



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS



2007 - 2008

Policy Speech



**ADDRESS BY THE MEC
FOR HOUSING, LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AND
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS,
MR SAM KWELITA
DELIVERED IN THE
PROVINCIAL
LEGISLATURE ON
14 MARCH 2007**

POLICY SPEECH FOR 2007/08 BY THE MEC FOR HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MR SAM KWELITA DELIVERED IN THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE ON 14 MARCH 2007.

**Honourable Madame Speaker and Deputy Speaker,
Premier, Mrs Nosimo Balindlela and Members of the Executive Council, Chief Whip and other party Whips present here,
Distinguished members of the Provincial Legislature,
Executive Mayors, Municipal Councillors,
Members of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders
Director General and HODs,
Distinguished guests
Stakeholders,
Comrades, Ladies and gentlemen**

Madam Speaker, precisely a week away from observing Human Rights day, I present to this House the 12th policy speech of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Traditional Affairs.

The 21 March 1960 marked a milestone in our fight for human rights. As a province we have taken up that fight to ensure that the rights to which all our people are entitled to are enjoyed by all communities. It is in the spirit of 21 March 1960 that we take this fight into the scourge of eradicating poverty amongst our people.

The RDP remains the vehicle for achieving our goals of meeting basic needs poverty eradication and creating jobs. We have crafted the PGDP which will see us incrementally achieve key milestones in the development of the communities in our province. This requires us to create a functional department managed by competent and dedicated agents of change who can

maximise the impact within limited resources to deal with access to clean water and sanitation, electricity, proper roads, permanent shelter and other necessary and basic needs.

What propels us is the consciousness of the responsibilities that we have to our people, particularly the poor who have been marginalised.

Madam speaker I want to immediately move into the delivery imperatives of the department as we take further steps to meet the needs of our communities during 2007/08 and beyond.

Housing

Budget : R 1, 101, 981 million

Madame Speaker, providing housing to communities in the Province remains a huge challenge.

According to surveys the district with the highest percentage of informal housing is Nelson Mandela Metro (23%), whereas OR Tambo (DC15) and Alfred Nzo (DC44) have very low levels of informal housing (3% and 2% respectively). At the local municipality level, Maletswai (EC143) and Buffalo City (EC125) are the municipalities with the highest percentages of informal housing (with 30% and 29%). By contrast, in Inxuba Yethemba, Ikwezi, Baviaans, Camdeboo, Blue Crane Route, Inkwanca, Kou-Kamma and Gariep, more than 80% of households live in formal housing.

As we move towards eradicating informal settlements by 2014, the Breaking New Ground Delivery Plan launched by the National Minister of Housing, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu, remains the policy directive.

The primary goal of the programme is the creation of sustainable human settlements in line with the vision of the Freedom Charter which states ***“new suburbs shall be built where proper facilities shall be provided for transport, lighting, playing fields, crèches and social centres.”*** which goal

translates into the promotion of quality living environments. This approach will assist in building a non-racial integrated society.

The shift in housing development necessitates that all government departments gear themselves up to align their own delivery programmes to housing development.

In terms of BNG during 2006/07, we have accelerated the implementation of the Breaking New Ground Plan with five pilot projects on Sustainable Human Settlements currently being implemented in Buffalo City (Duncan Village), Mbashe (Elliotdale), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (Zanemvula), King Sabatha Dalindyebo (Ngangelizwe), Mquma (Butterworth, Siyanda), Ndlambe (Thornhill) and Maletswai. These projects will see the delivery of some 51 000 houses upon completion. This Madam Speaker represents a further step in moving towards eradicating informal settlements by 2014.

In terms of its service delivery model, the Department has opted to refocus its approach. We have decided to utilise established contractors to speed up housing delivery. We have roped in established contractors not only to deliver on housing projects but also to build expertise and capacity amongst our emerging contractors. We have set aside allocations for women and youth in construction as a contribution to building this sector.

Madam Speaker, 2007/08 will also see other developments on the housing front.

In the area of middle income housing, financial institutions in terms of Financial Services Charter have partnered with government and pledged to administer home loans for households earning between R3501-R7000 p.m. to enable access not only to bank loans but to a combination of both subsidies and bank loans. In the current financial year we have provided for an amount of R3, 6 million to assist with deposits for about 1200 families.

