

# **2007-2008 Budget and Policy Speech by Mrs YN Phosa, Speaker of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, on the occasion of the tabling of Budget Vote 2 of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature**

15 June 2007, Legislature Chambers

The Honourable Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga Legislature, Mr BJ Nobunga;  
The Honourable Premier of the Mpumalanga Province, Mr TSP Makwetla in absentia;  
Leaders and Representatives of Political Parties;  
Members of the Provincial Legislature and Members of the Provincial Executive Council;  
NCOP Delegates present;  
Leaders from Police and Security Services present;  
Executive Mayors; Speakers of Municipalities and Councillors;  
Leaders from the House of Traditional Leaders;  
The Secretary to the Legislature, and Heads of Departments present;  
Leaders of Business, Labour, Media, NGOs and Religious Groups; and  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The former President, Nelson Mandela once reminded us that:

"The purpose of the budget is to bring a better life for all". That articulation from the former President, puts a great responsibility on all legislatures in the new democratic South Africa. Our growing efforts therefore, have to continue to be necessarily rooted towards contributing to changing the life-conditions of our people. This task is incomplete, and that is what brings us here together today, to ensure that we take this task forward in the context of our respective constitutional mandates.

Since the dawn of democracy, the legislators have not faulted in their commitment to transform the lives of our people for the better. When our present legislators faced the voting public, they initiated a contract with the people; a contract of trust and commitment to bring the necessary and desirable change in their lives.

Honourable Deputy Speaker and Members of this House, in the procession of time, the people of our province, indeed people of our country, have of necessity been expecting an ongoing significant change in the quality of their lives. Theirs, have been a life that was negatively affected by previous government's systematic exclusion and marginalisation. An old adage, has it that, there can be no future without a history. Certainly, we cannot treat the present as if the present has had no history.

Indeed, the task is huge and incomplete and yet its meaning and importance are beyond question. Our collective commitments can certainly make a noticeable difference. President Thabo Mbeki illuminates this point in reminding us that:

"As South Africans, we are all partners in the great enterprise of ensuring that the promise of our Constitution is fully realised, making a positive impact on the lives of our citizens".

As we present our budget and policy speech this morning, the Legislature remains committed to be part of this "great enterprise" because, indeed, "the purpose of the budget is to bring a better life for all"

## **CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE**

In our parliamentary system, the Legislature is an essential element in a practice of representative democracy. In this sense, it also shoulders enormous responsibility for ensuring that our provincial government and state organs do not only remain responsive to societal needs, but also fulfil service delivery requirements to the people of the province.

Our Legislature should therefore continue to be an active player in the people-centred systems and practices of government. However, this will be determined by the extent to which we continue to fulfil our constitutional mandate in the midst of challenges and opportunities that we have to contend with as an institution in the public domain.

As we have observed and witnessed over the years, our constitutional mandate presents us with a unique possibility not only to continue, but also to further contribute in the improvement of the lives of our people in a meaningful and significant way. It is therefore of strategic and political imperative that we remain, with unflinching commitment, grounded to the overarching objective of improving the quality of life of our people. This is the promise of democracy that we are required to fulfil in the context our constitutional obligations articulated below.

All these efforts are critical in ensuring that we too, make a mark in the task of halving poverty in our country by 2014, which we committed ourselves to, in 2004.

### **Oversight Function**

Inspired by the fundamental principles and practices of effective, transparent and accountable government, we want to reiterate that "oversight is a critical part of a democratic society committed to effective government and transformation, and that it ensures that government remains in touch with the people and problems in delivery are recognized and addressed". It will therefore be always critical that we execute our oversight function in a constructive and comprehensive way, whilst we simultaneously seek better ways of ensuring that our Committees in particular and the Legislature in general, are progressively excelling in this regard. In the process of holding the executive and state organs accountable, there has to be an added emphasis on both financial and non-financial performance matters.

This we need to do and do it well within the realms of proactive and retrospective oversight underpinned by an enabling political culture. In line with the political imperative for the provision of service to the people, our oversight responsibility has to ensure that the progressive and transformative programmes of government are adequately implemented. This will give our province a greater possibility to bring us much closer to the realisation of the overarching goal of a better life for all our people.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, we have already acknowledged that this overarching goal constitutes a "huge enterprise" that summons and beckons us all unto a broad front for development. In the context of constructive oversight, we want to remain a partner in the public service delivery regime in our province. Our people deserve more and we need to do more, and transcend our sectoral boundaries both in thought and in action for the sake of our people.

