



the premier

Department of
the Premier
FREE STATE PROVINCE

1997 STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS BY PREMIER, DR IVY MATSEPE CASABURRI

15 APRIL 1997

Madam Speaker and Deputy Speaker
Honourable members of the Legislature
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen, Citizens of the Free State

As we formally start the Fourth Session of our democratic Legislature, we stand before you with great humility. It is also indeed an honour for me to address this house for the first time after assuming my office.

A new year is beginning for us and we are once again being afforded the opportunity to give account to the citizens of this Province on how, under this new democratic dispensation, we have carried out the responsibilities, we were entrusted with. During this past year, skippering this ship as a state was no easy task.

As this nation worked towards finalisation and acceptance of our new constitution and gave birth to a new institution, the National Council of Provinces earlier this year, we have been reminded of a quote I recently heard from someone who read from a Spanish poet Antonio Machado "Traveller, there is no road, you must build it as you travel".

Indeed we have been building a road to practical democracy, to reconciliation to inclusiveness, to a new culture of human rights. There have "been detours, surprises, armed bandits and even assassins along the way" (Keith Bezanon).

But most importantly there has been those and many of them, black and white, male and female, advantaged and disadvantaged, disabled and able, rich and poor, rural and urban, in government and the private sector and civil society, who were committed to and shared our determination to make this democratic and new value system work whatever difficulties we may encounter as a Government or a Province.

We have come through turbulent times but we are grateful to many people, including many of the staff, who have persevered through this turbulence to preserve this Province's well being.

In particular we are grateful to the media who were asked to give us a chance to heal our wounds, find our feet again, yet remain true to their role of critical assessor as to how we perform our task in delivering on the mandate given us.

Today the Free State Province takes pride in how it has been able to overcome setbacks and commits itself to be as accountable, transparent and as committed to the people of the Province as we possibly can be. We would like to market ourselves not only as the Sunshine or the Winning Province but also as a Province which can do more with less and which can be seen to act with unprecedented speed to respond to the needs of the people of our Province.

To be able to do so, we need to have proper understanding of the separation of powers and have good working relations between the different organs of State. I wish to congratulate the staff at all levels for their efforts during the most trying time of our Province to achieve this and to the members of the Legislature to make this possible. This is made even more imperative by the new constitution and the Council of Provinces.

The New Constitution has helped resolve numerous problems regarding the role of provinces in decision making process at national level and has created a new framework for how provinces can exercise influence. Many countries in the world look to us who have embarked on this bold new initiative, to chart new directions from which they can learn. Our own tentative steps in this engagement have already shown that the process is not easy but have convinced us that the fundamental principles upon which the NCOP is built are indeed correct. We are proud that a son of this soil, cde Patric Terror Lekota is the first chairperson of this body.

Aligning our policies and making practical the concept of co-operative governance between different spheres of government and between departments is becoming a reality. As you know, the Free State shares borders with six (6) provinces. To translate co-operative governance into practical reality, our working relationships with these provinces are important. A common approach to similar problems, while being cognisant of our own specificities, will be of benefit to us all.

I as Premier, have in line with this, already paid a visit to Mpumalanga province and will be visiting two others soon. Two Premiers will be visiting our province soon with their own teams so that we can exchange views in terms of making policy alignment, legislative consonance (especially regarding enabling legislation) and co-operative governance a reality.

Growth and development policies, programmes and projects of one province or of one town can impact negatively on others. This is why the need for consultation and sometimes common legal or regulatory or policy framework may be imperative e.g.. In the field of hazardous waste management and other environmental issues.

Madam Speaker

While we recognise and are working towards co-operative governance, supportive culture does not exist. Creating such a culture cannot be an event especially in a country and province where deep seated inequalities and a lack of human rights culture was so entrenched. It is therefore the task of the Free State Legislature and Government (as is the case with other provinces) to commit ourselves to this new framework because it is what indeed gives effect to the new constitution which all of us must pay unswerving allegiance to because it belongs to all of us.

