

2025/2026 FINANCIAL YEAR BUDGET SPEECH VOTE 11 FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, TABLED BY MEC BASIKOPO MAKAMU ON THE 15 APRIL 2025 AT THE LEBOWAKGOMO LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER.

Honourable The Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

Honourable Premier of the Province Dr. Phophi Ramathuba.

Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip of the Legislature.

Colleagues in the Executive Council.

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on CoGHSTA Honourable David Mmakgabo Sepuru and the Committee members.

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Pandemic and Disaster Honourable Mpho Sonnyboy Shai and the Committee members.

Honourable Members of this august Legislature.

Your Worship, Executive Mayors and Mayors of our Municipalities.

The Leadership of SALGA in the Province.

Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders including the entire Executive Committee.

Provincial Leadership of CONTRALESA.

Our esteemed Majesties, and Royal Highnesses present.

Leaders of Chapter Nine Institutions present.

The leadership of the Ruling Party, the African National Congress and Alliance Partners.

Stalwarts and Veterans of our Struggle.

Leaders of Opposition Parties.

Leadership of various Religious Denominations.
Representatives of NHBRC, RISIMA, and HDA.
CoGHSTA Staff led by the Head of Department, Dr. Modjadji Malahlela.
Contractors in the housing sector
Members of the Media present.
Invited Guests and Stakeholders of the Department.
Comrades, Ladies, and Gentlemen.

Honourable Speaker, let me start by thanking you for inviting us to table this Budget Speech Vote 11 of the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements, and Traditional Affairs before this august house.

This Budget Vote takes flight from the story of hope and resilience we learnt from Koko Madzivandlela Chauke from Matiyane Village, right at the doorstep of the Punda Maria Gate in Vhembe. Koko Chauke lived for 104 years to get her beautiful and fully furnished home, under the Breaking New Ground housing scheme. This is one of many progressive and good stories to tell the world and those who care to listen. This is a story of the progressive government of Limpopo that lifts the burden off the shoulders of its people, a story of hope and a story of courage that inspires and motivates our people, that indeed the spoils of democracy shall at the ultimate end be enjoyed by all.

We are indeed inspired by the story of Koko Chauke and that of other centenarians in Limpopo Province, who kept going even when the odds were against them. To us this is the story that gives us wind beneath our wings, the story that keeps lifting us higher in the service of our people.

We stand here in this august House to declare to all and sundry that nobody in this world will ever detach us from the plight and the lived realities that confront our people. To a granny in Dzingidzingi in Mopani, to a victim of gender-based violence in Tshilapfene in Vhembe and to a child headed household in Maswiakae in the heart of Sekhukhune, to an aunt who commute daily on the dusty roads of Ga-Mashashane to Polokwane, to an unemployed graduate of Mookgophong in Waterberg, we say hang in there. The service delivery train of the ANC led government is coming your way. It is delivery of services to the people that must be planted upon the tested foundations of political freedom. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make to achieve A Better Life For All. We will never, not now and not in future, sever ties with our masses, the poor, the marginalized and the downtrodden because they are our greatest inspiration.

Honourable Speaker

This Budget Vote is tabled against the backdrop of the progressive and straight forward State of the Province Address (SOPA) where our Honourable Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba outlined a multi-faceted strategy to fast-track service delivery in the province. We appreciate the Premier for giving meaning to effectiveness and efficiency in the service of our people. The Premier is becoming a trailblazer and trendsetter in service delivery and a passionate advocate for quality of life of our people. We are standing here, and signs are emerging that suggest a positive blend of successes, and it is all thanks to the exceptional loyalty and dedication by the Premier to the residents of this province.

Administration

Honourable Speaker, Programme 1 has an allocation of R449.369 million, which is 17% of the total budget of the department. Last year, in this august house, we made a commitment that the department will fill 55 advertised vacant positions, and to date 40 positions have been filled and on course to finalise the recruitment process for the remaining positions.

The department has sustained the unqualified audit outcome. Although we are not satisfied with the stagnation and working hard to improve the audit opinion, there were no material findings on our Annual Financial Statement and an overall reduction in number of material findings in the last audit.

Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements

Madam Speaker and Honourable members

The freedom Charter states that “**There shall be Houses, Security and Comfort**”. Housing remains a cornerstone of human dignity and a key indicator of society’s progress. Our commitment to Breaking New Ground in integrated human settlements has led to significant strides in providing housing for all particularly the vulnerable groups.

Honourable Speaker

During the previous Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) period, the department achieved significant milestones. A total of 34 904 housing units were completed against a target of 30 732, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to meeting housing needs. Furthermore, we surpassed the

MTSF target of 8 435 serviced sites, delivering an impressive 17 577 serviced sites across all five districts.

Honourable members, last year, in this august House, I made a commitment that the department would deliver 4 555 housing units in both rural and urban areas. I am pleased to report that we have exceeded this target, completing 5 053 housing units. We are well our way to defeating the triple challenges facing people through the creation of job opportunities.

The Department is continuing to conduct the structural integrity assessment on incomplete houses which were previously abandoned by poor performing contractors. The NHBRC has already assessed 3630 units. We have prioritised the completion of blocked housing units through a phased approach and for 2024/25 financial year, 135 units were completed against a target of 350 housing units.

Honourable Speaker,

The eradication of mud houses remains one of our key priorities, ensuring that no family is left in undignified living conditions. Last year, we committed to eradicating 500 mud houses, and to date, 109 have been demolished and replaced with proper housing.

Similarly, our commitment to providing housing for military veterans remains steadfast. Last year, I announced that we would construct 132 housing units for our veterans across the five districts. To date, 58 units have been completed, with further work continuing. The programme, however, encounters obstacles, including the untraceable beneficiaries and the unavailability of fully serviced sites within various townships.

Honourable Speaker,

The dangers of asbestos are well documented, which is why many nations, including South Africa, have banned its use. In response, the department in collaboration with the Housing Development Agency has prioritised the removal and replacement of asbestos roofs. Last year, I committed to the Phase 2 implementation of the Seshego Asbestos Removal and Replacement Programme, targeting the removal of 755 asbestos roofs and conducting an audit of 10 500 roofs across all five districts. I am pleased to report that 577 asbestos roofs have already been removed, while the audit has exceeded expectations, with 11 823 roofs assessed.

In our efforts to support first-time homeowners, the department committed to disbursing 70 subsidies under RISIMA's First Home Finance Programme. To date, 74 subsidies have been disbursed. We have in the gallery, one of the beneficiaries of this programme and my special guest by the name of Racheku Mapule Dorothy from Mmotong wa Perekisi, who benefitted in February 2025.

Honourable members, As more South Africans migrate to economically viable areas in search of opportunities, we are ensuring that housing infrastructure keeps pace. To this end, we are constructing Community Residential Units (CRUs) in Marapong (Lephalale), Tshikota (Makhado), and Talana (Greater Tzaneen).

- In Marapong, we committed to delivering 514 CRUs. Despite initial project challenges, 514 units are now roofed, and will be completed by the 30th of June 2025.

- Recognizing the need to accommodate previous hostel dwellers who cannot afford formal rental housing, the department has appointed two contractors to build 200 housing units at Altoostyd, with site handover completed in February 2025.
- The Tshikota CRU will yield 118 units with related services. Installation of Engineering services is in progress, after which construction will commence.
- In Talana, procurement of a contractor to build 146 units is currently underway, with work expected to commence in the second quarter of 2025.

Honourable Speaker,

A title deed is more than just a document—it is an instrument of economic empowerment, granting our people legal ownership of their homes. Last year, I informed this House that our target was to register 1460 properties in the name of the rightful beneficiaries. To date, 913 title deeds have been registered in the name of rightful beneficiaries, and we are intensifying efforts to meet and exceed our target.

We continue to drive spatial transformation, ensuring that human settlements development aligns with our broader planning objectives. I am pleased to report that two new townships have been successfully proclaimed: Polokwane Extension 79 and Nancefield in Musina. Proclamation of these townships will facilitate the registration of title deeds to rightful beneficiaries.

Upgrading informal settlements remains central to our agenda. In 2024, we committed to delivering 5 236 serviced sites by Informal Settlements

Upgrading Programme Grant (ISUPG), and to date, 3 254 sites have been connected to water and sewer infrastructure. Additionally, we pledged to formalize two informal settlements in Mogalakwena: Portion 80 Potgietersrus and Mookgopong Extension 15. I am pleased to report that both have been successfully completed.

