and site visits undertaken, we have developed a **programme of action** that identifies various areas where partnerships with the private sector and provincial governments in Italy can benefit our Province – I will mention a few of the proposed projects that we are currently investigating further:
- a. The implementation, in Provincial hospitals, of best practice **hospital management** approaches as observed at a PPP hospital funded and managed by the private sector
 - b. The potential for a **doctor exchange and training** programme in partnership with the region of Puglia
 - c. An in-depth assessment of the **Italian cooperatives model** and identify ways in which it can be customised to local conditions to advance economic development and transformation
 - d. Programmes and partnerships to enhance research, skills development and knowledge transfer in agriculture
 - e. The development of an MoU to guide the facilitation of investment by **Italian companies** in Mpumalanga
 - f. The development of a financing model for the delivery of high impact **infrastructure projects** (starting with the Hospital Build Programme)
136. This was the first of many such visits that I intend making during the remainder of my term as the Premier of the Province. Plans are currently underway for me to undertake another trade and investment mission to China.
137. We have no doubt that these partnerships and many more that are yet to come from other countries will propel us further in our quest for a **radical socio economic transformation of our economy**.

Conclusion

138. Madame Speaker, the efforts and results that I have presented today would not be possible without the dedicated support and expert advice of my colleagues.

139. I would like to thank our honourable Portfolio Committee members, the honoured members of the Executive Council, and the staff in the Office of the Premier for their ongoing support and commitment to our office and the citizens we serve.
140. Last but not least I acknowledge and thank my family for their unwavering support and patience during all those hours I spend away from home.
141. Madam Speaker I hereby present the Vote 1 Budget for the financial year 2015/16, which amounts to two hundred and seventy three million seven hundred and seventy three thousand rand, **R 237 773 000** for consideration and approval by this august House.

I Thank You.