

**SPEAKER, MRS BP SHIBA ON THE OCCASSION OF THE MPUMALANGA
PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE POLICY & BUDGET SPEECH**

2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR

- The Honourable PV Mkhathshwa, Deputy Speaker,
- Honourable RM Mtshweni-Tsipane, Premier of Mpumalanga Province,
- Members of the 6TH Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature,
- Members of the Executive Council,
- Executive Mayors of the Districts and Local municipalities,
- Members of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders,
- Members of the Mpumalanga Provincial Speakers' Forum,
- Director-General of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government,
- Secretary to the Legislature, Heads of Departments, Heads of Chapter 9 and State Corporations,
- Acting Chairperson and Acting Secretary of ANC, Mpumalanga,
- Provincial Secretary ANCWL,
- Leadership of the Tripartite Alliance, and SANCO,
- **Our guests streaming live on all media platforms,**
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good Afternoon

Introduction

I have the pleasure to table the 2020/2021 Policy and Budget Speech of the Mpumalanga Provincial legislature. The purpose of this policy statement is to articulate and give account on the fulfilment of our mandate and promise to our people, which is *“to hold the Executive and other state organs accountable, through oversight, public participation and law-making”*. This address is expected to outline the road traversed since the establishment of this 6th Legislature, where we took public oath and made commitment, to be the eyes, ears, and mouthpiece of all our citizens, following up on commitments made, to improve the quality of life and Grow South Africa together.

Hon, Deputy Speaker, it is however prudent that I start by acknowledging the cooperation and positive contribution of all Honourable Members and Officials of the Legislature, who continue to work hard, even under this dynamic political, economic, social and technological (PEST) environment and new normal, which has changed the world of work and the manner we conduct our business.

Honourable Members, we therefore table this policy & budget speech, during this challenging moment in our history, enjoined to confront COVID-19, with its epic potential to disrupt and change our experience and knowledge of the world.

It is a moment once again, where the test of the human spirit, to triumph over all adversity, must be recalibrated, in our collective effort, to safeguard our lives and livelihoods as *well as safer future for our children*.

Accordingly our greatest concern is the short term and long term effects, this pandemic shall have on the vulnerable poor and working class people, the majority whom are black, African, the youth and women. This pandemic has made more visible, the entrenched levels of inequality which continue to dictate the life-worlds, life potential and lived experience of the majority of our people.

This pandemic, has brought a painful reminder and the necessary urgency to rigorously address our generational mission, to attain radical socio-economic transformation. It has brought into sharp contrast the main content of our National Development Plan (NDP), which according to many scholars and public intellectuals is characterized as interlocking multiple pandemics converging, which include, abject poverty, unemployment, inequality, disease burden, a result of our colonial legacy of systemic racism, white supremacy and capitalist exploitation.

Our immediate challenge is to more deliberately, through a qualitative delivery of our constitutional mandate, ensure the transformation of the institutions of power, which continue to reproduce inequality and difference, according to race class and gender.

Honourable Members, a closer reading of COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that women shall bear the biggest burden of disease, with so many located in our country's frontlines. They constitute the lowest income end of the working class, as nurses, cleaners, caregivers, social workers, CDWs, teachers, police and soldiers. It is important that remuneration packages, the working conditions and the protection of these frontline workers, must radically change and begin to value their importance, for the very survival of our society.

Of further concern is the extended burden of Gender Based Violence (GBV) being exercised on women through increasing incidence of senseless and cowardice killing

by men. We still remain subject to a societal logic, in whose very DNA, is a general disregard for our equal sanctity and humanity, seen through the entrenched reality of male supremacy and domination.

We must join hands against these social ills, ravaging our communities, threatening the very fibre of our society by reconnecting with our age old African traditions and values of (Ubuntu), underpinned by our interdependence and co-humanness as a people.

The killing of women by men has reached an alarming proportion and as this Legislature we are joining the call to our President the Hash Tag WE CANNOT BREATHE.

The President of the Republic of South Africa, HE Mr Cyril Ramaphosa has made a clarion call, for a collective response to this “Femicide”. This response shall require broad social mobilization, and the political will by men and women, to address society’s general spiritual, cultural, psychological and social decay.

‘Our countrymen must also draw a leaf from the revolutionary Thomas Sankara, Former President of Burkina Faso, who stated “The revolution and women’s liberation go together, We do not talk of women’s emancipation as an act of charity or out of human compassion. It is the basic necessity for the revolution to triumph”.

