

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF GAUTENG PANYAZA LESUFI DURING THE 2025 STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS, TSHWANE, PRETORIA

24 February 2025

Madame Speaker, Honourable Morakane Mosupye;
Deputy Speaker, Honourable Nomvuyo Mhlakaza-Manamela;
Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Honourable Parks Tau;
Deputy Ministers Mondli Gungubele and Peace Mabe
Chief Whip of the Governing Party, Honourable Lesego Makhubela;
Members of the Executive Council;
Leaders of Political Parties in the Government of Provincial Unity;
Leader of the Official Opposition, Honourable Solly Msimanga
Leaders of Political Parties and Members of the Provincial Legislature;
Former Minister Zizi Kodwa;
Former Premiers;
Executive Mayors and Speakers of Councils;
Traditional and Religious Leaders in Gauteng Province;
Chairperson of the Board of Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone, Mr Lionel October;
CEO and Tshwane Automotive Special Economic, Dr Bheka Zulu;
CEO and President of Ford of South Africa, Mr Neale Hill;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Members of the Media;
Distinguished Guests;
The People of Gauteng:

INTRODUCTION: TONE SETTING AND CONTEXTUALISATION

It is now six months since the 7th democratic administration, which was configured in terms of Government of Provincial Unity, took up the reigns to deliver on the electoral mandate of the May 2024 national and provincial elections. We are thankful for the continued commitment shown by all the political parties which are part of the Government of Provincial Unity.

Let me also thank the official opposition and the parties outside the Government of Provincial Unity for their continued thoughtful contribution to a robust yet constructive legislative environment that deepens democratic governance in our Province.

This SOPA is underpinned by the three national priorities, re-emphasised by President Cyril Ramaphosa in his 2025 State of the Nation Address. In Gauteng, we are aligned with these three strategic priorities of the Medium-Term Development plan:

- drive inclusive growth and job creation;
- reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living; and
- build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

People of Gauteng;

Our presence here in Tshwane this evening is nothing else but a mark of appreciation to the new Administration of the Tshwane Municipality.

Under your leadership, Executive Mayor Dr Nasiphi Moya and Deputy Mayor Eugene Modise, Tshwane is back, better and bolder. Together with other parties in your administration, you have demonstrated that a city can be clean and a city can serve all its residents. For that, we say thank you, thank you, thank you! Keep it that way!

We are pleased to see the effectiveness of Inter-Governmental Relations to the test and succeeding in enabling the system of government to deliver services to residents.

People of Gauteng;

Today, as we host SOPA 2025 in this groundbreaking facility, we are not just celebrating what has been built—we are charting the road ahead. The Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone (TASEZ) is proof that Gauteng is the driver of Africa's automotive revolution. It is a bold declaration that the future of manufacturing starts right here.

It was the great African scholar Chinua Achebe, who said, “Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will glorify the hunter.” Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone is hosting the 2025 State of the Province Address to respond to those who are pessimistic and gloomy about our province. We are ready to tell our story to prevent people from defining us. When they say nothing is happening and nothing is working in this province, we do not debate them, but we show them.

Five years ago, where we are today at Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone, there was nothing here but an open space that was destined for a very special reason. TASEZ is the manufacturing flagship programme of our province.

Five years ago, in 2019, the first sod-turning ceremony was overseen by President Cyril Ramaphosa to start the production line of Ford’s Next-Generation Rangers. Today, this plant is now producing 725 cars a day and more than 200 000 Ford Rangers per year, a remarkable achievement.

Our province is proud to be home to Africa’s first automotive city. We launched TASEZ in 2020 through a strategic partnership between the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, the Gauteng Provincial Government, the City of Tshwane Metropolitan and Ford Motor South Africa.

This intergovernmental and multi-sectoral partnership yielded a combined investment of over R26 billion, creating over 8000 jobs, of which 3 300 are permanent jobs. Through this innovation, 229 SMMEs have already benefited from R1.7 billion in procurement opportunities, with targeted support for women, youth, and entrepreneurs with disabilities. In addition, the TASEZ Training Academy is preparing the workforce of the future, already having skilled 370 SMMEs ensuring skills development and technology transfer.

Earlier today, together with the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Parks Tau and the Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Dr Nasiphi Moya, I had the privilege to do the second sod-turning to signal the launch of Phase 2 of the TASEZ, which will expand opportunities for emerging entrepreneurs and black industrialists to enter into the automotive sector.

With Phase 2 now underway, this SEZ will expand its impact, attracting R6.1 billion in private-sector investment and R3.95 billion from government partnerships. Over 4,000 construction jobs will be created, along with an additional 2,150 permanent jobs in high-value manufacturing.

This is real economic transformation in action, where factories rise, businesses grow, and communities thrive. by doing this, we are **#GrowingGautengTogether**. TASEZ is an emphatic demonstration of the positive outcomes which accrue to collaboration between the three spheres of government within the context of an IGR agreement.

The TASEZ model has been a testament to our commitment to growing and supporting manufacturing sectors in Gauteng. We want to expand and replicate this model of success to the West Rand and Sedibeng.

Madam Speaker;

We are gathered here in Tshwane, the home place of Lilian Ngoyi, Dr Tlou Theophilous Cholo, Dr Sam Motswenyane, Francis Baard, Martha Mahlangu, Ronnie Mamoepa, Judge Dikgang Moseneke, Emma Sathekge, Dr. Gwen Ramokgopa, Dr. Fabian Ribeiro, Dr. Abe Nkomo, Prof. Nico Smith, Lucas Macro Masterpieces Moripe, Faf du Plessis, Adv. Nakedi Ribane, Vusi Mahlasela, Japhta Masemola and the hero of our generation, the one and only Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu. We do so to honour and salute these greats

People of Gauteng;

Whatever we do and whatever we say, if we don't resolve the following Gauteng 13 problems, being here will mean nothing. Our Gauteng 13 problems are the following:

1. Water
2. Cable theft and vandalism
3. Non-functional traffic lights
4. Potholes
5. Crime and lawlessness
6. Mushrooming of informal settlements

7. Electricity in particular load shedding and load reduction in our communities
8. Increase in Gender Based Violence and Femicide
9. Drug abuse
10. Service at our hospitals and clinics
11. Lack of schools
12. Failing infrastructure and CBDs
13. Unemployment

We have to reverse the impact of these G13 problems if we are worthy of being called government.

G1. WATER

I want to apologise, wholeheartedly to all those people who, as we speak, struggle to access water in our province. This is unacceptable, we must intervene decisively and call for accountability. We can't claim to be a smart province, and we still subject our people to this Stone Age problem.

Even though this is not a competency of the provincial government, together with our municipalities, and the Minister of Water and Sanitation Mme Pemmy Majodina, we have taken a drastic decision to allow City Power to take over the electricity supply of the Eikenhof pumping station while Eskom will take over the Emfuleni pumping station to immediately restore power.

