

18 February 2011

State of the Province Address by the Honourable Premier of the Northern Cape, Mrs Hazel Jenkins, on the occasion of the opening of the Third Session of the Fourth Democratic Legislature, Kimberley, Northern Cape Province

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker
Members of the Executive Council

Members of the Provincial Legislature
Members of the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces
Honourable Members of the Judiciary

Honourable Consul General of the Peoples' Republic of China, His Excellency, Mr Hao Guanfeng

Honourable Governor of the Karas region of Namibia, Mr B Swartboo

Honourable Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Former Members of the Provincial Legislature
Heads of State Security Services
Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association: Northern Cape

Mayors and Leaders in our System of Local Government
Honourable Traditional Leaders and Veterans of our Liberation Struggle
Heads of the state organs supporting our constitutional democracy
Provincial Public Service Commissioner

Director General and Government Officials

Distinguished guests

The people of the Northern Cape
Ladies and gentlemen

I stand before you this morning filled with a deep sense of pride and joy to present to you, the people of the Northern Cape, my third State of the Province Address under the auspices of the African National Congress-led government and the stewardship of President Jacob Zuma.

As South Africans, we have had the privilege of experiencing constitutional democracy for almost seventeen years and I am of the view that our democratic order and ethos are unparalleled in the recent history of the world. I am also of the view that one man, a global icon and symbol of the oppressed the world over, made an enormous contribution to the liberation of our Motherland. By his very words and selfless actions, this man has been acknowledged as a standbearer of hope, integrity, fearlessness and reconciliation. This man's dignity and warmth knows no bounds. This man is both a source of strength and inspiration, love and humour, hope and encouragement. This man will turn 93 in July this year and we will soon be running out of superlatives and praise for the invaluable contribution he has made in securing the well-being of our Nation. He certainly is embedded in our collective memory and psyche as a Nation. And this man can only be Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

Tata Madiba, on behalf of the people of the Northern Cape, I say "thank you" for all you have done for us. May the good grace of the Lord Almighty be with you always.

Ladies and Gentlemen the substantive aspect of my Address is underpinned by the express premise that this Administration's tenure is, by and large, informed by our sincere and collective desire to primarily serve the needs and the legitimate interests and expectations of the people of the Northern Cape.

Honourable Speaker, in 2009, Government, being mindful of the various challenges that still persist, and taking into account that centuries of apartheid underdevelopment and colonial oppression cannot be addressed in over a decade and a half, adopted the following key priorities to position our country on a developmental trajectory, namely:

- * Education
- * Health
- * Rural development and agrarian reform
- * The fight against crime; and
- * Creating decent work

Although progress has been made on these priorities, we are concerned that poverty and unemployment persists despite our recent economic gains.

In his State of the Nation address, on 10 February 2011 President Jacob Zuma categorically stated that:

"To address these concerns, we have declared 2011 a year of job creation through meaningful economic transformation and inclusive growth.

We introduced a New Growth Path that will guide our work in achieving these goals, working within the premise that the creation of decent work is at the centre of our economic policies.

We urge every sector and every business entity, regardless of size, to focus on job creation. Every contribution counts in this national effort.

President Zuma further remarked that “We are pleased to announce the establishment of a jobs fund of 9 billion rand over the next three years to finance new job creation initiatives”.

Ladies and Gentlemen, to this end, Provincial Government Departments and Municipalities will align their programmes with the job creation imperative, and it is anticipated that MEC’s will announce their job creation targets and more specific details per sector, in their forthcoming Budget Votes.

Honourable Members, I cannot help but quoting from the President’s State of the Nation Address once again when he stated as follows:

“The mineral wealth of our country is a national asset and a common heritage that belongs to all South Africans, with the state as the custodian.

To take advantage of that potential, Government has endorsed the African Exploration, Mining and Finance Corporation as the state Owned Mining Company that will undertake the mining of minerals of strategic significance.

One of government’s priorities this year is also to finalise and adopt the beneficiation strategy as the official policy of Government so that we can start reaping the full benefits of our commodities.”

Ladies and Gentlemen, I assure you all that this Provincial Government will continue to make vigorous inputs to the beneficiation strategy in order that the people of the Northern Cape also derive these benefits on an equitable scale.

Honourable Speaker, education is an important priority area to which this government has paid particular attention to. We are extremely grateful for the Matric Class of 2010 who managed to improve the overall pass rate for grade 12 from 61.3% to 72,3%. This 11% improvement was achieved despite the industrial action and the 2010 World Cup, which had most of the cynics predicting a serious drop in the Matric pass rate. Furthermore, of the 10 182 candidates who sat for the examinations, 21.1% qualified to enrol for Bachelors’ degrees which translates to an increase of 3% from 2009.

The educators and learners of the Class of 2010 have made the Northern Cape proud! These gains will be consolidated through the Programme for Learner Achievement that will henceforth be instructive in informing the Department to focus on school support and development.