Our commitment to revitalizing mining towns has also yielded tangible results. We undertook key infrastructure upgrades, including:

- Wastewater Treatment Works in Motetema
- Bulk water and sewer infrastructure in Masakaneng
- Geohydrological studies, borehole refurbishment, and infrastructure mapping in Rossenekal (Elias Motsoaledi Municipality)

I am happy to report that all these projects have been successfully completed.

Furthermore, we committed to support the Water Service Authorities in rectifying and upgrading sewer infrastructures which poses health risk to the residents of Makotse village under Lepelle Nkumpi and Dan Village within Greater Tzaneen municipalities. I am pleased to report that the department in collaboration with Capricorn District has completed the sewer line in Makotse village, with engineering designs in progress for Dan village following a detailed assessment of the challenges affecting the project.

Honourable Speaker,

Our improved utilisation of allocated conditional grant funding has led to an additional R200 million being allocated for human settlements programmes from the national fiscus. This reflects our department's efficiency in planning and implementation.

Despite the challenges, we remain firmly on course to ensuring that, ultimately, there shall be **housing, security, and dignity** for all.

For the 2025/26 financial year, we commit to the following:

- With Human Settlements Development Grant, the department will continue to provide adequate housing through construction of 2 923 housing units across all five districts. This is a decline from previous years due to budget constraints.
- As part of supporting municipalities and responding to the migration into urban areas, 1 962 sites will be connected to water and sewer.
- To reduce informal settlements in the province, two informal settlements will be formalised under Fetakgomo Tubatse and Maruleng Municipalities.
- To address the challenge of gap market in housing delivery, 70 housing subsidies will be disbursed to the qualifying beneficiaries under the First Home Finance programme.
- Registration of 1 500 title deeds.
- Construction of 51 housing units for military veterans.
- Eradication of 606 mud houses. The target includes rollover housing units from the previous financial year

- 250 incomplete housing units will be completed to restore the dignity of the qualifying beneficiaries.

Honourable Members

- Constraints of bulk infrastructure negatively affect the ability to provide new housing opportunities. Therefore, the Department through ISUPG is determined to support municipalities and Water Service Authorities in provision of new bulk infrastructure and upgrading of the existing ones. To this effect, 26 multi-year projects were approved across five districts. The engineering designs were completed for all 26 projects and the Department will implement five of them in 2025/26 financial year under Mopani and Capricorn Districts. These are:
 - Ha-Mawasha Sewer Bulk Line
 - Bulk Water Pipeline - Giyani Ext F
 - Siyandhani Bulk Sewer Pipeline
 - Senwabarwana Bulk Sewer Pipeline
 - Bulk Water Pipeline at Giyani Ext H

Cooperative Governance

Honourable Members

Municipalities continue to be at the coalface of service delivery due to their proximity to the people. We are relentless in our effort to ensure that all municipalities are stabilised and well governed to deliver all basic services to communities.

As I stand before you today all the municipalities in the province, all governed by the African National Congress, are stable with functional councils. We are

however concerned by signs of instability rearing an ugly head at Makhado Local Municipality.

So far, our municipalities' spending on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant is R2, 292 928 386 00 (R2.2 Billion), as at the end of March 2025, which translate into 67.5%. We are concerned that this expenditure is below straight-line projection of 75%. We want to appreciate municipalities that received additional budget in March 2025 during the stopping and re-allocation, these municipalities are Greater Letaba (R15 million), Maruleng (R25 million), Makhado (R20 million), Collins Chabane (R20 million), Capricorn (R20 million), Bela Bela (R8 million), Modimolle-Mookgopong (R10 million), Ephraim Mogale (R15 million), Elias Motsoaledi (R17 million), Makhuduthamaga (R25 million) and Fetakgomo Tubatse (R18 million).

Honourable Speaker

I recently visited Giyani Section F and Masakaneng Bulk Water and Sewage Projects, in the Greater Giyani and Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipalities respectively, two projects funded by the department through the ISUP grant. I am proud to report before this House that I was impressed with the progress made so far in both projects. In Giyani Section F the project is complete and what is left is for the municipality to allocate sites to people to build houses and for the municipality to connect them to the water system. The project has created 21 job opportunities and will benefit 365 households.