It is the power failures in these water pumping stations that have led to the challenges of depletion of water in our reservoirs. We are at an advanced stage to repair leaks and replace ageing pipes. Since this intervention, water is gradually coming back to our homes.

As we move forward, we are preparing all municipalities to receive a large water supply from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, set for completion in 2028. This requires massive upgrades to municipal infrastructure to ensure it can accommodate the additional water supply.

Jointly with the Ministry of Water and Sanitation, we have established a war room with all our municipalities to monitor, resolve and protect our water supply in the province. While planning for 2028, we remain committed to ensuring continuous and reliable water supply for communities today.

G2: CABLE THEFT AND VANDALISM

To date, we have shut down 1079 scrap yards for non-compliance, shut down 593 spare shops and 149 tyre shops for operating illegally. 716 owners and operators were arrested and tried through our courts.

We've resolved to install tech logs that will alert us instantly when our network is tampered with and a 24-hour response team will always be on standby.

And we are making sure that businesses no longer suffer because of power cuts! A reaction unit comprising of various law enforcement agencies and the private sector has been unleashed to safeguard and protect our cables and public infrastructure

G3: NON-FUNCTIONAL TRAFFIC LIGHTS

We have identified more than 400 traffic signals across our province that require immediate replacement. We have now set aside a budget and a team to immediately repair or replace these traffic lights. We welcome the intervention and support from various private sector companies that have adopted various traffic lights in our province. We will unleash an intelligent traffic system that will be tamper-proof. We must also call upon those who, after drinking expensive water, decided that their cars must enjoy deep kissing with our traffic lights, especially on weekends and month ends.

G4: POTHOLE

Transport is the lifeblood of our economy, carrying the hopes and dreams of millions who travel our roads, board our taxis, and ride our trains in pursuit of a better life. Gauteng as an inland economy depends on the transport and logistics system to get products to markets in South Africa and the world. So the conditions of our road and road networks must be maintained.

From next month, we are resurfacing and upgrading the Golden Highway, Malibongwe Drive, Garsfontein Road, and key interchanges in Tshwane and Johannesburg. We are proud that the 5 KM upgrade of the D1814 road in Bronkhorstspuit has started. These projects will put thousands of people to work while fixing the key routes. Allandale Road is now done while K101 Olifantsfontein Road, Midrand is also about to be completed.

The Gauteng Provincial Government, working with municipalities, is committed to addressing potholes on our roads. A 72-hour pothole repair commitment and intelligent traffic systems will keep businesses moving and productivity high.

With the help of the CSIR, we've now mapped and identified all potholes in our province. Work has already started with the fixing of these potholes, beginning with our provincial roads and, where possible, as we did with the 40 worst roads in the Sedibeng, we will assist municipalities.

G5: CRIME AND LAWLESSNESS

Honourable Speaker;

We have said this before, and we say this again: fighting crime remains an apex priority for the provincial government.

Together with the private sector we have identified and profiled 442 kingpins that are causing the worst crimes in our province. These 442 crime kingpins are responsible for Cash In Transit, kidnappings, hijackings, rented murder, ATM bombings, blue light gangs and business robberies. Instead of waiting for them to commit crimes, we have put full-time surveillance around them. Of the 442 we have already arrested 50, and we are monitoring the rest closely. Thanks to the partnership with the private sector through Business Against Crime SA and the private security industry.

We congratulate the SAPS for arresting an alleged mastermind who has been linked to the murder of a Sandton businessman while he was trying to flee the country to Ethiopia. What is notable about this case is that the three suspects were discovered through CCTV footage and were arrested by the police with the help of a private

security company. This is the template to fight crime that GPG has been propagating for the last two years

The operation commenced in last month, and we have given ourselves 6 months to make inroads in apprehending these criminals. The net is gradually closing, and it will definitely close around the kingpins.

“When the music changes, so does the dance”. It is important to adapt to the changing circumstances. We must be ready at all times to change when the circumstances demand it.

Our efforts of appointing wardens, establishing an air wing with 3 helicopters, introducing panic buttons and painting our province with thousands and thousands of CCTV cameras have already yielded results. The latest crime statistics released by the Minister of Police a few days ago show a drastic decline in major crimes in our province.

In addition to the national cooperation, Gauteng will go a step further by signing a memorandum of cooperation with SAPS and municipalities to ensure that we effectively fight crime. Each municipal law enforcement agency will be able to operate across boundaries.

Air-wing and fleet deployment

People of Gauteng;

We will continue to unleash the airwing which was boosted with an additional helicopter. Day by day, the Air Wing team helps our ground forces to foil many attempted criminal activities.

On the 23rd of November 2024, the team intercepted the nefarious plans of a group of suspects that were committing vehicle theft around Gauteng and other provinces. The suspects were using a Toyota Quantum and a Hyundai Venue with fake registrations, actively targeting high-end valued motor vehicles, like Toyota Hiluxs, Fortuners, Land Cruisers, Prado and Ford Rangers. We broke the backbone of these syndicates.

Further investigation and intelligence revealed that the suspects owned sophisticated electronic devices utilised to commit the theft of motor vehicles. The culprits were finally nailed whilst driving out of a shopping mall in Krugersdorp.

We will crush other syndicates that may come to light. We are relentless in this area and remain resolute to stamp out this menace to our Province.

Since its inception in 2023, the air wing has been involved in 292 operations. Some of its other recorded successes include 648 arrests for various offences; 56 cellphones recovered; 486 hijacked and stolen vehicles recovered; 97 firearms recovered; and a total of 48 Cash-in-transit crimes attended to, with 34 successfully foiled. Our sincere appreciation to our Provincial Commissioner and his Team, we are now cracking various crime syndicates in our province.

Safer, revitalised CBDs

We made a bold proclamation that we will reclaim all our CBDs from criminality in Gauteng, starting with the City of Johannesburg.

I am pleased to report that so far, we have conducted **558** operations in CBDs across our province. The installation of cameras in Small Street has come into force with vigour. These cameras are monitored through the Interim Command Centre. Already we have seen over 21 000, License Number Recognition (LPR) hits, over 6,000 crime dispatches, more than 800 vehicle interceptions, with 256 vehicles of interest impounded, and 148 arrests.

We have also deployed hundreds of Gauteng Traffic Wardens to conduct patrols on a daily shift basis. The Wardens conduct operations under the supervision of Gauteng Traffic Police and SAPS in collaboration with JMPD and other stakeholders (i.e. Community Police Forum, Business and Civil Society).

Randburg's businesses and citizens, led by Councillor Lucinda Harman and former JSE President Roy Anderson, have demonstrated how to carry out an effective public-private partnership at a local government level with their Re-imagine Randburg cleaning operation. We pay tribute to these civic leaders and encourage our suburbs,

townships, and city centres to do the same. Because public-private partnerships bring together diverse stakeholders with a range of viewpoints and experiences, they have the potential to revolutionise local government and our province.