Honourable members, part of our obligation in improving learner outcomes is to ensure that we provide comprehensive support to poor and vulnerable learners in the form of "no fee" schools, transportation and nutrition. We will also assist district officials and educators by providing detailed daily lesson plans.

To learners, we will provide easy-to-use workbooks in all 4 main languages of our Province. From this year onwards, all grade 3, 6 and 9 learners will write Annual National Assessment tests in literacy and numeracy that are independently moderated.

Teacher training, especially in Mathematics and Science, will continue apace and special attention will be accorded to the training of principals, particularly those in underperforming schools.

Access to higher education for children of the poor will be expanded and includes the conversion of loans into bursaries for qualifying final year students. Students in further education and training Colleges who qualify for financial aid will be exempted from paying fees.

We will focus on scarce skills to respond to the needs of the province as articulated by the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS). We are investing in a knowledge-based society which is critical to the future success of a nation. Quality education and skills development will continue to be a key driver of innovation and the knowledge economy.

To address the skills shortage in our province, we hereby make a humble plea to big business and state owned enterprises in the Northern Cape to play a key role in skills development to help us provide the technical skills required by the provincial economy.

The Department of Education will consolidate the implementation of its Integrated School Safety Plan during the 2011/12 financial year. A total of 200 schools will participate in the School Safety Emergency Readiness programmes and 100 of them will constitute focus schools participating in the Anti-vandalism Programme.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a well-known fact that the establishment of a university in our Province is a long-standing and fervent wish of the people of the Northern Cape. Whilst we have been able to offer our young people university study opportunities over the past few years, this had to be under the auspices of, and in partnerships with, other tertiary institutions. More work was needed in order to ensure that the province moves closer to having a fully-fledged university with its own identity, with course content that is fresh and unique, and not just inherited from other institutions.

The Minister of Higher Education, Dr Blade Nzimande, in his Budget Vote Speech on 25 March 2010 made the following commitment: "Work towards the establishment of universities in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape will continue this financial year. We are appointing two task teams, with representatives from these provinces, to explore appropriate university models for the needs of these provinces and come up with concrete proposals and timelines. Professor Cheryl de la Rey and Professor Thandwa Mthembu have confirmed their availability to chair these teams and will interact on key issues."

The Executive Council, in its resolve to expedite the establishment of the University, has appointed a Provincial Task Team to make substantive input to its National counterpart. This Administration gives you the undertaking that it will explore every avenue to get the University up and running in the shortest time possible.

Honourable Members, as you are all aware, our country is bidding to host the Square Kilometre Array Radio Telescope (SKA) which is located in Carnarvon in our province. The Northern Cape Province successfully delivered on its commitment to build the Karoo Array Telescope, also

known as the KAT7. This telescope consists of seven dishes which have been connected.

Besides enhancing our capacity for innovation, this project of national significance has already provided 800 job opportunities in our province and will create roughly a further 100 jobs in 2011.

Important work has been done and significant resources have been devoted to this flagship initiative. By all accounts the developments towards the construction of the mega-science radio astronomy project, are progressing well.

The South African SKA Project Office, also known as SASPO, has also commenced with the developments towards the building of the MeerKAT, which will consist of 64 dishes on completion. The project engineers and scientists are already working on the design of the MeerKAT dishes, which will be aligned to those that are likely to be used in the SKA.

Through the collaboration with other African partner countries including, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Ghana, Madagascar and Mauritius, the bid for the SKA is now viewed as an African Bid. The decision on the successful bidder between South Africa and Australia will be made by mid-2012. Considering the significant progress that we have made thus far, I am certain, Ladies and Gentlemen, that you will share in our collective enthusiasm and confidence that our Country will win the bid.

Honourable Members, the successful hosting of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup by South Africa was an incredible experience and had a major and positive impact on our nation and the continent at large. This event united the country and its people like never before, thereby instilling a sense of common patriotism and nationhood. The Province successfully hosted the Uruguayan National Team from 5 June 2010 to 4 July 2010. The Province was able to timeously meet all requirements set by the Uruguay Football Association. In all modesty, we are of the view that the conducive Base Camp conditions and the welcoming nature of our people contributed largely to the success of the Uruguayan Team in the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Through the 2010 FIFA World Cup Legacy Projects, the Province received an amount of R97 million to assist with various World Cup Legacy Projects such as the upgrading of sports facilities at 50 schools throughout the Province; the upgrading of the Northern Cape Theatre, the upgrading of the AR Abass stadium; the provision of Public Viewing Areas in all 5 Districts; the upgrading of the GWK Stadium and the upgrading of sport facilities in the JT Gaetsewe and Pixley ka Seme District areas.

It has created further opportunities for the training of sport administrators, referees and coaches so as to improve participation in sport. As a result, we have thus far managed to train over 113 coaches and administrators. The legacy project will further encourage grassroots development and enhance participation in sport played at schools.