In Masakaneng, work is progressing without hindrance with only water meter connection left to complete the project. The project has created 102 job opportunities. We express our excitement about the immense progress of

the project and thank both the executive mayors and local mayors for their dedication to the project.

I call upon all our municipalities to improve on implementation of all budgeted projects and spending on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant and all other grants in line with all prescripts and ensure that our communities receive the basic services due to them.

Honourable Members

Provision of water to our communities continues to occupy a centre stage, as the Honourable Premier already made it clear in this august house. We are worried that access to this essential resource in the province has declined by 6.5% between 2011 and 2022 (from 86% to 79.5%). According to Stats SA, Limpopo has the highest number of households with no access to piped water which stands at 20.5% (against a country average of 8,7%). The decline is mainly caused by ageing infrastructure, thus affecting sustainable and reliable water supply. The province is 0.5% below the Limpopo Development Plan target. On the same breath, there has been improvement on sanitation access from 38% in 2011 to 57.7% in 2022.

In line with **Priority 3** of the **ANC's 2025 Manifesto**, which is **Fixing Local Government and Ensuring Water Security**, we commit ourselves to working hand in glove with our municipalities to make them work for the people in delivering this basic service.

It is in the context of the above that we take this opportunity to welcome the assurance made by the Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba during the State of

the Province Address, to establish a functional Provincial Water Task Team whose work is to coordinate the implementation of the Provincial Water Strategy.

The Provincial Government is currently drafting a Strategy for the Provision of Water and Sanitation in the Province. This differentiated approach is aimed at ensuring that water is provided to all communities as we make a clarion call to our water services authorities including municipalities to prioritize and incorporate areas without water in their IDPs and prioritize maintenance of water infrastructure network throughout the water value chain.

Honourable Speaker

The 2023/24 municipal Audit Outcome Performance paints a picture of our local sphere of government well on its way to good governance with the prudent utilization of public resources. We bow our heads as we celebrate with Capricorn and Waterberg District Municipalities for obtaining Unqualified Audit Outcomes without matters of emphasis. We also commend all the fourteen (14) municipalities that have obtained Unqualified audit opinions with matters of emphasis. The following 6 out of 14 municipalities (Maruleng, Molemole, Makhuduthamaga, Makhado, Greater Letaba and Greater Tzaneen) have obtained unqualified audit opinions for five consecutive years, they are appreciated and encouraged to work towards achieving clean audits as they are good candidates. It is worth noting that Mogalakwena obtained Unqualified audit opinion improving from the previous qualified opinion. This means that the municipality has fairly risen above its challenges that made the headlines previously for wrong reasons.

We encourage all municipalities to emulate these good performers on audit outcomes by ensuring that whatever they do is in the best interests of the people and is done within the prescripts of the law. We equally congratulate Polokwane Municipality under the Executive Mayor Councillor Makoro John Mpe, for having been graded to level six (6), making it a serious contender for a Metropolitan Municipality.

Honourable members, overreliance on consultants by our municipalities has led to this sphere of government losing millions of rands which could have been used for providing services to our people. To reverse this trend, we are working together with Provincial Treasury to support municipalities to build capacity to reduce the cost, and only use consultants for specialized services.

We are proud of Sixteen (16) municipalities that prepared their 2023/24 Annual Financial Statement inhouse namely; Capricorn, Waterberg, Vhembe, Sekhukhune, Polokwane, Makhuduthamaga, Makhado, Musina, Thulamela, Belabela, Lephalale, Mogalakwena, Thabazimbi, Greater Tzaneen and Greater Letaba. We also acknowledge municipalities such as Mopani District that are building the capacity of the Finance Unit to stop outsourcing this work. As we move forward, all the municipalities are expected to submit their Annual Financial Statements by the 31st of August 2025.