Provincial Integrated Command Centre and partnerships with other stakeholders

For the first time in the history of our townships, we have now installed hundreds of CCTVs in our communities. These are 380 CCTV cameras in crime hotspots and over 6000 CCTV camera feeds across the province in partnership with VumaCam. An additional 600 CCTV sites will be concluded by the end of March 2026. To date we have distributed 2000 manual panic buttons and over 101,000 subscribers have downloaded the e-panic App. The total number of callouts received in response to the App is 49, 585, with an acknowledgement response rate of 3.5 minutes. The ambulance response rate is 21 to 24 minutes, while the security response rate is 14 to 23 minutes.

Upskilling of Gauteng Traffic Wardens

Wardens will be upskilled in accredited specialised areas to enhance our emergency and disaster management response. To date, a total of 1,890 Wardens have been trained in Chemical, Biological, Radiation, and Defence (CBRN) for Disaster Management.

G6: MUSHROOMING OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENT

To date, we have demolished more than 6600 new shacks, and we have declared this habit of erecting shacks in our CBDs, towns, and townships as a crime against the State. We now have a standing court order to evict these mkhukhu mafias. We've developed a new technology that will immediately alert us when a new settlement is established.

With the use of the tool, we were able to identify 198 new invasions throughout the province. The tool is also used to protect government land, servitude, and road reserves. It has also assisted us in quantifying the state land lost through land invasion.

About 8000 hectares of state land have been lost, which is all the more reason to ensure that we eradicate land invasion.

To accommodate those who genuinely need houses, we are partnering with our municipalities. The City of Johannesburg has approved the concept development of Grand Central Mixed Housing with a yield of 81 000 opportunities that will assist in reducing the Housing backlog to less than 500 000. There are 101 000 beneficiaries who have been approved for benefitting from the Housing Subsidy Scheme.

Ikageleng rapid land release

The Ikageleng Rapid Release Programme is geared towards addressing the gap in the income groups that do not qualify for the full subsidy programme and do not earn enough to qualify for bond applications but are willing to build houses for themselves. The inclusion of these income groups through this programme supports other existing human settlement subsidies, thereby promoting the integration of different income groups and social inclusion.

To improve the living conditions of beneficiaries, strategic land is sourced from the private sector and serviced with water, sewer, and electricity and released to qualifying beneficiaries. The spatial location of these land parcels plays a vital role in creating sustainable human settlements, as they are near social amenities, areas of employment and economic opportunities. In the Rand West Municipality, 650 serviced stands were completed in November 2024 and are ready for handover.

The Title Deed Programme is an important flagship project, and a concerted effort is being put in place to ensure the issuance of title deeds to deserving beneficiaries. The Department of Human Settlement has been intervening in reducing the backlogs regarding issuing title deeds and has categorized priority areas for speedy implementation. A total of T 763 title deeds, will be allocated by the end of the term.

In 2024, we committed to upgrading the living conditions of the people of Makaanzi. I am happy to report that the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (CEMM) is driving the upgrade. Germiston Ext 47 and 48 have been earmarked to create over

4800 housing opportunities for the people of Makausi. We will continue to work with the community and the Ekurhuleni municipality to find lasting solutions for the people of Makausi.

Hostel development

We have conducted a full assessment of hostels owned by municipalities and the 6 owned by the province. Work is already underway in the following municipal hostels – Sethokga, Mamelodi, Rathanda, and Kagiso. Municipalities also receive grants directly from the national department to undertake similar upgrade work at hostels owned by them.

Maintenance and upgrades of hostels and flats owned by the province will continue to ensure that these affordable housing projects are well maintained. An alternate funding mechanism needs to be explored to address the huge demands in upgrading informal settlements.

G7: ELECTRICITY

Residents of Gauteng;

Our commitment to the 2024 SOPA was clear: expand generation capacity, drive renewable energy solutions, electrify underserved communities, and protect critical infrastructure. We have done what no other province has done by investing over R1.2 billion in energy infrastructure, directly impacting over 43,400 households and reducing the burden of load-shedding.

In our hunt for 3000 Megawatts (MW) to protect the Gauteng energy grid, we now stand at the following energy power levels:

- Our partnership with City Power through Kelvin Power Station yields an additional 180 MW to the City of Johannesburg. The intention is to expand the facility's capacity to 600 MW by the end of this term. This expansion will be driven by a transition to gas power, supporting our goals of environmentally friendly and reliable energy solutions;
- Signed and sealed 800 MW solar power in Merafong;

- Concluded a waste to energy that will yield 212 MW with Tshwane contributing 112 MW, the City of Johannesburg 35, and Ekurhuleni 65;
- Revitalised the old Johannesburg power station, John Ware, to give us 200 MW;
- Our BRICS partners have invested in a solar farm in Soshanguve which will give us 100MW when completed;
- After investing 1MW Microgrid in Amarasta Alexandra Township we intend to invest this form of energy in Evaton and surrounding areas;
- Together with Eskom and City Power, we replaced a total of 643 transformers in townships and municipalities, ensuring that homes and businesses stay connected despite the challenges of vandalism and overloading. We will accelerate this programme.

With time, the combination of all of the above efforts will work out to almost 2000 MW which will ultimately benefit our energy improvement in Gauteng. Gauteng's energy future is one of sustainability, resilience, and innovation. Together, we will power a brighter, more reliable future for all our residents. Energy security is important for economic development, job creation and sustainable development.

We will continue to support the Minister of Electricity and the entire Eskom team in their efforts to stabilise our national grid and ensure uninterrupted supply, giving Gauteng a much-needed economic boost. While challenges continue to exist, we have noted dedicated interventions to resolve them, and we applaud this. However, we recognise that there are communities in our province that remain without electricity for an extended period, such as in Evaton and `Winterveld.

As government, we will do everything in our power to stamp out vandalism and cable theft which are the main causes of the break in transmission in these communities.

Working with Eskom, we have already electrified 39 000 homes in Evaton, this will bring light and dignity to families who have waited for far too long.

We are gearing up for 350 new connections as part of Phase 1, with plans in motion to roll out a microgrid—a game-changer for this community. We are also tackling land ownership issues head-on with Emfuleni Local Municipality to ensure no one is left behind. Working with Eskom, we've locked in a multi-year plan to connect 1,000 more homes next year.

To improve municipal revenue collection and reduce energy losses, we have installed more than 3,000 smart meters across Emfuleni, Mogale City, Rand West, Merafong, and Lesedi. We have installed 45 solar high mast lights in crime-prone communities, improving security while reducing pressure on the grid. The Robertsville Rand Water Project has also been completed, ensuring uninterrupted water supply for our communities, even during load-shedding.

Working together with Eskom's leadership, we are exploring opportunities to roll out Small Modular Reactor (SMR) nuclear plants—a major breakthrough in our fight against load shedding. These advanced nuclear plants will be deployed across communities, ensuring clean, stable, and uninterrupted power for homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure.