Honourable Speaker, the Province is once more pleased to announce the hosting of two major international events as part of our distinct reputation as a destination of extreme sports, namely the International Maloof Money Cup Skateboarding Championships and the Bloodhound Project

which will be an attempt to break the current world land-speed record.

The International Maloof Money Cup Skateboarding Championships will be held in Kimberley during September 2011. This is the first time that this Championship will be held outside the USA and we will be pulling out all the stops to ensure the successful hosting of this international Championship. The Province has already commenced with a campaign to promote skateboarding in the Province.

The Bloodhound project is an attempt to set a new World Land Speed Record and its main intention is to inspire young people to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics by building a car capable of reaching of 1600 kilometres per hour.

Hosting the Bloodhound Project in June 2012 will not only impact on local economies but will also draw national and international attention, incorporating tourism, infrastructure development, community upliftment, skills transfer and overall economic development for the Northern Cape Province. The Project will also play an integral part in the positioning of the Northern Cape Province as the extreme sports and recreation destination of the world.

These two prestigious events will undoubtedly put our province and country on the international map and will attract tourists and visitors to experience our warmth and hospitality. The Northern Cape Provincial Government has identified Tourism – through the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy – as a crucial and vibrant sector that must contribute to improving the long-term socio-economic well-being of the people of the province.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the quality of health services provided by the Department of Health is also a top priority for the Northern Cape Provincial Government to improve health services across the length and breadth of our vast Province.

In spite of steady progress being made with regard to health services, enormous challenges still remain, for example, the chronic shortage of ambulances. We will be engaging with all role-players and decision-makers to strengthen the provision of health services to our people.

Be that as it may, we are pleased to advise that in order to provide a much needed health care service to our communities, the clinics in Novalspond, Groot Mier, Boitshoko, Riemvasmaak and Mapoteng are nearing completion and will officially open in March this year.

Additional clinics have also been opened in Hondeklipbaai in Namakwa and Olifantshoek and Jan Witbooi in John Taolo Gaetsewe. An upgrade of the Casualty and Records Sections at Galeshewe Day Hospital commenced in 2010 and is scheduled for completion at the end of 2011. This will allow for a 24 hour service to be provided to the community. Through this step, government will significantly extend access to Primary Health Care Services to the people of Greater Kimberley.

A twelve bed Forensic Unit for state patients is under refurbishment at the West End Hospital in Kimberley and will be operational in the first quarter of the new financial year for admission of state patients in compliance with the Mental Care Act 17 of 2002 and the human rights

provisions as contained in the Constitution of our Republic.

The construction of the new hospitals in Upington and De Aar are proceeding as announced in my State of the Province Address last year. With the initial work in the latter case being concluded, we will soon see the walls rising and once more much needed jobs will be created for the benefit of our people.

On the Human Development front, the Department of Health has shown a marked improvement in boosting its human resources with the appointment of medical personnel, professional nurses, environmental health practitioners and dental assistants who have all been placed at facilities to step up the care against HIV and AIDS, TB and other diseases. From the appointed nursing staff, fifty nine were graduates from the Henrietta Stockdale nursing college.

There has also been an official undertaking by the Minister of Health to deploy medical experts comprising gynaecologists, specialists, midwives, etc in July this year to all five Districts.

In terms of training medical personnel, we are, in partnership with Cuba, benefitting from a comprehensive programme where 36 students are being trained to acquire the necessary qualifications to serve our people, especially in remote and rural areas.

However there are still other categories of employees that are classified as scarce skills that remain vacant. Thus, the current vacancy rate in the department remains unacceptably high.

Despite this challenge an opportunity exists for students in the Northern Cape to apply for the numerous bursaries that are on offer both from the Department of Health and the Premier's Bursary Fund. Both are intended to address the capacity deficiencies I have just referred to. The plans of the Department of Health in this regard expressly speak to the commitment of government to create jobs and strengthen the critical capital resources of the Province.

Moreover, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are pleased to report that the Northern Cape has made tremendous progress in the HIV Testing Campaign. To date, 3914 new patients have been enrolled on ART with the testing rate currently standing at 96%. A total of 10 655 new patients will require ART in the new financial year. The provincial prevalence estimate among pregnant women is showing signs of stabilization as shown in the marginal increase by 1% in 2009 in comparison to 16.2% in 2008.

Care and support to people living with HIV and AIDS and their families have been given by a dedicated corps of more than 1524 community health caregivers. These are ordinary people, mostly women, who have with sheer passion, determination and in the true spirit of ubuntu taken it upon themselves to serve our communities with great compassion. This act of altruism is commendable indeed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our government is taking active steps in the fight against crime and corruption which remains one of the top priorities for the Province.

As a Province, we will continue to intensify our fight against crime and corruption. Fighting crime requires will, intensity, creativity and unity. The mass mobilization of Liquor Traders, Traditional leaders, women, youth and religious leaders need to be prioritized to ensure a united front against crime.