In our quest to continuously improve the way we fulfil our constitutional obligations, there is certainly a need to continue to seek for better ways of ensuring that our Committees are even more effective in executing their oversight function. This is even more crucial considering the fact that our Constitution does not necessarily articulate the mechanisms for ensuring effective oversight by our Committees in particular and the Legislature in general. I am happy to inform this House that Parliament is currently developing an Oversight Model which has a huge practical relevance not only to our Legislature but also to the legislative sector in general.

In the context of our commitment to capacitate Members of our Legislature, we are currently investigating a possibility of organising a workshop on this Oversight Model for Members of this House and relevant staff members. More details in this regard would be communicated in due course.

Our oversight efforts would necessarily require adequate resources. Professor Christina Murray, presents a compelling view in articulating that "resources and infrastructure of a Legislature play a role in determining the effectiveness of its oversight over the executive". I am sure that this view will find resonance to the Honourable Members of this House. There is indeed, a critical necessity for more resources in this regard, to ensure that we realise a more effective and sustainable oversight function which among other things, is fundamental for an accelerated service delivery in our province. In the

meantime, an amount of R2.174 million is available and has been allocated accordingly, to ensure that, as Open Society Foundation of South Africa puts it, "we hold the executive accountable, and to seek to remedy situations where executive has not performed according to its stated policies".

### **Public Participation and Petitions**

The Constitution obligates us to execute the democratic duty of involving the people in the legislative processes and activities of the Legislature and its Committees. We also have proclaimed that "the people shall govern". It is true that "people must have the greatest possibility to participate in the process of government".

Barbara Jordan, correctly accentuates this point in asserting that "democracy needs the nourishment and nurturing of its citizens. Inattention kills it." She goes on to say that "An enlightened citizen is an indispensable ingredient of the infrastructure of democracy".

Clearly, our people must have unfettered access to the legislative processes, otherwise, the emasculation of participatory democracy might creep in and dilute our social transformation agenda. Honourable Deputy Speaker, the 2007 theme for our legislative sector centres around participatory democracy. In this regard, our Legislature has adopted the following theme "Expand Public Involvement, Deepen Democracy". This theme corresponds with the National Parliament's theme "Masijule Ngengxoxo Mzantsi (Lets Deepen Debate, South Africa). The complimentary nature of these progressive efforts is essential in ensuring that we increase the potential impact of our collective efforts in expanding public participation and deepening of democracy in our country in general. These are not coincidental efforts. They are deliberate and targeted initiatives born out of the historical realities of exclusion and neglect of our people during the pre-1994 era.

To further demonstrate our commitment to carry out the constitutional duty of facilitating public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the Legislature and its Committees, we will be launching the Parliamentary Mobile Unit soon. The mobile unit is ready, and we are convinced that its usefulness will be witnessed and experienced by the people in the various regions of the province.

We have also adopted a Public Education and Participation Programme that will further consolidate our efforts in the public education and participation arena through our Committees. The mobile unit will be critical in the implementation of this programme. The Public Participation Unit working with other units will have to provide the necessary professional assistance regarding public education and participation activities.

In the spirit of our 2007 theme: "expanding public participation, deepen democracy", we will continue to pursue our innovative idea of organising our sectoral "parliaments". In the course of this financial year, the focus will be on the following sectors: youth, children, women, senior citizens, and people with disabilities. We believe that our engagement with these various sectors gives us an opportunity to expand public participation and deepen democracy in our province.

In terms of the Constitution and also our Petitions Act, the Legislature receives petitions from members of the public and various interest groups. This is a necessary democratic activity that facilitates problem solving between government departments, state organs and the public. We will therefore have to ensure that this avenue for problem solving is available to our communities at large through the work of the Public Participation and Petitions Committee supported by our administration.

All these public participation and petition efforts are critical in our quest and commitment to the protection and promotion of participatory democracy in our province.

They are necessary to ensure that social exclusion in public policy decision making processes does not find space and place in our progressive democracy. To this end, we have allocated an amount of R3.740 million. The insufficiency of this amount cannot be overemphasized in an era where there is an overwhelming need for the expansion and deepening of the culture and practice of democratic participation in public policy and related areas. More funding is certainly needed to ensure that indeed, the "people have a greatest possibility to participate in the processes of government".

## **Law Making**

The Legislature is required to consider, initiate, amend and pass legislation. Guided by the Constitution and our Standing Rules and Orders, we remain committed to passing more transformative laws in our province. We are happy to announce that in the previous financial year, the following pieces of legislation were passed:

- Mpumalanga Local Government Laws Repeal Bill, 2005
- Mpumalanga Roads and Transport Laws Repeal Bill, 2005
- Mpumalanga Cemeteries, Crematoria and Exhumation Bill, 2005
- Mpumalanga Finance Matters Bill, 2006
- Mpumalanga Repeal and Application Bill, 2006
- Mpumalanga Gaming Amendment Bill, 2006
- Mpumalanga Appropriation Bill, 2006
- Mpumalanga Adjustment Appropriation Bill, 2006
- Mpumalanga Liquor Bill, 2006

We shall also continue to actively participate in the national lawmaking process to influence national legislation wherever possible. This, we shall do, by mandating our Permanent Delegates to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) to vote for laws affecting our province in a manner that adds significant value to the people of the Mpumalanga Province.