At the same time, we are driving the revitalisation of waste-to-energy projects, using innovation to diversify our energy mix and create jobs. And, as part of our long-term strategy, we are positioning Gauteng as a leader in green hydrogen energy solutions, unlocking new opportunities for clean energy and industrial growth.

G8: On Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

Honourable Members;

We are addressing this scourge head-on. By the end of January 2025, more than 14000 GBVF victims were supported to deal with the aftermath of their harrowing experiences.

To this end, we have partnered with Wits University, University of Johannesburg, North-West University (Vaal campus), Vaal University of Technology, Tshwane University of Technology, Tshwane North College, University of Pretoria and Rosebank College, to advance the fight against GBVF.

Key interventions to end GBV include:

- Working with Faith-Based Organisations and various civil society groups to heighten awareness about GBV within communities;
- Distributing more than 80 000 physical e-panic buttons across the province to improve the safety of women and children;
- Reaching 400 000 Households through the GBVF Brigades Outreach Programme within our TISH Communities;
- Reaching and referring over 3000 GBVF Victims to our social workers and SAPS for secondary psychosocial support and opening of cases respectively;
- Observing over 200 GBVF cases in our courts supporting the victims through court picketing and watching briefs as part of ensuring the criminal justice system is working;
- Rolling out 134 active green doors, which provide victims with a safe place, counselling and advice on opening cases against abusers or perpetrators.

The successful fight against GBVF will take the combined efforts of law enforcement agencies and communities.

G9: DRUG ABUSE

Residents of Gauteng, we have a serious drug problem in our province. This is evident by the number of people who continue to reach out to us for support through our dedicated hotline. Almost 33 000 people have called this government for help since October 2022.

This is a battle we refuse to lose. Through our Substance Abuse Harm Reduction Strategy, we are tackling drug abuse head-on, ensuring young people have a future free from addiction.

We are refurbishing the Dr F and F facility and repurposing Mabutho Hlatshwayo CYCC as an additional state-owned substance abuse facility to increase capacity for rehabilitation services. We are working with national government to open more facilities and give more people access to recovery and rehabilitation.

Through the Masupatsela Programme, 30,000 young boys and girls will take the lead in anti-drug, health, and girl-child support initiatives—empowering them to make better choices.

To strengthen aftercare services for recovering substance abuse users, we have established seven Centres of Excellence across five regions, including Alrode, Xilembeni, IkusasaLethu, and Sebokeng. These centres provide computer training, photography, hair and beauty, life skills, and hospitality—giving recovering addicts a real shot at a better future.

G10: OUR HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

Honourable Members;

We have almost reached our target to convert 40 of our clinics to provide comprehensive 24-hour services. Thirty-eight (38) of the 40 clinics in our province already service our people for 24 hours with the majority of these clinics having a full-time doctor as part of NHI pilot projects. To ensure that health services are not disrupted by loadshedding all our clinics in Gauteng are now using solar for their energy needs.

To further expand access to healthcare in underprivileged areas, the province has dispersed sixteen mobile clinics among its five health districts. These mobile clinics will offer TB, STI, pregnancy tests, and childhood vaccinations, among other vital services.

Accelerating Infrastructure improvements for better healthcare delivery

We have concluded the refurbishment of ICU wards at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital, Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital and Jubilee District Hospital.

Also, at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital, the Wits Roy McAlpine Burns Unit was opened in August 2024. This unit is designed to become a leading contributor to burns research and treatment in Africa.

Maintenance work is being done at Tembisa Provincial Tertiary Hospital, Jubilee District Hospital and Leratong and Kopanong District Hospitals with special attention being paid to the Accident and Emergency Departments, the Casualty department and neonatal facilities.

Reducing HIV and Aids infections in the province

According to the most recent data from the District Health Information System (DHIS), HIV infections in Gauteng have significantly decreased between 2020 and 2024. The province saw a 1.9% drop in new HIV infections in the 15–24 age group, from 2.9% in 2020 to 1% in 2024.

In those aged 25 to 49, the number of new HIV infections decreased by 2.2%, from 5.1% in 2020 to 2.9% in 2024. These numbers show that our interventions are working with more people choosing to participate in Pre-Exposure Prophylaxes (PrEP) and receiving HIV prevention medication.

The Office of Health Care Standards (OHSC) conducts inspections across hospitals and Primary Health Care centres. In the last assessments in 2024, 14 hospitals were inspected and all of them were certified as compliant with NHI.

On Private Hospital Licensees applications for the 2024/ 2025 financial year.

The province has approved about eleven (11) new applications for hospitals to be built and another twenty-nine (29) for hospitals to be expanded and reconfigured to improve their bed occupancy and viability.

Accelerate Health Information System

To improve services in our medical facilities and reduce the waiting period, we are making headway in digitising paper-based patient records and creating a digital repository that will enhance accessibility, security and efficiency in managing patient records, while also ensuring compliance with privacy and security standards. Mamelodi Hospital stands as a testament to the province's commitment of accelerating health information systems in public facilities.

At Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital, more than 486,701 patients' files have been converted into digital format. The province has also initiated the digitisation of records at Thelle Mogoerane and Sebokeng Hospitals.

To eliminate queues in our facilities through technology, the Queue Management Project is being implemented and is currently live at Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital. The system is also being rolled out at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital.

Central Chronic Medicine Dispense and Distribution Programme

To avoid long Queues of patients coming to collect their medication our Central Chronic Medicine Dispense and Distribution programme continues to grow in its reach with close to 1.5 million people now registered on the system. In the past year, there has been an increase of 150 000 new people who have since joined other patients to collect their prescribed medications through this remote system promptly upon notification, significantly reducing waiting times at healthcare facilities.

Digitisation and Improvement of Forensic Pathology Services

The province prides itself on successfully modernising its Forensic Pathology Services. The rollout of the Digital Fingerprint System, which helps identify unknown dead bodies and trace their families, has spared our residents thus sparing our citizens the trauma of going through dead bodies to identify their loved ones.

The system is currently operational at six state mortuaries, across the province and full implementation of the system is expected to be completed in the next two years. After many years of delays and cost overruns, the Pathological Centre is now 97% complete. We will be the only province with this facility across the country.

Surgical backlogs

Since the inception of our targeted response to reduce surgical backlogs which we launched on Mandela Day in 2023, we can report that over 40 000 patients have been operated on. These operations helped patients with conditions such as cataracts, hip and knee replacement, patients with bone fractures and other conditions. To some, it has saved their lives, while to others it has improved their quality of life.

G11: LACK OF SCHOOLS

Providing additional learning spaces

Together with the National Treasury, we have set aside R2.5bn to build 18 schools. This is a path-breaking school infrastructure project sanctioned and funded by the National Treasury's Budget Facility for Infrastructure (BFI).

Quality public education is the key to empowering our children for the future. Our commitment to creating a high-quality, inclusive education system is already delivering real, impactful results.

