



SPEECH

04 JULY 2025

**Executive Mayor
Cllr Pule Shayi**

SODA STATE OF THE DISTRICT ADDRESS

**Mopani TVET - Phalaborwa Campus
Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality**



Mopani District
Municipality

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G20
SOUTH AFRICA 2025

Speech by his Worship, the Executive Mayor of Mopani District Municipality, His Worship Councillor Pule Shayi on the occasion of the State of the District Address (SODA), 04 July 2025 at Mopani TVET College.



Madam Speaker, Cllr. Martha Maswanganyi;

All me to acknowledge the Speaker of Legislature, Dr Makoma Makhurupetje;

Members of the provincial legislature present here, Hon. Dikeledi Mmetle and Hon Gloria Mnisi, Hon. Percy Machethe, Hon. Nkakareng Rakgoale, my Predecessor, former Executive Mayor, Umama and Cde Joshua Matlou

All our mayors present here;

Whip of Council, Cllr. Magdelina Lewele and all whips present;

The speakers from our local municipalities;

Members of the Mayoral Committee;

The chairperson of the Local House of Traditional leaders, Kgoshigadi Sekgopo and your collective in the executive;

The leadership of Contralesa Kgoshigadi Sekgopo

Ke wetse fase ka Thedi go hlompha Matswarathamaga kamoka mesong ya lehono, Maaparankwe, ba ka mafateng a matelele a mohweleretshipi, dikota maledu, madula phateng a moshate, Ba Ndabezitha ba hina,

Ntlogeleng ke ise madume a ikgethilego go Kgoshigadi Mosebutsane Audrey Shayi wa setshaba sa ba Ga Shayi Ditlou..Bowela Kalana, Kgoshi yaka ye e mpusago, ba go boya tshube la marakapula le phetole, ba hlogo tsa maretetswana, ba go bina ka go nanya, bare ba Tshubje ba hloka modukulo ga se ba tshubje ke matsenela...Nkurwane ya ka mosate.

The Regional Secretary of the ANC, Cde Sonia Maswanganyi and the REC collective;

Leaders of the MDM structures present here;
Chair of chairs and all chairs of our Section 79 Committees;
Our Cdes in the opposition benches. Leaders of opposition parties;
Fellow Councillors;
Municipal Manager, Ntate Mogano and your senior management team;
Chair of the Audit Committee, Vho-Tshikovhi;
District commissioner of SAPS, General Mashava and your Officers
The representative from SALGA;
Administrative leadership of our Chapter 9 institutions
All servants of the Most High God, Baruti go tswa Phuthegong tsa geso go
tswa ka Moria: Kgotsong
Ward committee members and CDWs
Representatives of our Sector departments and state-owned agencies;
including our SETAs
Our esteemed colleagues from the private sector;
The academic Community in particular our host Mopani TVET, College
Principal Dr Baloyi ML
Government communicators and members of the media present;
Leaders of organized labour, in particular SAMWU and IMATU;
Sports Federations
Civil Society Organisation and NGOs
Members of the media;
Lapa la gesu la ga Shayi le etilwe pele ke 1st Born ya Geso Moruti Molefe
Phillip Shai le di Kgaetsedi tsaka.
All our invited guests, and our people listening through the radio stations
and those following online.
Ladies and gentlemen;
Vaka hina, ha mi losa! Go sele
We learned yesterday of the passing on of the former Deputy President of
the country, David Dabede Mabuza after a short illness. DD also served as
the deputy President of the African National Congress.

Affectionately known as the Cat, he served both his country and the movement with aplomb. Today, we remain one in spirit, sending message of condolence to the Mabuza family and join all South Africans, not only in mourning the loss but as well celebrating the life of this towering giant of our people.

We wish to request that we all rise and observe a moment of silent....may the soul of our former Deputy President rest in eternal Peace.

Adopting his famous battle talk, we can as well today say: **If service delivery inga funi ku henzeka,sizo yi shaya siyi phuli nyawu,hi yezenke manje.**

My special guests today is the executive management and players of Phalaborwa United Football Club (**Ta bhonga tingala,Ditau dia rora**). The leadership of SAFA reported that the team has won the District Play-off and will be participating in the provincial play-off in order to be promoted to the second division...the play-offs we commit to grace. **IF THEY DON'T WIN THE PLAY-OFFS**, we encouraged them to buy the PSL status of Kaizer Chiefs and play in the Premier League.