Working together with the Public Service Commission, the Independent Complaints Directorate and South African Police Service, a number of cases were received from the Presidential Hotline with certain investigations having been successfully finalised.

A number of community complaints of police inefficiency in the compilation and safe-keeping of dockets were taken up with the police management and feedback was communicated to complainants.

The rebuilding of acceptable societal values and norms cannot be over-emphasised. We need to rebuild the social and moral fibre of our society to do away with crime. A long-term sustainable approach in dealing with substance abuse and the violent nature of crime in our Province has been prioritized for the next financial year. Members of the community are encouraged to join the Community Policing Forums in their respective areas in our collective and united offensive against crime. Remember, the fight against crime is not only the responsibility of the police and other law enforcement agencies. It is therefore our intention to provide support and resources to Community Policing Forums to function with maximum efficiency.

Ladies and Gentlemen, during or about October 2009, I lodged various High Court applications after it had come to my attention that trustees in the Mme Re Ka Thusa Trust Fund had allegedly misappropriated Trust funds. A complex litigation process was subsequently pursued and I am delighted to report that on 12 November 2010, the High Court removed the last remaining trustee and in effect concurred with the investigation that I had instituted which found that state-funded monies had been misappropriated.

In the interim, I have submitted a statement to South African Police Service for the purpose of laying criminal charges against the erstwhile trustees. It is therefore patently apparent that the course of action I initiated is indicative of the zero tolerance the ANC-led Government has adopted against the abuse of state funds.

In pursuance of the court order, I am pleased to announce that I proceeded with the appointment of six new female trustees. It is envisaged that the modus operandi regarding the disbursement of funds of the Trust will complement President Zuma's job creation initiative.

Being mindful of our quest to instil good governance principles in the affairs of state-funded entities, we will also shortly revisit the governance arrangements and structure of the Premier's Bursary Trust Fund. In addition, the manner in which the funds will be disbursed in future will also be re-looked to benefit especially poor and disadvantaged students.

Honourable Members, despite significant progress being made over the last 15 years, people living in rural areas continue to face the harshest conditions of poverty, lack of access to land

and basic services. As government, we are committed to a comprehensive and clear rural development strategy linked to land and agrarian reform, improvement of the conditions of farm workers and farm-dwellers and build the potential for rural sustainable livelihoods.

In this regard, Government will, amongst others:

- * Intensify the land reform programme to ensure that more land is in the hands of the rural poor and will provide them with technical skills and financial resources to productively use the land to create sustainable livelihoods and decent work in rural areas; and

- * Review the appropriateness of the existing land redistribution programme, introduce measures aimed at speeding up the pace of land reform and redistribution and promote land ownership by South Africans.

The Gatlhose community lost 49 000 hectares of their land and now the community in the different locations have opted for a combination of financial compensation, alternative land for agricultural purposes, housing development and development of infrastructure like schools and clinics. Out of 1018 households, 638 opted for financial compensation and 380 have opted for resettlement.

An amount of 35 million rand was paid to 638 households who opted for financial compensation while an amount of 59.5 million rand was put aside for land purchase of 17 000 hectares which will be the full and the final award for the resolution of the Gatlhose claim.

As part of the ongoing settlement of land restitution claims, we will, on 21 February 2011 be handing over 31 million rand to 326 households of Gong Gong restitution claimants.

The Northern Cape Province has developed its Rural Development Strategy to fast-track rural development and improve sustainable livelihoods for communities. The approach to rural development in the Northern Cape reaffirms the importance of getting co-operative governance right and harnessing the energies of other social partners through a provincial team of stakeholders and development coalitions both at district and local levels.

Significant strides have been made in improving the social conditions of the people of Riemvasmaak which is the first Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) pilot site in the Province. The pilot project entails, amongst other tasks, the building of houses, provision of potable water, electricity and the upgrading of roads and community infrastructure.

In the 2011/12 financial year, Government will expand the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) to other rural areas such as Heuningvlei in John Taolo Gaetsewe District, Schmidtsdrift in Pixley ka Seme District as well as all resettled communities in the Province. The rationale for the expansion of the programme is largely informed by many years of deprivation suffered by communities who lost their land due to draconian land laws pursued by the apartheid junta prior to the liberation of our country.

Ladies and gentlemen, agriculture remains one of the core sectors of the provincial economy with enormous opportunities. The Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) has been one of the key programmes that is aimed at supporting agricultural production throughout the value chain specifically targeting historically disadvantaged farmers. CASP funding for 2010/12 is at a tune of R42,403,000, benefiting 3500 farmers. Projects are currently at various stages of implementation and are scheduled for completion by the end of the financial year. 205 temporary jobs were created thus far, from various phases of implementation and 638 farmers have received training on various production, marketing and business management aspects.

In the coming financial year, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Department will spend R42.7 million on CASP. The major projects identified for the coming year are Heuningsvlei as a CRDP node at a cost of R 10 million; Kaboeb in Onseepkans will receive R 3.4 million and Waterdal in De Aar will receive R 3.8 million which will be spent mostly on reviving the ostrich projects in Pixley ka Seme.