Investment in township schools is yielding results. Today, the gap in National Senior Certificate (NSC) performance between township schools and former model C schools has reduced substantially.

For the first time since 1994, Gauteng's top learner in the NSC exams, Msawenkosi Buthelezi came from Zimisele Secondary School, a township school in Kwa-Thema. He outperformed students in both public ordinary and independent institutions writing the NSC. This achievement highlights the significant improvement in education within schools, where two-thirds of Gauteng's bachelor passes now originate.

We celebrate the exceptional achievement of Lufhereng Secondary, a school in Soweto, under the leadership of Ms Sebonwang Mphahlele, for obtaining a hundred percent (100%) in Matric with 97% in Bachelor passes. This demonstrates excellence in education in township schools.

The 2024 NSC pass rate for Gauteng was 88.41%, an improvement of 3.03% on the 2023 NCS results. All 15 districts in the province achieved more than 80% for the 6th consecutive year, with three surpassing 90%. Johannesburg West, the number one district in the country, achieved a 97.03% pass rate, with 147 schools achieving 100% passes an increase from 129 schools in 2023.

We also continue to make exceptional progress in LSEN schools which recorded an exceptional pass rate of 95.4% in the NSC. Malwandla Baloyi, a standout learner from Hope School, achieved remarkable success in the 2024 LSEN matric exams. She was

among the top-performing students in Gauteng, demonstrating excellence despite the challenges faced by learners with disabilities. We owe this to the learners, educators and parents.

We are doing everything possible to fulfil our commitment to prepare Gauteng's youth to lead and excel in an Artificial Intelligence-driven world through our schools of specialisation. Our efforts are beginning to bear fruits in this regard. For example, Michaela Shabi, a 20-year-old from Katlehong, matriculated at Katlehong Engineering School of Specialisation in 2022. She is now pursuing a degree in Artificial Intelligence Technology at I-SHOU International University in Taiwan.

Mbali Nkonyane, a graduate of Curtis Nkondo School of Specialisation and a recipient of the GCRA bursary, went on to study BCom Accounting at the University of Johannesburg. She is now a trainee accountant at one of the Big Four accounting firms, demonstrating the transformative power of education and opportunities for success.

We welcome the signing of the BELA Act by President Ramaphosa which is an important milestone in the transformation of basic education in South Africa.

One of the key changes is to embrace Early Childhood Development (ECD) as part of the basic education system. Forthwith Grade R will now become the entry grade in public schools, further strengthening the foundation phase.

To date, 3 103 Grade R practitioner posts have been converted into post-level 1 educator posts. Of this number, 1 176 have obtained B.Ed. for the Foundation Phase and 1 927 have a Diploma in Grade R teaching. A further 5 065 pre-grade R practitioners were enrolled for further education and training for ECD level 4.

Currently, we have over 21 476 ECD classes catering for 136 479 Grade R learners in our schools. In addition, we have a total of 71 174 ECD centres both registered and unregistered that cater for 38 910 learners in registered centres and 32 264 learners in unregistered centres. We continue to make steady progress in ensuring all ECD centres are compliant and fully registered.

Moving forward we will address the backlog of 2000 classrooms that is required to increase capacity in Public and Private schools.

Madame speaker;

Multi-certification programme

Pursuant to improving the capabilities of our learners, a multi-certification programme is being implemented to ensure that young people exit the basic education system with more than just a matric certificate but additional technical skills. Our multi-certification programme is ongoing and will be upscaled to include skills of the future, such as Artificial Intelligence and life skills such as swimming, driving, and first aid.

G12: FAILING IN INFRASTRUCTURE (CDB)

People of Gauteng;

In many parts of our province, the lack of bulk infrastructure has stalled development, leaving promising projects unrealised and communities underserved. We are changing this.

Through a strategic partnership between the Gauteng Department of Infrastructure Development, GIFA, and COGTA in partnership with our municipalities, we are tackling the critical need for bulk infrastructure that enables cities to function and businesses to thrive.

In this regard, the Gauteng Infrastructure Financing Agency has been tasked to address Bulk infrastructure delivery.

Revitalisation of CBDs into Vibrant Economic Hubs

As part of revitalising the CBD, we are proud to announce that we've attracted an investor who is building the biggest mall in South Africa here in Langlaagte, Johannesburg. The mall with 2400 squares of retail stores, warehouses and other shops will be officially opened in May/June this year bringing fresh life to our CBD of Johannesburg.

We are implementing revitalisation plans across 10 pilot CBDs, with Johannesburg at the forefront. I am happy to report that we are making important strides in mobilising communities behind the campaign to reclaim and revitalise our CBDs.

In Johannesburg, we have consulted with a broad array of stakeholders from civil society, property developers and property owners as well as the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality.

We promised the people of our province that we were going to clean up our CBDs and restore our cities and towns to their former glory. We are proud to report that the City of Johannesburg has already secured over 10 of these hijacked buildings that were in nefarious hands. Eight court orders have been granted to the city, while two buildings have already been reclaimed.

At the core of the renewal in Johannesburg is the Park Station Precinct Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), integrating four major taxi ranks to enhance mobility and stimulate economic activity. With the backing of PRASA, Intersite, Transnet, the City of Johannesburg, CSIR, and JoziMyJozi, this project will create jobs, modernise transport, and drive commercial expansion. The Provincial Government is leading by example through our Government Precinct Development, ensuring that government offices remain anchored in the CBD.

A safer, cleaner CBD attracts investment and boosts small businesses. The return of over 2,000 Transnet employees to the Carlton Centre and 96 Rissik Street will reignite retail, services, and local commerce.

There is an overwhelming commitment to work together to make our CBDs into - thriving economic nodes where our people can live, work and play.

The rise of Johannesburg CBD would be nothing without the beauty of art and culture. For this reason, Johannesburg CBD has seen the unveiling of a new, better and bolder concert venue capable of hosting international stars right at the doorstep of FNB Stadium. This is an internationally comparable venue capable of hosting international events with ease. We are proud of this cultural rebirth of Johannesburg.

G13: UNEMPLOYMENT: OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE

In tackling unemployment, we are not here to make promises but to report and confirm substantive employment commitments. Under both public and private employment initiatives, we can confirm that 271 150 new permanent jobs and 561 000 employment opportunities will be created in the following sectors.

Both these categories of permanent jobs and employment opportunities bring us to a total of 832 150.

Of these, permanent jobs will be as follows:

- The phase two of TASEZ, where we are, will pump R6.1. Billion thus creating 4 000 construction jobs and 2150 post construction jobs.
- The Public Sector Infrastructure Project will unveil a R220 Billion infrastructure pipeline that will create 34 000 construction jobs and 17 000 post construction jobs.
- The expansion of the Lanseria International Airport will attract an investment of R3 Billion with 3000 new jobs for the people of Diepsloot and surrounding areas
- Mekgrereng Smart City Project has attracted an investment of R20 Billion, thus creating 20000 new jobs for people of Brits and surrounding areas.
- Vaal SEZ has attracted an investment of R28 Billion for a Vaal Aerotropolis creating 6000 new jobs for people of Evaton, Sebokeng and Sharpeville.
- During the expansion of the Gautrain project, we expect the creation of 125 000 jobs;
- The tourism and hospitality sector is set to support 60,000 jobs, providing opportunities for our people, especially youth and small businesses, to participate meaningfully in this thriving industry.