With the recent boom in the property sector, across the Province, specifically within the category of first time home owners, municipalities must take responsibility to provide housing opportunities for these communities. This may include the need for municipalities to release land for targeted housing development within the context of broader economic development of the municipality.

We must however work in partnership with municipalities to ensure housing shortfalls are addressed. For this purpose a specific criteria has been developed to accredit municipalities as developers. The accreditation involves the delegation of certain clearly defined functions in respect of the administration of national housing programmes. In the assessment of municipalities to perform the function of housing, capacity assessments will be undertaken. The evaluation of municipalities will look into capability areas such as:

- Housing subsidy budget planning and allocation processes, including ability to develop and review independently Housing Sector Plans and Accreditation Business Plans;
- Programme management which includes contract administration, subsidy registration and technical (programme) quality assurance;
- Financial management with ability to review, report and manage subsidy disbursements, financial reporting and reconciliation.

In response to the President's Imbizo during September 2006, in the NMMM, further assistance in 2007/08 will be provided to the Metro, Buffalo City Ugie and KSD in developing comprehensive Housing Plans. The plans will assist these municipalities to develop housing within the context of developing Housing chapters as part of their respective IDP's. Funding of R1,2 million has been set aside for this purpose

The issue of delivery of quality housing will further be strengthened this year. Poor quality in housing delivery will not be tolerated and we will continue to take bold steps to address this situation. Apart from the deployment of project managers to address the issues of quality, we will also address the contracts management dimension impacting on quality and time. Penalty clauses and other contractual means will be used to compel delivery against set quality and time in an effort to drive delivery. Project managers will also see their terms of engagement and remuneration linked to specific quality outcomes in housing projects.

Madame Speaker the following represents some key issues in the delivery of housing during 2007/08:

- The eradication of informal settlements with 6 projects translating to a value of R242,6m will be undertaken this year
- Finalisation of the unblocking of blocked projects will see 44 projects valued at R129, 6m being implemented
- We have adopted a policy for the rectification of housing stock built between 1930 and 1994. In the current financial year we will conduct investigations to determine the backlog. R10 million will be used to conduct this investigation and to undertake initial rectification.
- For the 1994-2002 housing stock a report will be completed by end of March 2007. An amount of 40 million has been set aside to continue this rectification. Approval of any rectification project will depend on action taken against the previous contractor / developer who has failed to deliver.
- Implementation of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system for housing projects to track performance and ensure quality products.

With more than half of the Eastern Cape population still living in traditional settlements, the implications of an expanded commitment to rural housing supply in the province are enormous because so many people in these areas earn very little to qualify for housing subsidies. This poses a significant challenge in terms of housing delivery for the Eastern Cape in future. Exactly how this should be undertaken in terms of housing provision remains a major challenge for the province. We have thus convened a Rural Housing Summit scheduled to take place during the first quarter of 2007. We therefore further commit ourselves to popularise the rural housing policy and to undertake an awareness campaign to do so.

The Department has a budget of just over R1 billion for providing housing through the various policy instruments.

Local government

Budget : R 241,852 million

Madam Speaker I now turn to the support to Municipalities within the Province. What is important to note is the character of the municipalities making up our province in an effort to come closer to the kind and nature of support required to further develop them. While we recognize the autonomy of municipalities it is our responsibility to ensure that we have functional institutions at the coal face of delivery.

Key to that is the political stability. In the words of Dr Xuma writing as an organizing secretary of the Atlantic Charter committee in 1943 when he said:

“In the mass liberation movement there is no room for division or for personal ambitions. The goal is one, namely, freedom for all. It should be the central and the only aim for objective of all true African nationals. Division and gratification of personal ambitions under the circumstances will be a betrayal of this great cause.”

Also in local government the division at the level of political leadership, as seen in the last term and also in the beginning of this term, is a betrayal of the sacrifices made in the liberation of this country.

Management of municipalities

Madam Speaker my department acknowledges the challenges facing municipalities to meet the overwhelming pressure for services. This is exacerbated by the management vacuum in municipalities not only of accounting officers but other levels of key technical expertise. This can be addressed by ensuring that vacancies are filled by competent personnel who understand the demands of developmental local governments. The department will step up its efforts to assist municipalities to find, select and employ the right people.