In addition, funds from this amount will benefit about 4000 farmers. Among the major projects to be implemented are the revitalization of Warrenton as a rural town; Heuningsvlei bulk water system with co-funding from the Department of Water Affairs and reviving the ostrich projects of small-holder farmers in Pixley ka Seme. It is expected that approximately 450 jobs will be created through various CASP interventions in the 2011/12 financial year.

The implementation of the two major projects under the Ilima-Letsema programme, namely, the Rooibos Tea processing facility and the revitalization of the Vaalharts irrigation scheme will continue. These two are anchor projects for Ilima-Letsema and forms a significant component of job creation initiatives.

The manufacturing of the pasteurizing equipment of the Rooibos Tea facility has been completed. Installation of the equipment commenced in January 2011 and the expectation is that it will be completed and tested during the month of February 2011 and by March this year pasteurisation at the Nieuwoudtville plant will commence.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in recent weeks our province and indeed major parts of our country were struck by devastating floods. Many families have been affected and we extend our condolences to the families who lost their loved ones. We also commiserate with those who have suffered extreme hardship by way of losing all their belongings.

Our government has responded with urgency and compassion to the flood afflicted areas by providing immediate assistance and relief to the affected communities. A Provincial Joint Operations Centre and an Intergovernmental Task Team were set up to monitor the floods and devise strategies to intervene to minimise the damages.

To demonstrate the seriousness of the situation and the commitment of the Provincial Government, we have submitted a signed provincial business plan to the President requesting urgent funding from the Disaster Management Fund to assist with disaster relief and related hardships.

In this regard, National Government has set aside R800 million for immediate relief to assist communities and the Northern Cape's share from this amount will be announced in the relevant Budget Vote in March 2011.

The following departments must also be commended for the active role they have played in responding to the plight of the multitude of displaced people: Department of Social Services who provided food parcels, blankets, mattresses, clothing and trauma counselling; the Department of Health for the mobile clinics and monitoring the outbreak of any diseases; the Department of Education for the recovery plan for learners to catch up in afternoon and weekend classes; and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Human Settlements for assisting to coordinate the flood relief operations.

In addition, the Department of Agriculture is leading the interaction of government with farmers and all the affected municipalities are cooperating extremely well with the disaster management teams.

The flood has impacted severely on the employment of seasonal workers as at least 55 605 seasonal workers will not get employment and at least 4 178 permanent workers will be affected.

Concerted attempts are being made to secure whatever funds are available, both from within our budget and beyond, to assist farmers and farm-workers who have been affected.

Ladies and Gentlemen, part of our contribution to tackling poverty will be achieved through the implementation of the Anti-Poverty/Balelapa programme which was launched in the Province last year. This campaign entails the profiling of the most deprived households to identify their specific needs so that they are assisted to access government services and development opportunities.

The profiling of households through the Balelapa/War on Poverty programme has commenced in all the districts through support from the SETA's. A total of 26 124 households will be profiled, providing the Northern Cape Provincial Government with a comprehensive database at household level to enable government to direct services to where they are most needed.

Honourable Members, it is a generally acknowledged fact that the youth of our country are the valued possession of our nation. Without them there can be no future and to this end we have launched an intensified campaign on the National Youth Service and Expanded Public Works Programme in order to facilitate the creation of job opportunities for young people. We must also address the needs of the aged and disabled, uplift disadvantaged sectors such as women and youth, and improve the lives of our people in rural communities and informal settlements.

The Provincial Government has also launched the sanitary towels campaign in Heuningsvlei in the John Gaetsewe District which is primarily aimed to restore the dignity and self esteem of our girl children and women. Through the launch of the sanitary towel campaign we are complementing and consolidating various efforts to protect and promote the interests of the girl child. We are taking the well-being of the girl child particularly seriously and to help needy girls

to go to school without worrying about their monthly cycle. This campaign will be rolled out through the length and breadth of our Province.

Honourable Speaker, drug and alcohol abuse is taking on rampant proportions in the Province. To counter this problem and to provide specialist rehabilitation services to mostly our youth caught in the grip of Drug and Alcohol abuse the Department Social Services in collaboration with service providers, is arranging a private-public partnership for the establishment of an inpatient treatment centre.

During the coming year the Department of Social Development will roll out its Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Campaign to the Namakwa, John Taole Gaetsewe and Francis Baard regions, focusing on pregnant women, tavern owners and women of child bearing age, thus creating a society that takes responsibility for the welfare of its people, especially the most vulnerable.

As part of our efforts to enable young people in conflict with the law not to re-offend, and to prevent young people to commit crimes, the Department of Social Development will, for the 2010/2011 financial year, spend an amount of R77 million for crime prevention initiatives.

Ladies and gentlemen, our government remains committed in its quest to build cohesive and sustainable human settlements and improve the quality of household life. We remain committed to the creation of integrated sustainable human settlements.