Job opportunities include the following:

- EPWP will create 469 000 jobs benefiting the unemployed across our province;

- Through the Department of Higher Education and Training investment of R1,3 Billion, we will recruit Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) 40 000;
- Through the labour activation programme in partnership with the Department of Labour, Gauteng has been allocated 20 000 stipend based work opportunities;
- Presidential Youth Employment Stimulus is going to generate 32 000 teacher assistant jobs.

KEY PROVINCIAL PRIORITY AREAS

ECONOMY

Honourable Speaker;

At the end of 2024 quarter 3, Gauteng's economy continued to demonstrate resilience, significantly outperforming the national average despite a fragile economic environment. While national growth remained sluggish, Gauteng maintained robust expansion, achieving a 2.4% growth rate post-COVID, twice the national average and contributing over half of South Africa's GDP growth during this period.

Over the past year, Gauteng's GDP grew by 1.2%, compared to the national rate of 0.4%, reinforcing its role as a key economic driver. This consistent outperformance highlights Gauteng's economic importance and resilience amid broader national challenges.

Investment Attraction

In 2023, President Ramaphosa convened an investment conference in Gauteng, the economic powerhouse of South Africa. As a direct result, Gauteng secured R180 billion in investment commitments, accounting for 49.4% of the total R364.2 billion pledged across the country.

To sustain these ongoing efforts to make Gauteng an attractive investment destination, we will, on April 3rd and 4th, 2025, host the inaugural Gauteng Investment Conference under the theme, *"Investing in Gauteng: The Engine of Africa's*

Growth". This will be a launchpad to secure R800 billion in new investment pledges over the next three years.

The next chapter of growth is unfolding, and we invite the world to be part of it.

Residents of Gauteng;

From this investment conference, we envisage investment pledges of over R300 billion from the private sector alone by the end of April 2025. We are not stopping here. The public sector will showcase an infrastructure pipeline of at least R220 billion.

The Hunan Province, China:

We will soon finalise a groundbreaking agreement with the Hunan Province in China. This will open new trade avenues for our SMMEs to export nuts, Rooibos tea, biltong, honey, moringa and wine to Hunan's vast market of over 66 million people across 13 cities without major restrictions.

This partnership is a game changer for our small businesses, which will soon expand their operations, create more jobs and contribute to the growth of our economy. We are committed to ensuring that SMMEs receive the necessary support to succeed in this international venture.

It is my honour and privilege to have the Chinese Consul General, Mr Pan Qingjiang, at our 2025 State of the Province Address and we look forward to working with you.

It is regrettable that one of our major investors in the steel sector, Accerlormetal, had to make a difficult decision to close one of their plants in the Sedibeng. This departure is bound to have an adverse impact on the livelihoods of communities in Sedibeng.

However, we are happy to announce that after engagement with one of our BRICS partners, we have received a firm commitment that a new steel firm will soon be established in the area.

We are proud to announce that a new R2.5 billion steel firm has been built and concluded with phase one, already hiring 1000 workers, with phase two expected to

double these numbers. We urge our municipalities and government entities to move with speed to finalise all outstanding administrative paperwork so that we can officially open this new steel plant in our province

Agro-processing

Gauteng reaffirms its role as a key player in the agricultural value chain, with agro-processing contributing significantly to the provincial economy. In 2023 alone, the food and beverage manufacturing sector generated over R780 billion in revenue. Employment in this sector saw an increase in 2024, with over 10 000 new jobs added.

Gauteng also remains a strong player in agricultural exports, with meat product exports reaching R4 billion over the past year. To further support the sector, we are providing technical and financial support to 40 SME agro-processing enterprises by the end of this term.

We secured R100 million in infrastructure investment for agro-logistics, including packhouses, cold storage facilities, and transport infrastructure. To date, 21 refrigerated trucks have been provided to farmers and agro-processors. Additionally, aggregation capacity will be increased through the RandWest AgriPark and Fresh Produce Market, with a goal to aggregate 3,000 tons of smallholder farmer produce by the end of the term.

A partnership with the South African Poultry Association will also see the establishment of a 30 million eggs production facility by 2029. These initiatives aim to enhance productivity, support small-scale producers, and position Gauteng as a leader in agro-processing and food security.

TEDA

We are opening markets for township businesses! Through our Enterprise and Supplier Development Roadshows, 30 local products, from detergents to beauty products and food, have passed product testing and are now being sourced by major retailers like Pick n Pay, Builders Warehouse, and Massmart.

Our township bakeries are booming! Our township bakery businesses in Eldorado Park, Toekomsrus, Westbury, and more were equipped with skills to standardize and improve bread quality. To date, they have the capacity to produce 22,000 loaves per day. This initiative will create thousands of jobs and supply local communities and government institutions with fresh bread.

A Gauteng success story, Themzak Group, a local manufacturer of disinfectants and detergents, is now expanding to supply major food outlets. 14 more local manufacturers are on track to receive ISO certification, unlocking bigger opportunities.

We are doubling down on re-industrialisation! 50 businesses in the chemical sector will get product development support to scale up and compete.

A re šomeng! Let's get to work!

Honourable members;

When young people are well-trained and prepared for work, they are more likely to secure employment, start businesses, create jobs, and contribute to the economy.

Empowering Gauteng's Youth for the Future

Fighting unemployment means more than just creating jobs—it means preparing our youth for the future. That is why we are equipping young people with the skills needed to participate in the modern economy.

By December 2024, a total of 220 unemployed young people from Gauteng townships completed K53 training, obtaining motorbike learner's and driver's licenses—empowering them to enter the fast-growing last-mile delivery sector.

But we are not stopping at driving skills alone. These youth have also completed the New Venture Creation (NVC) Skills Program (NQF Level 2), giving them essential training in business management.

We are ensuring that they do not just find work but become job creators. Their businesses have been registered with the CIPC and they have received BBBEE certificates to enable them to access business opportunities.

Tourism

Gauteng continues to be a leading tourist destination in South Africa. In 2024, we welcomed an impressive 3.8 million international tourists, making up over 42% of the country's total arrivals. This affirms Gauteng's status as the gateway to South Africa and a hub of economic and cultural activity.

Foreign tourist expenditure in Gauteng also reached a remarkable R 41.3 billion, the highest of all provinces, further reinforcing the province's contribution to the national economy.

We hosted seven high-impact events in townships, generating R814 million in economic activity and R13.5 million in revenue for small businesses. We have launched three major tourism campaigns—Winter to Spring, Spring to Summer, and Festive—showcasing the hidden gems of our province and bringing fresh, exciting experiences to both local and international visitors.