Whilst law making is still critical for our developmental state, the current political imperative for service delivery to the people necessitates the prioritisation of evaluation and impact appraisals. In this context, I believe that this 13th year of our democracy and freedom among other things, ushers in an opportunity for reflection. There is therefore a need to go beyond monitoring the implementation of legislation to ensure that the social impact of legislation is objectively determinable in the course of implementation.

## **POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORT**

The role that different political parties play in our parliamentary democracy is well articulated in our Constitution. We are therefore committed to ensuring that we provide the necessary funding to all the political parties in proportion to their representation in the Legislature.

However, we would like to reiterate the fact that as elected representatives from different parties, we are accountable to the people, to our political organisations and to the Legislature as well.

The challenge is to keep a fair balance in this accountability regime. The Legislature is currently implementing a funding policy for political parties. This policy was developed in consultation with all parties in the Legislature to ensure that there is equitable allocation of resources, and that political parties are able to perform their political responsibilities in the context of the Legislature.

In the previous financial year, about R3 million was earmarked for constituency work of the political parties represented in the Legislature. In the current year, there is a substantial increase - an amount of R 5.4 million has been allocated for this purpose. A further R 3.9 million has been allocated for caucus funding to enable parties to conduct their daily activities. The political parties are accountable for the allocated funds. They are required to provide an audited financial statement on an annual basis. I am happy that all our political parties continue to adhere to this necessary requirement.

## **MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

In these changing and demanding times, effective management and efficient administration are of strategic necessity in the realisation of a vision for a people-centred, vibrant, and dynamic African world class Legislature. This will certainly give us a possibility not only to better fulfil our constitutional mandate but also to be able to contribute meaningfully in the realisation of a goal of creating a better life for all.

There is therefore a need for ensuring that our administration's competencies and capabilities are significantly energised and synergised.

In the spirit of good governance, we have established several governance structures which include the Legislature Service Board, Presiding Officers' Committee, Audit Committee, the Secretariat, and the Management Committee. These structures have been useful for effective coordination and decision making relating to the management of the Legislature. Three Executive Managers and one Senior Manager have already successfully completed a certificate course in Public Sector Governance. Furthermore, the Legislature has a Fraud Prevention Committee, Risk Management Plan, and has also appointed a Chief Risk Officer in order to oversee matters of risk management. In the interest of transparency, accountability and also good governance, there is a need to explore the extent to which the Legislature's performance could be assessed internally.

A discussion document in this regard has been drafted. The Honourable Members are kindly urged to familiarise themselves with this document and also make their inputs. Without pre-empting the course of the discussion in this regard, once the process is finalised, it is plausible that in the future, the Budget and Policy Speech we are presenting today might be referred to a particular "Committee". We believe that these initiatives significantly enhance our governance efforts. We are happy that the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature Service Bill which we are in the process of finalising, will among other things, enhance the effectiveness of the governance structures I have highlighted in this rostrum.

In this 13th year of democracy and freedom, we believe that the Legislature has made considerable progress in the transformation front. We now have a representative management structure. We have also addressed the employment equity gaps relating to race and disability considerations in our staff compliment.

The Legislature also remains committed to the transformation agenda of our country and we will therefore seek to adhere to the transformative policies applicable to our institution. It is in this context that we prioritised the completion and adoption of our institutional policies. In this financial year, we have adopted policies on information technology, security management, and performance management. Future assessment on performance will now be based on this performance management system.

In my previous policy and budget speech, I mentioned that, through the Research, Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (RPPME), the Legislature will position itself for the provision of strategic information and knowledge support function to Committees as they execute their constitutional obligations. Good work is being done in this regard. However, the current institutional financial constraints have a limiting effect in the overall operations of this division.

Earlier on, we highlighted the fact that "an enlightened citizen is an indispensable ingredient of the infrastructure of democracy". In this regard, the RPPME Division is currently conducting a two-pronged research project to first, gauge the citizens' understanding of the Legislature in relation to its constitutional mandate and second, to assess satisfaction of internal stakeholders in the Legislature. This project is funded by European Union's Legislature Support Programme. As a public institution, it is important that our stakeholder contribute in this regard to ensure that the Legislature is able to provide them with better services.