For the 2010/2011 financial year the province received a conditional grant allocation of R273m for Housing. I am particularly pleased to announce that due to the Provinces' good performance, an additional R174m will be received in February 2011 from underperforming provinces for the implementation of human settlements' projects. In demonstrating government's commitment to the citizens of the Northern Cape, the province as at 31 January 2011, delivered a total of 2 974 houses and serviced 646 sites in various areas throughout the province to improve the quality of life of our citizens.

These houses were fitted with basic services such as sanitation, water and electricity. This year, a total of 170 poorly built houses will also be rectified. With the additional allocation of R174m, it is our intention to erect a total of 2019 new housing units across the five districts of our province.

We have made significant progress on the Massive Priority Projects and these are as follows:

Pampierstad 1450 project: Phase 1 of internal infrastructure which includes water, sanitation and streets is 90% complete. The construction of 100 top structures has commenced and it will be completed before 31 March 2011.

Upington 915 project: The construction of top structures is 97 percent complete and all 915 top structures are expected to be completed before 31 March 2011.

Ouboks 2220 project: 330 houses are completed and 500 Houses are still under construction.

Leratopark (5000 mixed development units) project: The construction of an access road is completed. Project to install 800 internal services which include water, sanitation and streets has commenced. Tender for the construction of 200 houses will go out as soon as the services are completed.

Kuruman 4500 (mixed development) project: The feasibility study has been completed. The town planning and survey will commence in 2011.

To promote home ownership, the department has fast tracked the transfer of 2 310 properties in various areas in the province to beneficiaries. They are now proud title deed holders to their properties.

The Human Settlement delivery process has also created 1372 jobs, thus reducing unemployment and poverty within the province.

Honourable Speaker, we are determined to address our housing shortage in a vigorous manner, acting together with the private sector and the communities in need of shelter.

In terms of housing opportunities we would like all Breaking New Ground (BNG) houses to be fitted with a solar geyser at minimal cost to residents from 2011 onwards in order to improve the quality of life of our citizens.

The Provincial Government is also targeting a process of retro-fitting RDP houses that have already been built. Our target is to retro-fit at least 10 000 units per annum at minimal or no cost to residents.

Local government is where every citizen has direct and frequent contact with government. The Provincial Government will continuously engage municipalities, in terms of their positioning, to be effective and responsive to expedite the service delivery needs of our people.

Honourable Speaker, in our quest to foster and maintain higher standards of basic service delivery to our people, we have identified certain municipalities for urgent assistance in financial terms. To this end, the following municipalities will be allocated funds as indicated:

- * Khai Ma R600 000
- * Hantam R650 000
- * Karoo Hoogland R650 000
- * Richtersveld R650 000
- * Kamiesberg R800 000
- * Nama Khoi R800 000
- * Kheis R650 000
- * Ubuntu R600 000
- * Khara Hais R800 000
- * Kareeberg R650 000

- * Renosterberg R650 000
- * Thembelihle R600 000
- * Kai Garip R600 000
- * Pixley R700 000
- * Mier R600 000

TOTAL R10 000 000

We must also restore the confidence of our people in the local sphere of government as the primary expression of the developmental state by doing the following:

- * Engaging municipalities to meet the basic service needs of communities by improving performance and professionalism;
- * Improving provincial policy oversight and support; and
- * Strengthening partnerships between local government, communities and civil society

These objectives have been identified as the key drivers in order to rebuild and improve the basic requirements for a functional, efficient, and accountable developmental local government system.

The provision of bulk infrastructure on a Province-wide basis remains a challenge and the necessary engagements will be undertaken to find lasting solutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Northern Cape Government commends the majority of councillors who served our people with integrity and dedication. We urge them to maintain this level of quality service on an ongoing basis.

It is the sincere wish of the provincial government to make our people's experience of local government as satisfactory and as pleasant as possible, as it touches our lives on a daily basis. In this regard, we have instituted a turnaround Local Government Strategy for municipalities, giving attention, amongst others, to the strengthening of basic administrative systems, financial management and customer care.

The Local Government Turn-Around Strategy has assisted in ensuring that some Municipalities in the Province have shown improvement in rendering services to their respective communities. We have also seen the improvement of sector departments in terms of "hands on" support to municipalities.

An Operation Clean Audit Coordinating Committee has been established under the Chairpersonship of the Director General and it includes the office of the Auditor General. As a result of this process, the Province is currently third in the country in meeting the target of providing household access to basic services to our people. As of now, in percentage terms, citizens of the Northern Cape have access to basic services as follows:

Water – 92%

Sanitation - 69%

Refuse removal - 64%

Electricity – 81%

Ladies and Gentlemen, through Operation Clean Audit we would ensure that by 2014, all 32 municipalities in our province will have achieved clean audits on their Annual Financial Statements. To this end, we are working closely with municipalities in ensuring that we strengthen and instil good financial governance on a Province-wide basis. This will indeed go a long way in restoring people's confidence in the sphere that matters most and that, Ladies and Gentlemen, is our local system of government. To this end, Kara Hais municipality will be a pilot site for the roll out of a new municipal finance system.