Our province has made some strides in realizing the filling of critical positions in municipalities in accordance with the requirements as set out by the Local

Government Regulations on Appointments and Conditions of Employment of Senior Managers. Out of 174 senior manager positions, as at the end of the 2024/25 financial year, a total of 139 positions were filled which translates to 80% of filled positions in the province. 40% of these posts are filled by women. All the senior managers (130) employed in our municipalities have all successfully concluded their performance agreements and committed themselves to delivering quality services to the communities. The remaining 9 newly appointed senior managers are in the process of concluding their performance agreements. The department is further supporting all municipalities in ensuring that they prioritize and fill all the remaining critical key positions.

Honourable Members, we have stabilized Thabazimbi Local Municipality following the Provincial Executive Council decision to place the municipality under Section 139(1) (c) on the 2nd October 2024. We had to place the municipality under administration because as government we could not sit idly and watch the council deteriorate. We had to intervene and bring people with experience (administrators) to assist in turning the situation around and make Thabazimbi work for the people again and comply with the constitutional mandate governing local government.

The new Thabazimbi municipal council was duly constituted on 12th December 2024 following the successful By-elections, which automatically led to the lapse of Section 139(1)(c) intervention. To this effect, the municipality is supported through section 154 of the Constitution which entails that national and provincial Government, by legislative and other measures, must support and strengthen capacity of municipalities to manage

their own affairs, to exercise their powers and to perform their functions. Council committees were established on the 30 January 2025, while the Municipal Manager has been appointed by the council with effect from 1 April 2025.

The Council also resolved to establish ward committees and the process is unfolding with seven out of twelve ward committees already established. I am standing here today proud and with my head held high to report that things are returning to normalcy with all parties agreeing to put people first in terms of delivering quality services. As the foundation of our connection with the people, the municipality is rising from the ashes like a proverbial phoenix, to deliver on its mandate once again.

I call upon other municipalities that are showing signs of deterioration to put their house in order, otherwise I will be hot on their heels.

Honourable Speaker

Our commitment to implement District Development Model (DDM) remains a priority, as the model also helps in joint planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. All our District Municipalities are called upon to focus on implementation and monitoring of districts One Plan catalytic projects within their district spaces. Since the implementation of the DDM in our province, noticeable progress has been recorded and thanks to the collective planning by all spheres of government including collaboration with our esteemed traditional leaders.

Honourable Speaker and Members, the department continues to support municipalities on the establishment/functionality of the Municipal Planning Tribunals (MPTs) and ensuring that they process the land development applications for both urban and rural areas to stimulate the rural economic development.

We remain committed with a renewed resolve to implement Community Works Programme (CWP) in all twenty-two local municipalities as a means of alleviating poverty through targeted work opportunities.

As at the end of March 2025, 21 489 work opportunities were created through the Community Works Programme. To this day the CWP has been addressing one of the 7th Administration's priorities which is to **Reduce Poverty and tackle High Cost of Living**.

**Honourable Speaker,
Disaster Management**

As we gather here honourable members, we continue to mourn the deaths of twenty-five (25) people, comprised of 15 children and 10 adults who perished by drowning during the recent heavy rains and thunderstorms. We meet here with heavy hearts because hundreds of our people were left homeless, roads, schools, clinics, bridges and other critical infrastructure damaged because of flooding in almost all the parts of the province.

This served as a reminder that when mother nature is angry, she can destroy even that which is made of iron and steel.

We take this opportunity to pause and thank the disaster management team of the department, Sector Departments and municipalities for always being combat ready to support. We also appreciate the non-government partners such as Gift of the Givers, The South African Red Cross Society and many others for work done.

Honourable Speaker,

Limpopo Province was included amongst other provinces in the Classification of National State of Disasters in a row between 12 January and 05 March 2025 by NDMC. This reveals that the magnitude of disasters experienced, and the frequency of disaster incidents occurrence in the province are unprecedented.

In response, the provincial government has made available an amount of R500 000 000.00 from the Provincial Revenue Contingency Fund which was allocated to four departments to repair public infrastructure as follows:

No.	Department	Amount
1	Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure	R412 243 000.00
2	Education	R86 388 000.00
3	Health	R1 037 000.00
4	Sport, Arts and Culture	R332 000.00
	Total	R500 000 000.00

This is in addition to the funds received from the national fiscus for both provincial departments and municipalities. As the provincial government we

will remain vigilant and agile in ensuring that these allocations are utilised for their intended purposes.