Dealing with Corruption

Corruption robs our democracy and the poor of their rights and freedoms. The Department will be launching the Local Government Anti Corruption Strategy and I call upon all of us to use that platform collectively act against corruption. We must pay specific attention to the integrity of key systems such as the Supply Chain Management processes.

Analysis of Support Programmes in the Eastern Cape

There are a number of support programs and initiatives (by both national/provincial governments and the private sector) that are aimed at enhancing service delivery, capacity building and organisational efficiency. These efforts are however not properly coordinated and managed and ultimately not maximized. This requires that we interrogate the capacity of both the district municipalities and our department to coordinate these support programmes. This requires that we strengthen the capacity of both. In this regard we will focus in the functioning municipal support units of all districts.

Madame Speaker the Department will also design a Provincial Municipal Support Plan that provides direction and parameters for the existing support providers with clear and measurable targets. The Plan should also provide for

a set of norms & standards to guide the provision of hands on support to municipalities. As monitoring and oversight are critical authority functions of the department clear indicators must be developed for district & local municipalities.

Integrated Development Planning (IDP) And Municipal Performance Management (PMS)

During 2006/07 Financial Year forty (40) Draft IDPs were assessed using a Credible IDP Assessment Tool with all Sector Departments participating under the direction of the Office of the Premier and my department. 42 IDPs were adopted after June 2006. The development of the second generation of IDPs has been started in all districts, with the exception of one, through the IDP Engagement process started during December 2006.

The Department aims at training district municipalities on the Credible IDP Framework and Assessment Tool. It will also focus on intensifying monitoring of the implementation of Ward Based Planning for maximum community participation in IDP Processes including consideration of provisions of the Credible IDP Framework. For this purpose I have set aside a sum of R7 241 000.

With regard to Performance Management System thirteen (13) municipalities have Municipal Performance Management Systems whilst eight (8) municipalities have adopted PMS policies. Whilst some municipalities are committed in developing and implementing Municipal PMS as well as annual review thereof others completely resist in preference of human resource PMS. Others use other systems that are not necessarily compliant with Chapter 6 of the Systems Act. Development of a Provincial Municipal PMS Framework to be customized by municipalities is crucial. My department has put aside a sum of R4 000 000 for this purpose.

There were 16 Annual Performance Reports submitted for 2005/06 whilst others are still outstanding. The Department is committed to intensifying its

hands-on support in ensuring that municipalities improve on the submission of Annual Performance Reports.

Public Participation At Local Government Sphere

Involvement of citizens in governance matters at all levels of government is gaining momentum. This places enormous responsibilities on the authorities to ensure that communities are taken on board in the governance and decision-making processes that affect their lives through Ward Committees.

Challenges hampering the full functionality of the Ward committees include, among things, the lack of clarity on the role and functions of these structures which are relatively new, limited support mechanisms such as administrative and resources, vastness of some wards and ineffective communication between Council and wards.

The department has been central in coordinating; the Ministerial Izimbizos, Presidential Imbizos and Cabinet outreach for the current financial year. This year will be dedicated as the year of mass mobilisation towards effective participation by citizens in programmes of government specifically at a local level.

Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG)

The Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) allocation for the 2006/07 financial year amounted to R1 288 000 000 with R1 412 000 000 for the 2007/08 Financial Year. Due to the fact that 24 of our municipalities were still below 60% expenditure, from the reallocation exercise the province experienced a reduction in allocation of R201 779 000. However, good performance by some municipalities led to the province regaining R181 171 000 resulting to the total loss R20 608 000.

The main reasons for poor expenditure are attributed to poor planning, laborious project registration processes, tedious processes by sector departments to recommend projects, cumbersome internal processes in and slow or no commitments of MIG allocations by municipalities. Taking into

consideration the disaster relief additional budget to MIG of R339 551 000 received in Jan 2007, these challenges are likely to persist.

To turnaround the current challenge, the department is finalizing its recruitment of more than 18 technical staff, specifically to assist municipalities and provide hands-on support with all MIG related activities. The department has also contracted two engineering specialist since January 2007 to develop responsive systems at the departmental and municipal level. The process will also inform the deployment of Siyenza Manje support engineers to municipalities. This process has started rolling out as most of the engineers and financial specialists will be deployed at provincial MIG office and targeted municipalities.