The challenge ahead of us is to ensure that this new framework and the NCOP which is to develop a strong sense of provincial interest, reconcile the various spheres of government, national with provincial and provincial with local.

Madam Speaker,

The framework is now in place. As members of this legislature, we are charged with the responsibility to make sure we act in accordance with our mandates, mandate our delegates to NCOP properly and report back regularly and accurately to our proper structures at whatever level or sphere.

We are aware that issues of economic growth and development and delivery in our province are of utmost concern. It is our responsibility to assess how we have fared in 1996/97 and what we would be doing in 1997/98.

One major event in the provincial history was the disbandonement of the Government of National Unity. The result of this was a demand for bolder initiatives and directions from government, which now consisted of only one party in the Cabinet.

On one hand the laudable contributions of those members of other parties, their experiences and sense of caution during their term of office were lost. We applaud them for their contribution. On the other hand, their departure created the political space for us to be courageous and take bolder steps in the direction of meeting the needs of the majority of our population.

In the light of huge developmental challenges, which are faced not only by or province but by the whole country, we recognised that what may have seemed easy and straightforward were not

necessarily so. In fact, it was precisely some of those things that needed thorough analysis and attention because without such, we would not have been able to meet challenges of fundamentally transforming society as we attempt to deliver on our mandate. The need to cluster our delivery system so as to avoid fragmentation, duplication and wastage was one of the lessons learned.

While economic growth and development were a priority area, this could not be seen in isolation of the other factors like safety and security, human resources capacity and good business ethics.

The corner stones of our economy have been mining and agriculture. To develop a clear vision and implement a strategy for economic development, a knowledge base is needed. This was not necessarily available. We found that if you need information about resources, these were not necessarily located within government so that policy makers can use it. Information about mining and its potential is located with mining companies in whom mining rights have been monopolised. Spatial information about land and its potential is fragmented and lies with agricultural unions, universities and partly with government. At a recent presentation by one of the major financial institutions, comment was made about lack of statistics of this province, rendering planning almost impossible.

The most precious resource of this Province is its people. In order to deliver services in accord with our priorities, investing in people and investing in our economy by attracting investment must be priority. To do this we must have safety of our people and of investors as one of our priorities.

For the first time a provincial Police Plan was drawn up in terms of which priorities were set. It is one of the functions of the Secretariat to monitor and evaluate the performance of the SAPS in relation to the Police Plan.

The need to improve the skills, technique and capacity in general of the crime investigators in the province was established by the Secretariat for Safety and Security. Efforts will be made during this year to improve the quality of crime investigations through training and the latest technology even if we have to pool the international resources available to us and to increase the number of detectives.

Despite the political uncertainty in the province which prevailed for a large part of last year, the Department of Safety and Security nevertheless succeeded in reaching the targets it set for itself. Important partnerships against crime, involving business, organised labour, agricultural unions, provincial and national Departments within the province and NGO's have been established. Important partnerships with certain components of the media, especially local radio stations and printed media in respect of crime prevention and morale boosting activities were also concluded. We view this partnership as very important and we are confident that it will do justice to the philosophy of community policing.

High profile publicity has been given to violent crimes on farms recently, but we wish to state that this Province has pursued criminals with determination. We believe that one death from a criminal act is one death too many irrespective of whose death it is. We urge that no unnecessary political points scoring be embarked upon. Instead we expect that we all work together to reduce crime so we can increase investor confidence in this province which we jointly can market as a crime free province if we all put our shoulders to the wheel.

Investing in our economy also means delivering services efficiently without being a wasteful government. But it also means ensuring that timeous efficient planning and implementation of procedures is effected. Having inherited bureaucratic procedures that inhibited fast delivery, attempts to overcome these have not always been successful and often led to loopholes which allowed for other kinds of problems such as fraud and corruption. However, while some of such cases received publicity, attempts at greater efficiency and bold initiatives at better delivery did not receive attention.