A co-ordinating committee that will assess and report on the assistance given to municipalities in order to address issues raised by the Auditor General was established in the past year. A Provincial plan for Operation Clean Audit has been developed and is being implemented.

In 2011 the Provincial Government will focus on building capacity for Traditional Leaders as well as strengthening Traditional Institutions in order to achieve synergy with the developmental programme of government, both at the provincial and local spheres, in partnership with LGSETA and SALGA in the Province.

From a provincial perspective, our preparations for the local government elections are proceeding satisfactorily. The voter registration that took place on the weekend of the 5 and 6 February this year went well despite the heavy rain that was experienced in many parts of our province. Another round of voter registration will take place next month and we urge our people without identity documents to apply without delay so that they have this crucial document before they register to vote and also exercise their democratic right on voting day.

A special appeal is extended to the youth to exercise their right and register and cast their votes during the upcoming Local Government elections because Local Government is everyone's business.

With local government elections only a few months away, we take this opportunity in making a call to all political parties to campaign, canvass and lobby in a manner that befits our constitutional democracy.

I am especially pleased that we have a department that is dedicated to environmental matters. Its work must impact on many aspects of provincial activity and address the question of the well-being of society as a whole and the preservation of environmental assets and natural resources in the Northern Cape so that they are valued, protected and continually enhanced for

future generations.

Honourable Members, in its endeavour to promote economic development, the Provincial Government signed an agreement with the Ministry of Economy of Armenia to strengthen economic cooperation between the Province and Armenia by:

- * Exchanging technical, scientific, administrative and legislative information and experience on economic matters in the industrial field, particularly with regard to industrial modernisation programmes as well as cooperation in industrial zones; jewellery manufacturing; diamond cutting and polishing; and

- * The provision of specialised training by Armenia in the diamond industry.

In addition, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism signed a cooperation agreement with the Diamond and Jewellery Company of Armenia to establish a diamond cutting and polishing factory, provide training and employment opportunities.

In January 2011, the Kimberley International Diamond and Jewellery Academy opened for its first intake of 48 students who intend to pursue a career in the diamond industry. The training will focus on diamond cutting and polishing and will run for a period of one year equipping students with an accredited diamond beneficiation qualification. The Academy will be officially launched in the new financial year.

Regarding the tourism industry, the Province is set to make a significant contribution to its economic growth and development as we have deliberately decided to further develop a number of tourist routes and support no less than 15 festivals and events across the Province in an effort to attract more tourists to the Province.

In partnership with the hunting sector, the Northern Cape Province will host the 7th International Wildlife Ranching Symposium scheduled for October 2011. The main aim of the symposium is to bring academics from across the globe to chart the way in the field of biodiversity conservation as well as preservation of our indigenous fauna and flora.

Honourable Members, since we assumed office in 2009, this Provincial Government has invested in programmes, projects and campaigns that seek to achieve just that. This province espouses the vision of Operation Nala and we have reaffirmed our commitment to put the interests of the people of the Northern Cape first by ensuring growth, development and improved service delivery in the Province.

Operation Nala, which will be officially launched shortly, will in essence, endeavour to expedite our township revitalisation and rural development initiatives. It will accord a thorough assessment of the objectives and functions of municipalities both within their current and historical contexts. Development and the work associated therewith must be balanced and coherent, thus Operation Nala will examine the extent of development in our townships and rural areas in an effort to tilt the scale to address major service delivery and related backlogs.

While acknowledging the fact that the central factor underpinning the task and responsibilities of government at all spheres is not service delivery and service delivery alone, we as the Provincial Government under the disciplined custodianship of the Ruling Party will not allow poverty and underdevelopment to persist. Operation Nala, both as a concept and a working instrument, is about creating the necessary conditions for improving the quality of life for all our people in the Northern Cape.

In the South African context and in the Northern Cape in particular, positive endeavours by government provide the basis for an effective service delivery machinery, thereby advancing human, economic and infrastructure development within our province.

Operation Nala will under the auspices of this particular Provincial Government, create the conditions necessary for the improvement of the quality of life for all the people in our beloved Province.

In providing and delivering services to the inhabitants within its municipal boundaries, the following basic values and core principles must inform the work of all municipalities in the Northern Cape Province:

It is therefore incumbent on the administration of any municipality to:

- * Be responsive to the needs of the local community;
- * Facilitate a culture of public service and accountability amongst its staff;
- * Take measures to prevent and fight corruption;
- * Establish clear relationships, facilitate co-operation and communication between the municipality and the local community;
- * Give members of the local community full and accurate information about the level and standard of municipal services they are entitled to receive; and
- * Inform the local community how the municipality is managed, of the costs involved and the persons in charge.