Bucket-Toilet Eradication Programme (BEP)

The initial backlog for bucket toilets was 48 417 bucket units and this included all other forms of unacceptable sanitation systems in both formal and informal settlements. The verification exercise by both the Department of Housing, Local Government and Traditional Affairs (DHLGTA) and Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) reduced the backlog to 37 192 units in the formal settlements. By the end March 2007, 28 173 units were eradicated and the remaining backlog is currently standing at 9019 units, which in terms of funding it translates into R216 000 000. This includes connection and bulk services.

The allocation by my department for 2007/08 Financial Year stands at R26 000 000 with the rest of the funding i.e. R190 000 000 being secured from MIG and municipalities. Although the total sum of R216 million, for the physical construction of new units and for the known associated bulk, has been secured, other challenges to meeting the National target of December 2007 includes, supply chain management processes, project registration and the delay in Environmental Impact Assessment and DWAF recommendation processes.

- To address the water service targets we will complete the assessment of backlog verification and funding requirements by end of March 2007.
- For sanitation we will complete the backlog verification and funding requirements by end June 2007
- For Electricity we will complete backlog verification and funding requirements by end October 2007

The department is establishing a Technical Task Team formed mainly by sector departments, specifically to short circuit the sector specific requirement processes. The Department has further set aside R2 000 000 for the development of a Geographical Information System (GIS).

Local Economic Development

The Department has realized that LED has been reduced to social interventions rather than enjoying a status as a catalyst to economic policy. It is with this understanding that our participation within the GDS has become important. There is a need for municipalities to engage the business community to develop a clear understanding of the economic environment in order to play a supportive role in establishing viable and sustainable communities. We appreciate the assistance we have received from the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) with the establishment of 7 development agencies in the province. These agencies must serve as drivers of key development initiatives. I acknowledge the capital infrastructure that government departments are investing in one of the poorer districts in our province, Alfred Nzo. This investment will raise the economic potential of this area. As a department we are supporting the post-summit processes through an allocation of R4,3 million for the 6 DM's for 2007/08.

With wall to wall municipalities the department will assist municipalities to create a balance between urban and rural development.

I wish to thank the Executive Mayors of Amathole, OR Tambo, Ukhahlamba and Chris Hani for driving and successfully hosting Growth and Development

Summits. The outcomes of these GDSs gives the department an invaluable base of information from which to better support the municipalities.

Municipal Financial Management And Viability

During 2006/07 30 of the 45 municipalities submitted their annual financial statements on time. 12 municipalities managed to submit their annual financial statements within 3 months from the cut-off date. 3 municipalities submitted their financial statements within 6 months after the cut-off date. The challenge currently is to assist municipalities that were unable to meet the cut-off date so that legal compliance is improved remarkably. Secondly the audit reports revealed numerous issues under the qualifications that need attention as well as the expression of opinions on the going-concern of specific municipalities.

This year my department commits itself to manage these issues to expected standards. We plan to assist 10 municipalities to determine their income streams, ways to improve revenue collection and credit worthiness. Further to this my department will ensure that the Local Government Anti Corruption Strategy is launched in all District Municipalities as well as the Metro. For this purpose I set aside a sum of R11 535 000.

In the 2007/08 financial year also, twelve (12) municipalities will be supported with an amount of R6 000 000 for the development of municipal valuation rolls. These rolls will assist municipalities to determine their rates base and levies which should see an improvement in revenue collection.

Capacity Building and General Administration

We are only one year into the current 5 year term of municipal councils with the majority of our councilors having the first experience of the municipal environment. Most of our municipalities have many new managers as well. This places huge responsibility on my department to ensure that all these functionaries are capacitated in terms of formal developmental and training programmes. My department is currently in partnership with various tertiary and other relevant institutions to develop appropriate training modules. This

arrangement will be strengthened this year to expedite the capacitation of our councillors.

The Department has sponsored municipal officials to undertake a Masters in Public Administration degree in a partnership between universities and SALGA.