In our quest to enhance our overall communication with our stakeholders including the public, we intend to develop a communication strategy in this financial year. An amount of R393 859 has been made available again by EU/LSP for this purpose. In the context of the envisaged communication strategy, the Legislature will continue to produce its internal publications, which include the newsletter and public participation educational material.

This initiative will be implemented through EU/LSP funding which we have already secured.

## **STRATEGIC PROJECTS**

The following key projects are being implemented: building of the Member's lounge; and video conferencing room. The project on the refurbishment of the Chamber is awaiting implementation. Due

to limited financial resources, the Legislature had to reprioritise, and that has affected the implementation process of these strategic projects.

In this new age of information explosion, technology has become a significant driver of change that is taking place in organisations and societies at large. It is therefore of strategic necessity that the Legislature prepares accordingly for the inevitable demands of technology. In this regard, the Legislature is developing an Information, Communication and Technology Strategy (ICT) in the form of a Master Systems Plan (MSP). Through this project, it will be possible to increase and strengthen our operational efficiency and strategic effectiveness respectively. An amount of R519 000 provided by the EU/LSP has been allocated for this project.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

In order for the Legislature to share experiences and learn from others, there is a need for it to maintain and strengthen its relations with parliamentary bodies and parliaments in both local and international contexts. To this end, the following study visits were undertaken:

- Select Committees on Public Participation and Petitions, and Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women, Children and People with Disabilities went to Canada
- Select Committee on Public Accounts and Portfolio Committee on Premier's Office; Finance; Safety and Security went to Ireland
- Select Committee on Public Accounts went to Mozambique to attend a conference for the Southern Africa Development Community Organisation of Public Accounts Committees

As an active member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Legislature remains committed in taking part in the programmes of the CPA. In the last financial year, the Legislature participated in CPA Africa and international conferences in Nigeria and Ghana respectively. In this financial year, the Legislature will also participate during the CPA international conference taking place in India in September. The CPA Africa region is scheduled to take place in Cape Town in July. Through our participation in this conference, we will also be hosting about 50 conference delegates from various parts of Africa, who will be visiting various parts of the province. We believe that this will be a unique opportunity to show case our province.

## **CHALLENGES**

The challenges are many - this is in the nature of things. However, the limited financial resources that the Legislature has to contend with, as it seeks to fulfil its constitutional mandate, is the epicentre of our challenges. There is therefore a necessity to address this challenge to ensure that the Legislature is able to fulfil its constitutional obligations. This will give the Legislature a better possibility to contribute meaningfully in the realisation of the overarching goal of creating a better quality of life for all the people of our province.

## **CONCLUSION**

We have declared 2007 as the year for the intensification of the struggle against poverty as we advance in unity. As I have articulated in this rostrum, the Legislature should continue to contribute in this regard to ensure that ultimately, the lives of the people are better than before. In this way, we will at the same time, be giving to our people, meaning of the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom which our Constitution affirms.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, I believe that through these efforts, we will also be advancing the struggle for social cohesion and human solidarity which President Mbeki eloquently articulated at the occasion of the 4th Annual Nelson Mandela Lecture in July last year. Certainly, social cohesion and human solidarity are both good and necessary for our society.

But I also think that at a micro level, institutional cohesion and solidarity is equally good and necessary for our institution. Let us then be inspired by these important values as we continue to find meaning

and importance in what we do, not only for ourselves, but also for others, and remember that "by recognising a person's sense of dignity, one affirms the central intrinsic worth of each human being". Let me now take this opportunity to record my profound appreciation to the Honourable Deputy Speaker, the Presiding Officers, the Chairpersons of our Committees, the Office Bearers, and all the Members of the Legislature in general, for their individual and collective contribution in ensuring that the Legislature succeeds. I also want to express my sense of gratitude to the Secretary to the Legislature, his management team and staff in general for their continued dedication and commitment also in the success of our Legislature.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, please allow me to table to this House, the:

- Three-year Strategic Performance Plan, 2007/8-2009/10;
- Annual Operational Plan; 2007/2008; and
- Policy and Budget speech, 2007/2008

I also request this august House to approve the allocated amount of R70 260 000 (Seventy million, two hundred and sixty thousand) for the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, (Vote 2).

Programme 1: Administration	R27 830 000
Programme 2: Facilities for Members & Political Parties	R24 929 000
Programme 3: Parliamentary Services	R17 501 000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>R70 260 000</b>

During the 2004/2005 policy and budget speech, Hon, Minister of Finance reminded us that:

"The legacy we leave must not be told in the numbers, it must be borne out in the values that characterise our time".

I thank you.