Madam Speaker

We are imbued this morning with profound sense of honour and humility, as we rise on behalf of the leadership collective and account to the people of this district. We do so, in the main guided by our collective responsibility and inherent obligation, having agreed on a programme to build better communities with our people.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to the social contract as entered into with our people in the context of the fifth democratic local government. Vividly, we remember the resounding message delivered by our people around the commitment to rebuild and renew effective local government that puts people first.

We gather today here on the backdrop of Mandela Month. It is during this month that we celebrate the life and legacy of the founding father of our democracy, President Nelson Mandela. Undoubtedly, the best way to celebrate and honour his legacy would be for us to give the people of this district safe drinking water. Perhaps it is important to recall his exact words when he spoke about the importance of water: **“It is a question of life and death.”**

Having laid out the priorities in 1994, which included houses, hospitals, education - in that order. President Nelson Mandela said he was taken aback when they went around the country visiting the rural areas, telling the people of the democratic government’s priorities. And he says the people said **“No, those are essentials, but not of immediate importance. We want water.”**

This message is not different from the message echoed by our people today. However, we will not lose sight of the other urgent tasks of creating jobs and reducing poverty, aligning our work to the priorities set out by the 7th Administration in the form of GNU, which speaks about driving including growth and job creation, tackling the high cost of living, and to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

The state of the district address is also set on the backdrop of the 70th anniversary celebration of the Freedom Charter, which remains the guiding policy vision towards the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society where our people will have access to basic services.

It is perhaps befitting that we draw wisdom this morning from one of the organizers of that historic congress of the people in Kliptown, the Nobel Peace Prize Recipient, Isitwalandwe President-General Chief Albert Luthuli, when he said and I quote:

“Friends, let us make no mistake, the road to freedom is always full of difficulties. Before we reach the summit of freedom, many will have fallen by the wayside as a result of enemy action, and others through despondency may abandon the fight. But I call upon you as the true son of South Africa to be true to Africa, and count no sacrifice too great for her redemption.”

As we reflect on the work of the past year, we look to the future alive to the realities of the challenging economic conditions. Working with our people we should be able to navigate the stormy seas, just as a skilled sailor must adjust their sails to harness the wind rather fight against it. Our eyes remain fixed steadfastly on the task of building better communities with our people.

EXPANDING WATER PROVISION IN THE DISTRICT

Madam Speaker

When accepting the responsibility to serve our people, we did indeed make a solemn pledge to spare no effort in trying to reduce the backlog on water provision in the district. And to this day we remain seized with that task. We are reporting to our people today that through our collective efforts, we have managed to reach an additional **27 409** in household connections.

Moving into the 2025/26 financial year, our plans as outlined in the reviewed IDP will be implemented with a total budget of **Two billion- Seven Hundred and Twenty-Eight Million –Ninety-Nine Thousands –Nine Hundred and Forty-Four (R2 728 099 944).**

From this budget of **R2,7 billion**, an amount of **R1, 868 billion** which constitute **68%** of the total budget is allocated for the operating budget. **R638 million** is the capital budget, which constitute at least **23, 39%** of the total revenue. At least **2,79%** of this budget will go towards servicing of the historic debt we have with both Lepelle Northern Water and DWS.

Fellow councillors

Water infrastructure provision is the backbone of our work, and true to the commitment made to our people in 2021, we will continue to invest on water infrastructure provision. Sustained focus on water infrastructure is the defining feature of the Fifth Council.

Through our capital budget of **R638 million**, particularly from the MIG, WSIG and RBIG, we will be able to continue our work around water provision and addressing the sanitation backlog.

Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality

Madam Speaker

Phase 1 of the Lulekani Water Scheme Project is at 96% which is targeting our communities in Ward 3 Benfarm and Ward 15 in Bico. This project has created 60 work opportunities, assisting at 20 of our SMMEs. Phase 2A is at 99% covering Humulani in Ward 13, having created 29 working opportunities with 12 SMMEs benefiting. Phase 2B also at Humulani is at 95%, this project entailed the borehole development, equipping and electrification, installation of package plant and construction of elevated steel tank.