In effecting the above functions in a caring and expeditious manner, Operation NALA will create the conditions necessary for the improvement of the quality of life for all our people in the Northern Cape.

Since the local government elections of 2006, Government has consistently funded a number of key projects in communities to change them for the better. These projects range from: eradicating the bucket toilet system; paving and tarring of streets; upgrading of community sanitation systems; replacement of water supply pipes; supply of bulk water services; and construction of houses and multipurpose community centres.

Amongst the job creation initiatives, projects across districts were funded and these include waste recycling projects; development and upgrading of tourism information centres; and the development of community vegetable gardens and a number of other local economic

development projects.

In its unflinching commitment to better the lives of the citizens of the Northern Cape Province, Government will invest the following amounts on current and future projects in the five districts as follows:

- o Frances Baard - R54 042 470 Million
- o Pixley Ka Seme - R79 835 385 Million
- o Siyanda - R56 120 313 Million
- o John Taolo Gaetsewe - R56 430 912 Million
- o Namakwa - R69 881 34 Million

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you may well be aware, energy is a major catalyst for social and economic development and as such the Northern Cape is strategically poised to play a leading role in the green economy given the Province's endless access to sunshine and wind.

In accordance with our strategic positioning, it is incumbent on the Province to play a leading role in the initiatives regarding the proposed Solar Park Corridor and its associated processes. Gauging from the extremely successful Investors Conference we hosted in 2010, we are definitely on course to create more jobs in the energy sector.

The Solar Park, which will be based in Upington, will, to a large extent, change the economic landscape of the Province, from over-reliance on agriculture and mining to other sectors such as manufacturing and the supply of solar related parts and components.

The environmental sector is critical in our drive and vision for a prosperous Province, and as a rapidly emerging sector, it holds a huge potential for job creation as has already been proven through some of the projects.

In March this year, the Department of Environmental and Nature Conservation will be bringing the environmental sector and related stakeholders together for a Green Economy Job Creation Summit to concretize the Provincial Green Economy Job Creation Plan in pursuit of the 2020 national targets.

Environmental Impact Assessment processes are currently underway regarding alternative Energy projects such as wind energy farms and solar energy electricity generation plants.

The launch of a massive Cleaning and Greening Project such as the one termed "Keep Kimberley Clean" by the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation, in partnership with Municipalities, private nurseries and non-governmental organizations is also in progress. The Cleaning and Greening Project will be an integral part of the Provincial Township Rejuvenation Programme that anchors the provincial drive for prosperity. It is our intention this year to turn around the state of our streets and surroundings, especially in our townships, entrances to our towns and central business districts through sustainable cleaning and tree

planting projects.

Ladies and Gentlemen, massive Infrastructural development projects have been undertaken through intensified labour absorbing methods to create jobs for our people.

As government, we will continue to support sectors with a high potential for growth and job opportunities. EPWP Phase 2 started on 01 April 2009 and targets to create 4, 5 million (100-day) work opportunities in 5 years. We have signed a protocol document with the Minister of Public Works, in which we committed the Province to contribute 106, 193 work opportunities towards the 4,5 million for the country over this 5 year period.

The first year of phase 2 (2009/2010), the Province had a target of 13, 031 work opportunities. The Province not only reached the target but exceeded the target by more than 800 work opportunities. In the current Financial Year (2010/2011), the Provincial Target is expected to create 14, 629 work opportunities and Municipalities an additional 4,192 work opportunities.

More work still needs to be done and more Departments still need to commit to creating work opportunities using their own budgets. The social sector continues to create more sustainable work opportunities with programmes such as School Feeding and Home Based Care Programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen and the people of the Northern Cape, the next Population Census will be conducted from 10 to 31 October 2011. This is a critical task that Statistics South Africa performs periodically to assist government in planning, decision making, monitoring and the evaluation of programmes and policies so that it delivers on its mandate. We therefore call upon the people of the Northern Cape Province to offer their full co-operation to enumerators who will be visiting their households.

In conclusion, as the Northern Cape Provincial Government we will, together with government at large and other progressive forces, strive to consolidate people's power for the manifestation of a national democratic society as we fast approach the celebration of 100 years of selfless peoples struggle.

With the implementation of various developmental initiatives by the Provincial Government, we certainly will make a decisive shift to meaningful socio-economic transformation in the Northern Cape. To this end, we will set in motion a very deliberate programme that will inevitably ensure that the benefits of our political liberation are shared amongst all the Province's people. We cannot and will not fail them in our collective goal to overcome poverty.

To this end, the Northern Cape Provincial Government will strive to engage every role player in our provincial economy as it is our sincere hope that we leave a lasting legacy for our people, thereby drastically altering the recent course of history.

I end this address by quoting Tata Madiba who said:

'My country is rich in the minerals and gems that lie beneath its soil, but I have always known

that its greatest wealth is its people, finer and truer than the purest diamonds”.

I thank you

Baie Dankie

Kealeboga

Enkosi