In terms of the current legislation in particular the structures Act, Speakers have a critical role to play in the promotion of public participation in Local Government environment or matters of council and therefore it is very much important to strengthen the capacity of offices of Speakers in terms of appropriate development and training programmes. The department has put aside a sum of R2, 1 million for this purpose.

The department has budgeted a sum of R6 745 000 to support and assist in the continuous improvement of the administration and capacity development within our municipalities.

Free Basic Services

It is the policy of our government to provide every household with basic services. Because some of our people cannot afford these services they are regarded as indigent and must have access to these basic needs. The government has committed itself to provide certain amounts of Free Basic Services to such households. The implementation hereof is not without challenges. Most municipalities do not keep proper and updated records of indigents nor have developed appropriate mechanisms to enable easy access to and awareness of the existence of free basic services.

For this year my department will focus on a robust programme of awareness of communities regarding their rights to Free Basic Services. I have put aside a sum of R2 377 764 for this purpose.

Disaster Management and Emergency Services

During 2007/2008 financial year the Department will be strengthening the Provincial Disaster Management Centre for it to discharge its responsibilities effectively. The Department will render support to Nelson Mandela Bay and District Municipalities through the deployment of newly recruited emergency response personnel within the disaster management centres.

The integrated approach of our Provincial Disaster Management Framework requires each provincial government department to prepare a disaster management plan with contingency strategies and emergency procedures in the event of a disaster, including measures to finance these strategies.

Nelson Mandela Bay, District Municipalities, Buffalo City and King Sabatha Dalindyebo Local Municipality will be supported to proactively respond to disasters through the institutional capacity support on the establishment of satellite disaster management centres closer to communities. Immediate relief aid to disaster affected communities will be provided and training of disaster management functionaries thereof. Fire fighting equipment will be purchased for Local Municipalities according to available resources. An amount of R 22 708 000 has been budgeted for 2007/ 2008.

Traditional Affairs

Budget : R 128, 090 million

Madam Speaker, the protection and advancement of our traditional leadership institutions remains a priority for our department. Implementing key pieces of legislation such as Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 of 2004 is a cornerstone of our delivery in this regard

Great strides have been made in the transformation of the Traditional Institutions, including the transformation of Traditional Authorities into Traditional Councils in line with the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 2003 (Act No. 41 of 2003). Out of 229 Traditional Authorities 120 Traditional Authorities have been transformed into Traditional Councils. It

is the intention of the department to complete the transformation process during the 2007/08 financial year. Transformation of these traditional leadership institutions means amongst others that at least 30% of active members are women, bringing these community structures in line with the democratic principles of the country. Much has been achieved with the PHOTL in this regard and we applaud the manner in which these changes have been introduced and accepted by the traditional leadership.

In my previous policy speech for 2006/07, Madame Speaker I indicated that construction for the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders and offices would take place in July 2006 and September 2006 and be completed in June 2007 and November 2007 respectively. However, this has not been possible because of the challenges with the procurement processes and delays occasioned by administrative factors. The construction of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders will now commence in April and according to the Department of Public Works the period of construction is 20 months. Furthermore, a sod turning ceremony and the handing over of the Land for construction by the Honourable Premier was held on 8-9 March 2007. Also, the department will be constructing at least 6 Traditional Councils.

The Department also intends to begin the process of establishing Local Houses that will work very closely with the District Municipalities during the 2007/08 financial year. The drafting of the legislation is in progress with the legal assistance of the Office of the Premier. We expect that by the third quarter of 2007/08 the legislation will be ready public comment.

The department commits itself to support the National Programme of Support to the Institution of Traditional Leadership (NPS-TL) as announced by the President of South Africa during his Address at the Annual Opening of the National House of Traditional Leaders on 23 February 2007. The Programme which is driven by **DPLG** includes allocation of necessary resources, capacity development, involvement of the institution of traditional leadership in development processes and formation of partnerships between the municipalities and traditional councils in order to speed up service delivery

and development in areas that fall within the jurisdiction of traditional leadership.

The “iMbumba yaMakhosikazi aKomkhulu” which was allocated R3 Million in 2006/07 financial year for development projects in their areas has been allocated R6 million for this coming financial year.

A Senior Manager for the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders has been appointed and it is expected that his appointment will enhance the efficiency of the PHOTL. Furthermore, a number of critical posts have been advertised and will be filled during 2007/08.