The task ahead of the reconstruction of the damaged infrastructure requires of us to do more with less, as the damages are estimated at R5 275 300 519.00 (R5,2 billion). It is therefore critical that sources of funding for disasters be leveraged prudently to complement and partner across government to deal with disasters as 'Disaster is everybody's business'

I call upon all departments and municipalities which received grants to spend them accordingly.

Traditional Leadership

Traditional leaders remain a powerful component to bring about unity and social cohesion in our communities. They have always been part of governance since time immemorial. Even during the dark days of apartheid, the institution of traditional leadership practiced democracy, sitting under a big tree. In one of his memoirs, former president Tata Nelson Mandela tells of traditional leadership as the bedrock of democracy. Tata Madiba says the matter brought before the traditional court would be subjected to debate where everyone, even the lowest or lowly placed commoner in the community would be given an opportunity to speak.

We are the children of the warrior kings and queens who fought fearlessly the fierce battles against the white colonial masters in defence of their land. Today we are standing on the shoulders of these great leaders such as King Sekhukhune, King Makhado, King Mokopane and King Ngungunyane fully aware and in recognition of the role they played in the struggle for freedom

in South Africa. The legacy left by these great leaders serves as a reminder of the role they played in navigating their people through one of the most challenging periods in our country. Unfortunately, this show of bravery is overshadowed by the ongoing rifts, disputes and infighting in some of the royal families in our province.

We are making a clarion call here and now to the institution of traditional leadership in its entirety to restore the dignity attached to this age-old institution, by ensuring that the dirty linen of the royal family is not washed and hanged in public. In Sepedi there is an adage that says “Marumo fase bana ba Sebatakgomo, ntlo lerole ga e tswale Kgoši”. Infightings within royal families not only have a negative impact on the developmental goals of the rural communities, but also erodes the level of respect that had been attached to it for many years. The sad part is that it destroys the social fabric that our traditional communities are built on.

We congratulate Her Majesty Queen Masalanabo VII whom His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa recognized as the Queen of Balobedu Queenship. We also shower Queen Manyaku Thulare who was recognized as the acting Queen of the Bapedi Kingship. We call and appeal to the royal families of Balobedu, VhaVenda and Sekhukhune respectively to follow their internal processes and procedures in resolving their challenges and return these institutions to their former glory.

As President Cyril Ramaphosa committed during SONA to assist this institution, we too are going to walk this road with our esteemed traditional leaders. There is no denying the fact that stable and peaceful royal families

are key components of the reconstruction and development programme in our province.

Honourable Speaker and members

We made a commitment here during the 2024/25 Budget Vote presentation to procure vehicles for senior traditional leaders and I am proud to announce that indeed we have procured and handed over all but seven vehicles to senior traditional leaders. The remaining seven (7) vehicles are being processed for delivery during the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year.

In continuing to modernize the sector, we are continuing with the construction traditional council offices. Procurement of contractors has been concluded and handed over the sites to the following traditional councils: Ba Shai Ditlou which is at 23%, Makuya at 40%, and Mapela at 5%. We are further renovating two traditional council offices, namely Litho Ndzundza which is at 45%, and Mampane is at 55%. Work on these five offices will be completed and handed over to the respective traditional councils in the 2025/26 Financial Year.

Additionally, we have handed over three fully furnished traditional council offices at Raphahlelo Traditional Council, Mphaphuli Traditional Council and Bakone Ba Matlala A Thaba traditional Council in Vhembe, Mopani and Capricorn Districts respectively. We will also handover Majeje, Manoke, Davhana and Bakwena Ba Matsepe traditional council offices which are all completed in this financial year. The designs for the following offices are concluded and ready for implementation: Matlala Ramoshebo, Tau Nkadimeng, Mamaila Kolobetona, Mashau and Mankweng. We will also commence with the planning for the construction and renovation of

Masakona, Mabunda and Mashamba traditional council offices and construction will resume once funds are available. We acknowledge the delay due to budget pressures, but we assure our esteemed traditional leaders that we commit to work together with them to see these offices completed and handed over.

Honourable members

Following the reconstitution of Traditional Councils, we have commenced with training of the members for them to perform their duties within the prescripts of the law.