Specifically the Social Welfare Department, despite restructuring difficulties has proven that we can improve efficiencies. The Province's anti poverty, social security programme was fraught with ghost beneficiaries. A pilot programme has been put in place to register pension beneficiaries and outsource payments, but ensure that financial controls are in place so that government money is only

paid out when proof of payment to the beneficiary is obtained. This system is likely to generate substantial savings annually.

In addition, a Flagship programme has been launched targeting single women with children under five, by training them to start income generating activities that lead to their self-reliance.

A need to overhaul the present state maintenance grant system was also identified and has high priority in the Welfare fraternity. The decision taken by National Government to introduce a new child support benefit which will replace the existing system is welcomed. These benefits will ensure that many more needy children in our Province will have access to the social security system.

More dramatic is the bold steps taken at rationalisation of old age facilities in order to achieve greater efficiencies. The outcome also resulted in the first national effort at social integration.

As a result of a request from a relatively marginalised group, the disabled, the department facilitated the creation of a Provincial Co-ordinating Committee on Disability comprising NGO and Government departments. Because the department is assisting in creating capacity for this organisation to help itself, it is serving as a secretariat. I am happy to inform you that this government has agreed to make available from the RDP fund, the sum of R1 million for this project.

A fundamental undertaking of the Government has been that all health services would become more accessible to all. In April 1996, the Policy on Universal Access to Primary Health Care was implemented in the Free State. Currently, there are 82 local government councils in the Free State which render health care services at 183 service points.

One of the health priorities which faced the Free State Health in the past was the establishment of an efficient and effective District Health System to significantly shift resources in terms of budget and services to the primary health care level in the province. The Free State has developed six (6) regions and demarcated fourteen (14) health districts.

The process of consolidating hospitals, and the Clinic Building and Upgrading Programme have also successfully taken off.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has made a significant impact on the population of the Free State and it is estimated that the HIV infection level has increased from 9.19% in 1994 to 11.03% in 1995 which presents a doubling time of 15.4 months. HIV infection has increased in all age groups but we are most concerned about the youth. Free State Health will continue its focus on the youth with various activities to influence behaviour change in this target group. Members of the ruling party in government and the legislature, will become much more involved with the HIV/AIDS campaign during the 1997/98 financial year.

Thirteen (13) new clinics were (promised)/ to be built, 19 were to be upgraded. Funds were available but due to delays in the tendering processes, no new clinics were built. However, I have pleasure in announcing that in the next few days, advertisements will be placed in media for the tendering for the construction of 13 clinics. We will ensure that the criteria for awarding contracts takes into consideration job creation and black economic empowerment in order to address the elimination of poverty.

This Government committed itself to giving top priority to education by giving it the largest slice of the budget. Yet this is an area where we have had least successes. There are several reasons for these.

First, our contractual salary obligations have resulted in more than 75% of the budget being spent on salaries, leaving very little for infrastructure, and transformation of the teaching process.

Secondly, the implementation of voluntary severance packages, decided at national level, did not have the intended results in that the scheme was introduced before an audit of needs of schools was done.

This was exacerbated by the contradiction between the two acts that govern education in the province.

The problem area that captured the public attention was that of schools stationary and text books delivery. The misalignment between tender board and education department processes and legal advice and contracts was the main problem. But in large measure, these problems were made difficult by unethical business practices on the part of the public. Of almost 200 SMME's that tendered, only three were legitimate and/or had capacity. Some had addresses in empty fields. Examining and validating the information they gave, was an enormous waste of government resources.

We have aggressively moved to institute inquiries into areas where there have been losses. We have established an inquiry to examine the issues surrounding the supply of stationery and text books for schools. The report will be submitted later in April so that we can move to correct any loopholes and weaknesses in our existing process and procedure.

Its heartbreaking driving through the Province seeing our children on farms and rural areas walking long distances to school in very cold or hot conditions. The devolution of national powers on transport matters to the provinces as of April 1st will allow us to address accessibility of schools to children in rural areas. We, as the Government, hope to bring this to an end when the Transport Ministry completes new bus and transport subsidy schemes. We cannot only subsidise transport of workers and not do the same for our school children.