Over the next five years, we anticipate a R180 billion revenue injection into Gauteng's economy through tourism, of which R200 million will be injected into SME businesses across supply chain management, hospitality, transport and emerging entrepreneurs cementing our position as South Africa's economic powerhouse and Africa's leading travel destination.

Transport infrastructure

The Gautrain rail expansion will be a gateway to opportunity, creating more than 125,000 construction jobs while igniting growth in property, retail, and logistics along its path. Gauteng Government will invest R120 billion in the expansion of Gautrain to the following areas: Soweto via Fourways; Mamelodi; Atteridgeville; Lanseria and Springs.

The Limpopo-Gauteng Speed Train Line

The Gauteng-Limpopo Rail Link project is gaining momentum. Following the announcement last year, it has been agreed that given the project's magnitude and intricacy, it will be executed in multiple phases.

The integrated concept document, endorsed by both Gauteng and Limpopo Premiers, has been approved and will be ready for signing by both provinces in due course. We are jointly ready to approach the National Department of Transport for consultation.

We are moving forward with cementing our inter-provincial trade partnerships with the Free State, North West and Limpopo Provinces to transform Gauteng into the heartbeat of Southern Africa's economy.

The Freight Data Bank and warehouse management system will make Gauteng a nerve centre for logistics, ensuring that goods, just like people, reach their destinations faster and more efficiently.

The work done by PRASA to recover key railway nodes in Gauteng is a welcome intervention. Rail moves more people in an affordable manner.

We remain committed to introducing and piloting **new number plates**. By April 2025, the pilot for 300 g-fleet vehicles will be in motion.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Honourable Members;

We agree that the Gauteng environment is filthy and we must work hard to become the cleanest province in the country.

Gauteng also faces increased risks of floods, fires, droughts, and heatwaves. The City of Johannesburg (CoJ) and the City of Ekurhuleni (CoE) are identified as having the highest environmental vulnerability, according to the CSIR Green Book Climate Risk Profiles (2019).

We remain committed to keeping Gauteng clean through the *Bontle Ke Botho* initiative. However, we require communities to play an active role in this regard.

We are proud to report that our dedicated team, the Green Scorpions, has made significant strides in enforcing environmental laws. This will ensure that those responsible for managing our environment comply with regulations.

In the past year alone, the Green Scorpions have conducted 382 compliance inspections across various sectors, including residential, commercial, and industrial developments, infrastructure projects, recycling facilities, waste management sites, and agricultural operations.

Planting trees and creating green spaces help absorb pollutants and reduce urban heat effects, contributing to carbon sequestration and greening efforts. I am pleased to report that since April 2024 a total of 91 222 trees have been planted across all five corridors. The breakdown of planted trees in numbers is as follows:

- City of Johannesburg, 26 655;
- City of Tshwane, 12 448;
- City of Ekurhuleni, 21 155;
- Sedibeng District Municipality, 12 645; and
- West Rand District Municipality, 18 319.

G16: GOVERNANCE

State of Municipalities

A functioning municipal government system and co-operative governance are crucial to any plans for economic and social development. In the August 2024 State of the Province Address, we committed to promoting inter-governmental relations and regional collaboration consistent with the District Development Model. We are pleased to announce that all Executive Mayors are now attending intergovernmental forums.

In this regard, we convened a local government turnaround summit in October 2024. The summit adopted a broad programme of action to resolve issues related to

municipal governance, finances, infrastructure and service delivery challenges. A second round of this Summit with Executive Mayors will be held later this year.

We remain committed to strengthening governance and financial management within municipalities. We are implementing the Government Debt reduction strategy to facilitate the collection of debt from Provincial Departments on behalf of the municipalities. We have committed to ensuring that no provincial government department owes municipalities.

The overall audit outcomes for Gauteng municipalities improved, with a total of six municipalities receiving unqualified audit opinions and two with clean audits for the 2023/24 financial year. We will continue to support the three that received qualified audit opinions.

We are particularly pleased with the West Rand District Municipality for moving from an unqualified audit opinion in the 2022/23 financial year to a clean audit in the 2023/24 financial year. We will continue to support the three that received qualified audit opinions

Furthermore, the local municipalities of Mogale City and Merafong saw an improvement in their audit outcomes in the financial year under review. Once more, Midvaal Municipality continues to be our shining star.

Revenue enhancement

We are taking steps to diversify our revenue streams.

To unlock the value of our unutilised and underutilised assets, we are pursuing a multi-faceted strategy that includes the disposal of non-core assets, short-term and long-term leasing, promotion of private sector investment and development.

These interventions are expected to generate over R400 million in revenue for the provincial government (Leasing non-core state assets: R60 million, Commercialising key strategic assets: R309 million, Disposal of non-core assets: R75.5 million).

To this effect, we have identified and conducted due diligence on 76 developed residential properties to be disposed of by current occupants. A further 35 vacant residential land parcels have been identified for possible disposal to the market. These assets will be sold to generate revenue and enable private sector investment and development.

WIFI

As part of our process to move away from a paper-based government to a paperless government and are migrating to smart technologies across government. We will continue to expand ICT connectivity across the province by providing connectivity in the following key areas:

- Smart licencing centre in Mamelodi, Maponya, Atteridgeville, Mohlakeng.
- Medical dispensation;
- Online registration in education;
- Digitisation of hospital, patient files;
- Conversion of payment system into cashless system.
- Working with the Department of Home Affairs, we will expand the self-service kiosk which will allow citizens to apply for the reissue of smart ID Card, passports and reprinting of birth certificates etc.

We are pleased to report back that **68** Wi-Fi hotspots are connected and we have continued to invest and maintain the Gauteng Provincial Network. We have a plan to roll out more than 157 public Wi-Fi hotspots across the 26 priority townships across Gauteng.

We have upgraded all 10 core network nodes. This upgrade investment into the Gauteng Provincial Network enables faster internet speed and more stability to the network to libraries, schools, healthcare centres and state buildings.

Ethics and Integrity

We are determined to enhance our prevention, detection, investigation, and resolution procedures, emphasising the institutionalization of clean governance. To this end, we

welcome the findings of the disciplinary process that was initiated against nine (9) Gauteng Department of Health and Infrastructure Development officials who were suspended for irregularities over the awarding of contracts for the refurbishment of the Anglo Ashanti hospital in 2022.

Of the nine officials facing charges, five have been dismissed, two have received written warnings, one has been acquitted, and the other could not be subjected to disciplinary action because the department no longer employs him.

I have also urged the Gauteng Ethics Advisory Council (GEAC) to explore an expanded role as a mediator in conflicts arising in government institutions. Their scope could extend to providing advisory support on governance issues in municipalities and strengthening their collaboration with the Integrity Commissioner.