We are working towards finalizing the recognition of approximately 250 headmen and headwomen where there are no disputes.

On procurement of traditional council office furniture, we report that the procurement for the 2024/2025, for 24 traditional councils was delayed due to the need to re-advertise and the furniture will be delivered in the current financial year. We are further procuring furniture for an additional 14 Traditional Councils, meaning we will deliver furniture to a combined total of 38 traditional councils in the current financial year.

Madam Speaker

Initiation schools as a rite of passage continue to play an important role as cultural institutions that prepares young men and women for adulthood.

During the 2024 initiation season, the province had a total of 631 legal initiation schools and 18 illegal schools operating across the province, recording 60612 initiates at legal schools against 898 initiates at illegal

schools. These brought the total enrolment to 61510, whereby a total of 45373 were males, and 15239 females all at legal schools. In contrast 737 males and 161 females were admitted at illegal schools.

Honourable members

As much as we take pride for being the leading light and good example of running incident free and successful initiation schools, we are saddened by the deaths of 3 initiates during the 2024 initiation season. This happened in Mopani, Sekhukhune and Vhembe who all recorded one death each. Although it is a small number, we always say this can be avoided because one death is one too many.

As we move forward, the plan for the 2025 initiation season is at an advanced stage. All applications to operate initiation schools have closed on the 28th February 2025 and assessment commenced from the 16th March 2025.

Honourable Speaker

After all is said and done, our work will be baseless if it does not find expression in the lived realities of the people and the material conditions on the ground that they face. It is on the behest and mandate of our people that we serve in these positions, and if our actions do not represent them, then we will be failing in our duties. The people of this province are our beacon of resilience, our greatest inspiration.

We once again commit ourselves to pick from the good work of 2024/25 financial year, working together with all our stakeholders in the broader

departmental value chain in our shared vision of building a better Limpopo Province for the future.

Honourable Speaker,

The Budget I am tabling today is composed of four components; Administration which is mainly support, Human Settlements, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

In 2025/26 financial year, a total budget available for the department of CoGHSTA as allocated is R2 573 445 000.00, a slight increase to the previous year budget of R2 556 913 000.00, an increase by 0.64%.

The departmental budget allocation per programme is as follows:

- Administration: R449 369 (2024/25: R454 369) a decrease of 0.97%),
- Human Settlements: R1 258 979 (2024/25: R1 245 166) an increase of 1.11%),
- Cooperative Governance: R333 570 (2024/25: R325 391) an increase of 2.51%),
- Traditional Affairs: R530 936 (2024/25: R531 987) a decrease of 0.20%).

Acknowledgements

In conclusion, I would like to send kudos to the African National Congress, my political home for giving me all the support and guidance throughout my political deployment. I also thank the Premier of our province, Honourable Dr. Phophi Ramathuba for appointing me as one of her Executive Committee to lead the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and

Traditional Affairs. I acknowledge the Premier and the entire executive for their continued guidance and support.

Appreciation also goes to the Chairperson and members of the Portfolio Committees on CoGHSTA and the newly established Committee on Pandemics and Disaster for providing guidance and for their dedication in steering the department to the destination we all want.

Thanks to the Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Hosi Pheni Ngove the 5th for his stewardship of the esteemed house and for leading it to stability. Ha Khensa Hosi ya Mina for always being a go-to source and well of wisdom on matters of traditional leadership.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to the Head of Department Dr. Modjadji Malahlela and the Executive Management Team, entire staff including the Security and Cleaners for their commitment to the Department. It is because of each and every COGHSTAZEN that we see the improvements in the performance of the department.

Finally, I thank my family, for always providing me space to serve the people of Limpopo Province and for understanding the political environment that I work under. Thank you for encouraging me to push above my potential. You always remain my shoulder to lean on. Without you I would be lost in a world without direction. You are the anchor that keeps me grounded and the compass that guides my every decision and the light that brightens even my darkest days.

To my colleagues present here today, delivery of services to our people is a war that we need to win. Allow me to end this presentation with an extract from a speech by former United States President, Abraham Lincoln, during

the American Civil war, in what is commonly known as the Gettysburg Address and I quote “With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Thank you, Inkomu, Ndi kho livhuwa, Ke a leboga, Sthokose, Dankie