The new curriculum which was released in March this year will be introduced in Grades 1 and 7 in January 1998. This will be followed progressively in other grades in ensuing years. Its initial implementation will feature intensive advocacy and in-service training courses. The Executive Council will pay close attention to how the Department of Education will implement the programme.

The school building programme is on course. Out of 18 projects, 8 have been completed, others are near completion and the rest will be completed in due course. With the renovation programme (COLT), 53 schools were identified, 28 of which have already been completed.

It is quite evident that on the economic front we have not done well. In a large measure, this is due to the gradual but significant decline of mining which is one of the pillars of our economy. The private sector throughout the country has not created jobs in line with even the small growth that occurred. In our province despite better agricultural performance, jobs are scarce. Investor confidence in the province was shaken by instability. This government commits itself to restoring their confidence.

This government commits itself to work with the private sector in projects to ensure adequate investment and social development to facilitate investment in infrastructure and job creation. It will also put its energies into accessing external funding, to ensure effective implementation to high priority capital development programmes.

This Government makes no apologies for corrective action, and black economic empowerment. However, taking our cue from pronouncements by the Minister for Finance, we will brook no abuse of this process by unscrupulous business communities, black or white, national or international.

This government, commits itself to continue in its attempts to develop black business but will ensure that those who have attempted or succeeded to take this government for a ride, will not be beneficiaries.

For purposes of establishing a clean and effective administration, the Executive Council has taken a decision to establish an internal audit unit, whose task will be to serve as an independent appraisal function, which is an integral part of the provincial government. This unit will assist the Executive Council and the Director General to meet their objectives and discharge their responsibilities by:

providing an independent appraisal of the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal controls set up by management,

assisting management to carry out their duties and responsibilities in an efficient and effective manner, in order to attain the goals of the government,

providing a service to all levels of the province to ensure effective control and compliance, as well as ongoing assessment of risk and identification of fraud.

This move, of establishing the internal audit unit, Madam Speaker, is necessitated by the kind of problems that we experience in relation to the use and management of public funds, problems that can only be captured at a very late stage by the external Auditor if you do not have an internal audit.

The Department of Finance, Expenditure and Economic Affairs will soon release a report on its findings on how to better transform and restructure the tendering processes with a view to allow speedy delivery of goods and services, without opening loopholes for fraud and corruption. In this regard, we want to reiterate the stand taken by the National Government with regards to awarding tenders, that this government is no way going to allow people who are involved in tax evasion, to be awarded government tenders.

The economic generators of our Province are Agriculture and Mining, Local Government and Housing, Public Works, Roads and Transport and Tourism.

In a province where agriculture is one of the major economic sectors, we have had much to be grateful about. Given that of the 3♦ % economic growth our country experienced in 1996, 1♦% came from Agriculture, the bulk thereof came from the Free State. Our government also realises the importance of commercial agriculture to the economic development of the Free State, and therefore supports this sector on the critical issues where it can have the largest impact. Agriculture has had an exceptionally good year. Due to the almost perfect rainfall in early summer, an all time record wheat harvest of 1.217 million ton has been attained. The veld over almost the whole of the province is in the best condition we have seen for years, resulting in very good livestock products. Even though we experienced a drought in February which caused some damage to the maize crop, the crop estimate is still higher than average.

However, the main focus of the Department of Agriculture should be to create a better life for people through self reliance and utilisation of agricultural resources in a sustainable manner. We have tried to do this by, facilitating agriculture related economic activities in areas of utter poverty.

For instance the Community Project Fund, where communities are supported in developing small business ventures, through provision of facilities and land. The number of families, who benefited by the departmental programmes in the past year, stands at 17 827. We wish to highlight the fact that 400 families have now received land ownership and 140 families are leasing land with the option to buy. We will focus attention on greater benefaction of agricultural products.