Inspired by these words, as parliamentarians and law makers, must through the Women’s caucus and Men’s Forum, begin a conversation about a total review of amongst others, the laws & regulations governing the licencing and sale of alcohol. We have seen a direct correlation between the normalized culture of alcohol abuse, social decay, and incidence of GBV during the national Lockdown.

Furthermore, our strategic task as this Legislature is to ensure Government, in light of the COVID-19 experience, expedite the full implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI), for equal access to a quality more integrated healthcare system.

According to **Statistics South Africa (Stats S.A)** only **12,6 %** of people in Mpumalanga province have access to medical aid scheme. An indication that the overwhelming majority of our people depend on public health care.

Approximately **50,5 %** of households rely on social grants, a number likely to further increase due to the anticipated job losses. The percentage of people with access to piped water sits at **86%**, sanitation **68%** and **1.7%** still use the bucket system. This is a clear indication of the impact the pandemic will likely have amongst the poor, if infection rate is not well managed and quality of basic services not improved.

To this end, as an activist Legislature, our immediate task is to refashion and reengineer all our efforts, to ensure clear government response to these pressing challenges.

We urgently need to evolve from a compliance driven culture in the conduct of Oversight, to greater emphasis on qualitative outcomes and real impact to the goal of a better life for all.

Institutional strategy

During the commencement of the Sixth Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Members of the Legislature, management and staff collectively participated in the strategic planning sessions aimed at developing a new Five-year Strategic Plan the covering the period 2020 to 2025. Informed by several political and strategic guiding policy

priorities of the governing party, the national development plan, the state of the nation and provinces addresses and legislative sector priorities, we were able to articulate the political and strategic path that the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature intends to follow to fulfil its constitutional mandate for the benefit of the people of our province.

The strategic priorities shall include the following in the next five years;

- A vibrant people's assembly that intervenes, transforms society and address the development challenges of our people;
- Ensure effective oversight over the Executive by strengthening its scrutiny of actions against the needs of our citizens;
- Ensure participation of the public in the decision making process, on issues that affect their lives;
- An innovative and efficient parliamentary service and administration that enables Members to fulfill their constitutional responsibility, and
- A healthy relationship between the Legislature, government and other organs of the state, which promotes efficient cooperative governance.

Support to Parliamentary Committee

In the exercise of our core mandate, Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature Oversight Model (MPLM) is an important guide in the oversight function of the Legislature. The MPLM identifies critical skills required for oversight with impact on the work of the Legislature and service delivery.

However, it is important to reiterate as we highlighted in the 2019 Policy and Budget Speech, that we still have some skills and capacity gaps to enhance scrutiny and evaluation of government programmes.

The continuous training and development of the Members of the Legislature and support staff will close the gap.

House Proceedings and Hansard

It is important for the Legislature to ensure that our language service is always of high quality, therefore the capacity development of the support staff in this regard, is our priority. It is for this reason that the language practitioners will undergo training in translation and the Hansard Transcribing system.

Public Participation

The Legislature continues to involve the public in its processes and programmes through:

- Public hearings;
- Petitions process;
- Sector parliaments;
- Sittings of the House; and
- Initiatives such as the Taking the Legislature to the People (TLP)

However the current financial and social environment has required a scaling down of some activities of the Legislature. This, therefore, requires the Legislature to be innovative and use available means within the available resource to ensure public participation.

Law making

The Constitution empowers the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature to *consider, pass or amend* any Bill that may be before it. Accordingly let me report that in the previous financial year 2019/2020, the Legislature passed the following pieces of legislation:

- Mpumalanga Appropriation Bill,2019;
- Mpumalanga Adjustment Appropriation Bill,2019; and
- Mpumalanga Second Adjustment Appropriation Bill,2020

The Legislature also conferred mandates to the members of the NCOP representing the Mpumalanga Province to vote in favour of the following national Section 76 Bills affecting provinces:

- Division of Revenue Bill, 2019; and
- Division of Revenue Amendment Bill, 2019

Whilst the number of bills passed is an indicator of the Legislatures performance, we should focus attention on improving the quality of our engagements and the impact of the laws on the ground. There should be an instrument of liberation at the disposal of our people, for a more democratic and inclusive society

Financial Governance

The Legislature will be phasing-in the use of National Treasury Central Supply Database (CSD) during 2020/21 financial year. The CSD will go a long way in assisting the Legislature especially in screening the local suppliers during procurement of the Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) events as well as other general procurements.