We have set aside an amount of R5, 197 million for the PHOTL for 2007/08. During this year we will see amongst others the:

- 10th anniversary of the PHOTL. The department is looking forward to these celebrations of which will be given the full support of the department.
- The current term of the executive committee coming to an end.

Madame Speaker, as regards the latter, the current term of the Executive Committee will be coming to an end this year. I have to pause here to reflect on some of the highlights of their term of office. The PHOTL led by the executive has developed strong cooperation and good working relations with all spheres of government. This is evidenced by the host of partner projects which have yielded:

- Multi Purpose centres for the communities
- HIV and AIDS programmes
- Poverty Alleviation programmes
- Releasing funding for institutional development of the traditional leadership institutions
- Memoranda of Understanding with various state institutions such as the SA Medical Research Council, Department of Agriculture and Department of health to name but a few.

Madam Speaker from the above it is clear that our traditional leadership institutions have remained not only relevant but have also spearheaded key socio-economic issues within our communities. Under the leadership of the current executive I extend my thanks and appreciation to them for their tireless efforts and strong leadership of the PHOTL.

Corporate governance

Budget : R102 ,215 million

No doubt Madam Speaker you are aware of the delineation of the Department into two separate departments of Local Government and Traditional Affairs and a new Department of Housing. The Department, whilst finalizing the recruitment process in terms of the current organogram, will ensure that the delineation of the Department is finalized by the first quarter of the coming financial year ending in 31 March 2008.

Despite the capacity challenges in the recruitment process the department has made great strides in filling the 176 critical vacant posts during the current financial year thus far. A significant number of posts are at various stages of the recruitment process. This process will be enhanced during the next financial year to ensure that all the funded vacant posts will be filled to strengthen the capacity of the department. During the forthcoming financial year, the department will focus on the development of critical and scarce skills especially those that are line function related.

In order to ensure that the department upholds the value for money principle and accountability we will vigorously implement the performance management and development system throughout all levels, particularly senior management level. Madam Speaker, this is a matter which I am passionate about. In the interest of sound and effective delivery my Department has already completed all Performance Agreements of all managers from the HOD to Assistant Managers. These agreements will be used as a basis not only to assess performance but more importantly to develop the identified capacity gaps sooner rather than later. I have furthermore developed a

specific time table of assessments which is part of the HOD's performance agreement with me.

The issue of employment equity in the Public service particularly has been a challenge. In the past financial year we have manage to make some strides in that the EE committee was formally appointed and the draft EE plan, in line with the new structure, has been developed and it addresses the target of 50/50 representation in senior management echelon. This issue requires all of our collective efforts. We have moved past the statistical, numbers games being played in this area. As a department we are furthermore identifying specific posts that will be earmarked for targeted recruitment and selection of under-represented groups such as women and the disabled.

With many of the management positions being filled, we have to develop improved mechanisms to support this growing information potential. The department will further facilitate the development and implementation of an integrated ICT system that will enable the generation of improved management information.

As the department is rolling out an integrated wellness programme, which includes HIV/AIDS, EAP and Safe & Healthy Environment, we will not only concentrate on awareness campaigns, but also now moving towards home based care, taking care of HIV/AIDS orphans, counselling of employees and their families.

Our Special Programmes Unit, now driven from the office of the MEC, has a critical role to play within our organisation. During the forthcoming financial year we have set aside funding for the creation of awareness around issues relating to mainstreaming of gender, disability, youth and the aged. The SPU will further monitor the Departmental programmes to assess the level of mainstreaming of these issues in the Departmental programmes. In addition the SPU will assume the mammoth task of coordinating our local authorities and government departments as they respond to the 365 days programme of action.

Donors and Social Partners

The task of building local governments, delivering on housing and building a department are all in themselves huge undertakings. We have been fortunate to have donors and social partners who have stepped forward to lend a hand and help to advance the cause of this government. To these donors and partners I extend our gratitude as a department and as a province for your contributions.

Madame Speaker we have fought for our freedom and for the rights which are ours irrespective of race, class, culture, gender or religious persuasion. We now need to harness that spirit of activism that has brought us to this point where we must now direct our fervour into driving improved services for all our people.

I thank you.