A note worthy process of voluntary restructuring has been undergone by the Department of Agriculture over the past year, resulting in the establishment of a smaller and more dynamic department, poised for considerable impact upon traditional and developing communities with an agricultural base in the province in the coming year, irrespective of their setting, rural or urban.

The establishment of a Community Projects Fund and a Rural Finance Programme are two significant pioneering achievements over the past year. These programmes have the full support of the private sector, the World Bank and the European Union. Initiatives are currently taken to monitor and evaluate the department's performance to date, which could indicate a very active year of focused farmer and community support ahead.

However, some elements of restructuring notably redundancies, have not yet been dealt with conclusively, mainly as a result of agreements at National level.

When the entire country voted in 1994 and most particularly in 1995 for Local Government leadership, a number of promises were made. Indeed it gives us pleasure to proudly announce that Local Government launched 133 projects in the entire Province on Water, Sewerage, Electricity, Roads and

Stormwater. Many of these projects have taken off the ground: some are at final stages whereas others are already completed. For example, projects under the MIP (Municipal Infrastructure Programme), Extended Municipal Infrastructure Programme, Bulk, Connector and Infrastructure Grand and Discretionary Funds. These endeavours were for the betterment of the squalid conditions under which our people lived prior to 1994 and to better their standard of living. These has been hue and cry for decent shelter and for quite too long our people stayed under unbearable and inhuman informal settlements.

The Department of Housing has increased its approval from 25 000 to 38 392 subsidies and from 2 181 to 9 941 houses have been completed and beneficiaries have taken occupation. Under construction are 1 707 units. The unacceptable hostel policy has been completely done away with. Under the Hostel Upgrading programme, these units were transformed into family units where men and women can stay together and raise their families with content and dignity. This province is among the first to implement the Hostel Upgrading Programme with success and great efficiency. However, the successes were not without frustration and hassles.

Some areas within this province such as QwaQwa, Tshiame, Oppermansgronde, Relebohile, Botshabelo and Thaba Phatshwa were unable to benefit from the housing delivery because of the land problems in these areas. Concerted efforts were however, made to have land transferred from the Central Government to ensure that these areas also enjoy the same benefits. The delegation of authority over land in Phuthaditjhaba has now been transferred to the Premier.

The Executive Council has recently approved the publication of names for formation of the much desired and much awaited Development Tribunal, which is aimed at fast-tracking and reforming development planning approach within the Province.

The amendment of Section 119 of Ordinance 8 of 1962 and Less Formal Township Establishment Act will ensure fast-tracking of land tenure and acquisition of sites for housing. This is intended to ensure that the "poorest of the poor" access decent housing as the Constitution entitles them to. These amendments will soon be tabled in the legislature.

The building of houses has contributed to local job creation in all areas where housing programmes were undertaken. This province is one of the few which have been commended for their delivery.

The sphere of local government is one of the most important pillars for delivery on our promises. The past year has proven tumultuous because of lack of capacity, inability to accept collective responsibility and some finger pointing and political bickering. However, we wish to emphasise the importance of this tier of government in creating a positive image of the province which should help to attract investment for economic development to this province in general and local areas in particular.

If economic growth is to occur and unemployment is to be reduced, provincial and local government must co-operate in an atmosphere of stability. At provincial level we must provide the necessary support and create a policy and regulatory framework to make local development possible. The government will in the near future establish a development tribunal and has already pronounced on the nominees. This tribunal will speed up the process of development and make the province more attractive for investment.

The Department established an Intergovernmental Committee drawn from itself and FRELOGA to review Local Government legislation in the Province. After consultation with councillors, officials and members of the Portfolio Committees of this house, an official document will be produced for further comments with a view to enactment.

During the past financial year the department went through two departmentalisation process. On January 8, 1997, the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport was formed. Though this had some negative effects, on each sector's ability to deliver, the departments nevertheless were able to achieve some importance successes.

Last year we promised delivery on access roads which would create jobs in certain local areas. All those projects are at various stages of completion, the first having been completed in January 1997 and the last to be completed in September 1997. We are also happy to announce that in fact, jobs created were in excess of our expectations.

The Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) was continued and 26 projects were started to the total value of R3,915 million. The funds were allocated from the national RDP fund. These projects had the purpose to involve local communities to the maximum. Job creation is of utmost importance and therefore labour intensive construction methods are used as far as possible. People involved in these projects are trained in the relevant skills to enable sustainability of the projects. During the year 1 125 jobs were created and people were trained. Of these, 450 were women and 120 were youths. These projects also serve as pilot projects where lessons are learned which can be used for infrastructure projects done by other department to enhance the implementation of the RDP.

The draft amendment of the Roads Ordinance was completed and has been submitted to the State Legal Advisor for comment after which the legislative process will be continued. The process of democratising the District Road Boards is on course and will culminate in a new Bill to be placed before the Legislature soon.

The draft Provincial Road Traffic Act is currently with the State Legal Advisor for comments after which it will be put through the process of promulgation.

The three departmental construction units did road improvements in the Free State Goldfields, Bethlehem and Brandfort to the total value of R85,234 million. Departmental maintenance teams were involved in road maintenance work on the paved and gravel road networks. They had a daunting task to keep ahead of the deteriorating road network due to the above normal rainfall as well as a lack of funds. They have however, been able to keep the network in a reasonable condition.

The Process to legalise and regulate the taxi industry in the province has been proceeding well. More than 95% of all taxis applied for registration before or on the target date of February 28, 1997. This puts the Free State at the forefront in the country. Due to the successes in these processes, the taxi industry in the province is without violence. They are busy improving their quality of service as well as their overall image. This process of regulation and legislation will continue and it is expected to be completed around October.

The new vehicle numbering system was implemented on March 1, 1997 and the public have responded relatively favourably to it.

Two major traffic safety projects were undertaken namely, the December Holiday and Easter Holiday Projects. The Traffic Management Directorate put all their efforts into this process. The accident rate during these periods were however higher than the previous year. It was evident that most occurring in the province are caused by motorists from other provinces travelling through the Free State.

Despite an anticipated budget cut of more than 30% in real terms, the department is determined to improve its level of service to the road users and the client department in 1997/98. The department endeavours to investigate, and utilise if possible, alternative sources of funding to try and alleviate the backlogs. This includes fuel levies, vehicles licences and joint ventures with the private sector.

There has been renewed confidence in South Africa which has put it on the international map again. Meaningful and direct investment can make a huge difference. One aspect of this is that tourism has gone up but hotel occupancy has gone down. Although this Province has not benefited significantly from the increased tourism in general, the decline in hotel occupancy rate provides a golden opportunity for the rise of this sector via smaller enterprises. The sector has the potential of boosting the economy.

Sports, Arts and Culture can contribute significantly to the development of tourism in the province in addition to the natural beauty of scenic mountains of the Eastern Free State, its water courses and historical places of attraction.

We will renew discussions with previously interested potential investors who were discouraged by political instability. At the same time we will be pursuing new ventures with parties which have indicated an interest in twinning with this province this year.

We will give resource to marketing and scientific support services for the promotion of this important sector. We will encourage Tourism Boards which were launched by various towns to target not only foreigners and people from other parts of the country, but to target Free Staters themselves. The department of Tourism has aggressively started with a new vigour in selling the Province to itself and to this nation.

Regarding Sports and Recreation there have been a number of highlights for 1996 among which are:

- the erection of basic sport facilities with the R4,9 million provided by the National RDP Fund; setting up effective control structures with the National Sports Council as a controlling structure;
- training courses for technical officials, administrators and clubs to entrench mass participation in sport activities;
- a programme aimed at empowering women in all aspects of sport in the province; the Free State academy of sport was officially opened at the Springbok Park Stadium on March 14, 1997;
- at the Pacific Games held in Australia in December 1996, we are proud to acknowledge that two athletes of those who obtained silver medals came from this province.