We have introduced the process of subjecting all tenders to internal audit before awarding a bid in order to obtain reasonable assurance that applicable SCM Regulations and SCM policy have been complied with. This initiative is aimed at improving the audit outcomes for a clean audit outcome.

The Legislature will continue with the cost containment measures to ensure that savings accruing from the implemented cost containment measures are used to fund budget pressures.

The budget of the Legislature has equally has been decreased by R19.4 million as determined by the National Treasury to fund budget pressures emanating from the unforeseen Covid-19 pandemic.

Provincial Speakers Forum

In line with the Sector priorities, the Mpumalanga Provincial Speakers Forum is functional as a platform to share experiences, best practice, and dialogue amongst Speakers at provincial, district and local level. Whilst the process to formalize this Forum, through the passing of Legislative Sector Bill, our task in the intervening period aims to improve collaboration and cooperation between parliament, the legislatures and municipal councils. Some of the strategic priorities are as follows;

- To consider structural mechanisms to step strengthen effective and impact in oversight, public participation and law making,
- Innovation in a capacity to enhance citizen participation, considering diversity and varied sectors of societies,
- The provision of support to municipal councils for improving current audit outcomes,
- The improvement in coordination and collaboration with stakeholders such as chapter 9 institutions,
- Strengthening the public confidence on local government in the hearts and minds of our people for more cohesive and safer communities.
- Building oversight capacity in municipalities to address the strained financial state of our municipalities as per the AG report.

Recently, the Speakers Forum expressed its concern with levels of instability in Lekwa local municipality. We urge government to prioritize finding a lasting and sustainable solution to the challenges of this Municipality.

Members Affairs & Support

The Legislature will continue to support and empower the members of the Legislature to carry out their duties as public representatives. We have undertaken to strengthen training and support through continuous sector standardized professional program. These include both academic training as well as an in-house capacity building. We urge all Members to fully utilize these opportunities for development and intellectual growth.

Social Cohesion & Nation Building (legacy projects)

The imperatives of building a democratic post-apartheid South Africa remain an ongoing unfinished project, against the backdrop of deep colonial legacy, and its impact of epic proportion. Our immediate task in line with the NDP, is build a “social compact” and human solidarity behind a common vision of socio- transformation.

To this end, as per our Institutional strategic objectives to ensure social cohesion and nation building we have undertaken to prioritize the fight against Gender Based Violence, which has a devastating effect on the psyche of our nation and the well-being of its citizens.

We shall as an activist Legislature, working together with municipal councils at all levels, resuscitate Women’s Caucus, and Men’s Forum, to develop a common programme, for maximum social mobilization and action.

Our silence perpetuates the culture of impunity, let’s save our girls and re-humanize men.

Conclusion

As I conclude, cognisant of the difficult moment of COVID-19, which changed the manner, we conduct our lives. In our experience of this pandemic, were reminded of the prophetic words of Greek Philosopher Aristotle, when he said, “Man is by nature a social animal”.

This means we are members of each other, we are interdependent, we are vulnerable, and we shall only flourish as a community not as individuals. We must therefore be in solidarity with the families of the *ancestors of the pandemic*, who sadly passed on both on our shores and across the globe. Our society should out of this experience be

anchored on a better humanism that protects life, advances the dignity and valued contribution of all.

The 2020/21 budget was informed by Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature's 2019 – 2025 strategic plan and 2020/21 Annual Performance Plan.

I therefore, present to you and request this Sitting to appropriate the amount of **(R395.2 million)** to the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature for the following Programmes:

- Program 1 is allocated an amount of **R201.1 million**
- Program 2 is allocated an amount of **R194.1 million**

Finally let me take this opportunity to thank the Deputy Speaker for his continued support and partnership. The Chief Whip of the majority Party, the Presiding Officers, leaders of political parties and all Members of the Legislature, for your valued contribution and support.

The Premier (Imbokodo), Mme Refilwe Mtshweni -Tsipane and Members of Executive Council, for your continued cooperation and hard work, making the business of the legislature run more smoothly.

The Secretary and officials of the Legislature, in ensuring our Members receive the professional administrative support. Let me also thank my organisation, the African National Congress for having trust on me to execute these responsibilities.

Lastly let me thank my husband Mr. Shiba and my family, which remains my pillar of strength and support. My God, our Lord Jesus Christ who walk with me all the time.

I table the Policy and Budget statement for the financial year 2020/21 and request this Sitting to appropriate and approve the amount as proposed.

Nkosi Sikelela I Afrika

I thank you

[ENDS]