Lifestyle audits

In 2024 the Special Investigating Unit concluded conducting lifestyle audits of the Director General and Heads of Departments. The first phase involved the Premier and Members of the Executive Council. The second phase involved the Accounting Officers in the GPG departments and entities. We will now extend this to Supply Chain Management officials.

The Gauteng Provincial Government has a total of 2184 Supply Chain Management - filled posts, 279 have already been security vetted, while 1905 have applied and are awaiting feedback

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Work on the e-indigent register has entered a critical phase and the system has been successfully integrated with the Department of Home Affairs for identity verification.

Working with the Department of Home Affairs, we will finalise full implementation. Once completed, the e-indigent register will integrate with the SARS and Department of Employment and Labour, across municipalities, deeds registries, integrating with the Deeds Registry, the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, and the

Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) database to streamline indigent verification and service provisioning

This e-register will eliminate inefficiency and 'double dipping' to ensure that only credible beneficiaries receive the service.

Homelessness

Homelessness in our province is more pronounced within our metros and includes those who live on the streets, those who move from one overnight shelter to the next and those who are temporarily homeless because they work low-paying jobs and cannot afford to commute to work daily.

We are working with NPOs to address homelessness in our province. This includes the provision of psychosocial services, family reunification, shelters, warm daily meals, and skills development programmes.

In total, just under 2500 homeless beneficiaries were admitted to homeless shelters, furthermore, over 1000 were linked to accredited and non-accredited skills development programmes that include website design, end-user computing, petrol attendant, security, welding, pest control, nail and beauty, poultry and plant production, among others.

I am happy to announce that we are making inroads regarding the establishment of homeless safe spaces. We have identified unused government buildings that will be used as safe spaces to provide temporary transitional accommodation for people who are homeless. We are currently assessing the suitability of these buildings and we will launch this programme later this year.

Bana Pele

Since inception Bana Pele programme has reached over 1,3 million beneficiaries, which means over 132 000 food parcels, over 46 000 school uniforms and upwards of 1.2 million dignity packs were distributed to children in need, among others.

Madam Speaker;

Poverty Alleviation

We expanded the food security programme in the poorest wards and TISH communities by providing nutritional food parcels and daily cooked meals through Community Based Care Organisations.

Having committed to establishing the state-run food distribution centre, I am proud to announce that the state-run food distribution centre will be launched and will be operational in October 2025, to distribute to three regions of Sedibeng, West-Rand, and Johannesburg.

The e-indigent register will assist us in identifying the households that qualify for poverty alleviation interventions.

SPORTS

We continue to be the preferred destination and host of big international sporting, arts and cultural events. In December, we hosted a big international artist for a two-day concert at FNB stadium with over 190 000 fans. This event contributed an estimated R900 million to Gauteng's economy and created over 6000 temporary jobs.

We have supported a total of 313 non-fee-paying schools to participate in Arts and Culture Schools integrated programmes to help young athletes have access to quality training, facilities, and competitions through the renewal of the Wednesday League School Programme.

As part of improving the overall event management system in our province, together with the Minister of Sports, we are putting together a special unit to look at ensuring seamless international standard eventing, specifically looking at challenges such as traffic jams and cell phone signals.

G20

We are the proud host of the prestigious G20 Leaders' Summit in November 2025.

Hosting the G20 Leaders' Summit puts our province squarely at the centre of global economic diplomacy. On the 20th and 21st of this month, we successfully hosted the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, attended by the Heads and Representatives of Regional and International Organisations and diplomats, all of whom play a vital role in shaping international relations.

The G20 Summit is a premium gathering of influential economic policymakers and players of global importance. As South Africa assumes the G20 Presidency, this milestone places Gauteng on the world stage, reaffirming our status as Africa's premier economic and investment hub.

More spin-offs are expected from the arrival of visitors participating in the G20 Summit-related events in the build-up to the Summit. These include Labour 20, Judicial 20, W20, Science 20 Summit, SAI20 Summit and Supreme Audit Institutions, among others. Gauteng stands ready to play a hospitable host of internationally comparable standards and to also reap the benefits accruing to this important Summit.

Through the G20 Provincial Co-ordinating and Implementation Sub-Committee, our province looks forward to leveraging the hosting opportunities presented by the G20 by influencing discussions and outcomes of the 2025 Presidency of the Group.

We will also partner with National Sector Departments to advance and lobby for our economic interests, as outlined in the GGT2030 action plan.

Madam Speaker

We are happy to also announce that Gauteng will be welcoming the President of the Republic and the National Executive from the 06th to the 07th of March this year, as President Ramaphosa leads the National Executive on a programme of visiting Gauteng province to engage the provincial leadership on our strategic development priorities.

This oversight visit is intended to address the socio-economic and service delivery challenges that the province is enduring. It is also meant to bring strong relations between National, Provincial and Local Governments. Furthermore, it is an opportunity to engage with the province on the state of readiness to host the Group 20 (G20) Leaders' Summit later this year.

We feel privileged that Gauteng's turn to host this important engagement with the national government is taking place in the same year that our province is hosting the G20 Leaders' Summit. This will further infuse our province with the necessary energy as it looks to take on this historic task at the end of the year.

CONCLUSION

Honourable Speaker; Honourable Members; Residents of Gauteng;

In closing, once again, I wish to sincerely thank all our partners who form the Government of Provincial Unity. Your unwavering support and commitment to collaboration have demonstrated that unity and collective action can overcome even the most significant challenges.

To our private sector partners, members of civil society and all our communities across the province, your invaluable contributions and co-operation in shaping a brighter future for our province cannot be overstated.

To all Gauteng government officials, we salute you for your hard work. Your resilience reinforces our commitment to our shared vision. It is this vision that unites us and drives us forward.

Let us work hand in hand to build a Gauteng that transforms lives and uplifts the poor and downtrodden, leading to the flourishing of all who call it home. Thank you, and may we move forward with renewed purpose and resolve.

Even though the dreaded experience of load shedding struck again this past weekend, we agree with the Minister of Electricity that we will find a lasting solution. Gauteng will continue to work hard towards expanding energy capacity in our province, building on the progress made so far.

We are addressing the water challenge with full force. We are confident that in the same way, we are making steady progress regarding the electricity challenges, we will also get to the root of the water difficulties.

We are driven by the need to promote economic growth as a key driver of job creation. But economic growth is impossible under conditions of rampant crime and corruption.

As the 7th Administration takes off under the Government of Provincial Unity, we wish to assure the residents of Gauteng that we will cut off the ugly head of crime by apprehending all criminal syndicate kingpins in this province. We will deprive crime of oxygen.

Let us work together as partners, the residents of Gauteng, the business sector, civil society, opposition parties and government across the three spheres, to put our province back on track and accelerate the fight against poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The message of the 29 May 2024 general elections is that we need to learn to work together to solve problems and that our complex issues can be shared to find a solution. **Isizulu sithi, “*Injobo enhle ithungelwa ebandla*”**

I thank you!