The coming year also holds the promise of increased delivery to make a positive impact on the lives of ordinary people in the Province.

The Free State has been pioneer in establishing a directorate of Science and Technology at provincial level. This directorate is focused on the improvement of the Province's economic and social conditions by focusing on technology for development. The Department has concluded initial consultations with various key stakeholders to establish strategic partnership for delivery.

There are already demands from previously marginalised Art Forums. The Department is in the process of sensitising government officials, politicians and the private sector about the importance of this portfolio, to the development of the economy of the province in general, and to tourism in particular. The role of this work in the process of reconciliation and nation building cannot be overemphasised. A provincial Arts Council is also in the process of being established.

The two departments have already committed themselves to co-operation for the promotion of the province.

Chapter 12 of the Constitution of South Africa recognises the institution, role and status of traditional leadership. The Free State is looking keenly to national legislation, which will address roles and functions of traditional leaders as provided for in the Constitution.

We recognise traditional leaders as major role players in the development of partnerships with local government, and as key partners in their local areas. We firmly believe that real development will not take place unless this partnership is strengthened and supported.

This government shall continue to uphold and respect this age old institution and shall continue in its attempt to bridge the gaps between this institution and local authorities.

We welcome the inauguration of the National Council of Traditional Leaders on Friday, April 18, 1997 and the appointment of the members of the Free State House of Traditional Leaders to the Council.

This Council together with the recently established MINMEC on Traditional Affairs will enhance the functioning of the institution of traditional leaders and promote traditional affairs.

I have pleasure in announcing that this government has decided to review the salaries of members of the House of Traditional Leaders to bring them more in line with other similar provinces.

This government is committed to gender equality and emancipation of women. This is the only Province in which women occupy leading political positions of Premier, Speaker, Leader of the House and Chief Whip. We are proud of this record.

The Office of Status of Women was launched in December last year. It will monitor the impact of government programmes on women and men and analyse data generated in order to achieve equity. The process by which this will be done will be workshops starting from April 1997.

The office will work within the policies and administrative guidelines of the National Government, while at the same time addressing and advancing issues relevant to the Free State. We recognise the resource constraints. We will not be able to provide the amount of quality of service that we would like. But, we will strive for efficiency in programme delivery and innovation in programme design, using non-financial resources wherever we can, to achieve maximum benefit possible. But we will live within our means.

Youth are a sector of society close to the hearts of all of us. A Youth Commission has been set up in accordance with the relevant legislation, although vacancies have already occurred. These will be filled as soon as possible by following the prescribed procedures. A youth secretariat has been set up and its deputy director has now been appointed. We hope that as the Commission shapes our policies and monitor our performances, this sub-directorate will play its role in placing youth in the centre of development, and transformation of our society.

We hope this will inspire youth to take up their responsibility and contribute to their own development specifically but demonstrate a new patriotism which demands selfless giving to the nation in general.

Madam Speaker

I have prescribed today the problems and successes of this government. I have indicated the legislative requirements and policy framework demands that need to be put in place to meet our challenges. We are confident that we can rise to this challenge. Our focus must be and will be delivery and delivery first. The building of our province demands that we effectively marshall all our resources, including human resources, for maximising the ability of our government to deliver. We will be intolerant of wastage because we cannot afford it.

I would like everyone here today, as well as those listening or watching this ceremony, to remember that this province is ours, it is our collective responsibility. Already the working relations that have been established here between the different political parties are indicative of the acceptance of this. This legislature" moral obligation to give leadership is one we cannot shirk.

Much remains to be done. Not much has been promised but we are eager to make this province a prosperous one because we know it has the potential. We must work together. The business community in its various sizes will be one of the stakeholders we nurture so that we can work together to explore this potential. Each person must assume responsibility, individually and collectively. The future lies with us. Let us march forward together in harmony claiming for ourselves a place in history that will let us be remembered as the generation that catapulted the Free State successfully into the next millennium!

Kee Leboha Bahaeso
Baie Dankie ons Mense
Thank you all