Phase 2C in Ward 13, Kurhula is at 98% having created 50 work opportunities, also benefiting 13 SMMEs. We will continue the implementation of Lulekani Water Scheme Project (Benfarm) with a budget of **R43.7 million** in the next financial year.

Yesternight, Mr Mbetse of Speak-Out sent me a message from concerned residents in Ga-Makhushane, and it read thus:

"Hello Mr Mbetse, maybe you can help the community of Makhushane, maune and Mapikiri. There is no water but the project of water pipe line are done

for this job but there is no water. The community are suffering of water distribution by trucks"

We have completed Phase 5C of Makhushane Water Scheme Project with 2080 households connected at Maseke village, Ward 10. Phase 5B covering Nyakelang 1 & 2, Kanana 1 & 2, Garden View Malungane and Makhushane Camp is at 99%. We have set aside a budget a budget of R66.6 million to increase coverage to our communities as part of Makhushane Water Scheme Project.

In the same wavelength Tatana Mbetse is seen in a video committing to use force to open water valves and infrastructure by force. Infrastructure that do not belong to Speak-Out but the people of Mopani.

Whilst we implore Speak-Out to desist from such, we have challenges of sustainable water provision where water sharing has become integral part of our programmes so that majority people enjoy access. Please do not touch our infrastructure by force. We survived period of peacetime heroes to be where the Municipality and its people are.

In Tours people using water trucks to collect and sell water illegally, have recently been attended to by our Riot Squad including at Nkowankowa Industrial Park and cases has been opened.

Last month, I reported theft of our materials at our Giyani stores worth millions with our security beaten to a pulp. Two weeks ago, recovered all the materials including sockets in Mpumalanga through our Riot Squad and we continue to serve our people.

Greater Giyani Municipality

Madam Speaker

The Giyani Water Project Phase 1 Reticulation is at 97%, with 23 of the 24 villages practically completed. Upon completion of all the projects, over 35 000 of our households in Greater Giyani will have access to sustainable safe drinking water. Though behind schedule, the progress made thus far, is a result, in great measure, of the support from all stakeholders at the level of the multistakeholder task team, led in particular by our royal leaders.

We know that our people in Nwakhuwani are receiving water from household connections. We know that our people at Ndindani are receiving water from household connections. Our people at Mhlaba Willem are receiving water. We know that our people at Muyexe are receiving water. Our people at Khakhala, Thomo, Gawala, Vuhehli can also relate to this story.

We have villages where bulk water supply coverage is not 100% - this of course is due to the ongoing work on the bulk water lines by Lepelle Northern Water. These villages would include Bambeni, Homu 14A and B, Mapayeni, Mageva, Maphata, Ka-Mininginisi, Dzingidzingi, Maswanganyi, Sikhunyani, Mahlati, Ngove and Bode.

We have encountered major delays in Risinga View where only one of the three contractors has completed work. The other contractors are at 73% and 88%, respectively. An amount of **R136 million** from the Water Infrastructure Services Grant (WSIG) will help us with the work around water reticulation as part of this Giyani Water Project.

We will be implementing phase 2 of the reticulation project not so long to cover the remaining 31 villages in Giyani. Work to find lasting solution in Middle Letaba is continuing, as led by Minister Majodina. The provincial government through CoGHSTA has also been supporting our work through

the implementation of projects for bulk water pipelines in Giyani Ext F and Ext H.

Greater Letaba Municipality

Madam Speaker

Our biggest project in the Greater Letaba Municipality is the Sekgosesa Regional Ground Water Scheme Project. Phase 2A is at 99% covering Senwamokgope in ward 12. Phase 2B is also at 99% covering Itielene in Ward 12. Phase 3A is also in Ward 12 and 13, covering Thakgalane as well, currently at 99%. Phase 3B is also at 99%. Phase 3D is at 87%. This project has so far created 152 work opportunities, also benefiting 64 SMMEs. We will continue with the project through a budget of **R15.6 million**.

Greater Tzaneen Municipality

Madam Speaker

In Greater Tzaneen Municipality, we are reporting to our people today that we have completed Phase 1, Phase 2B, and Phase 2C of Tours Water Scheme Bulk Project during the 2024/25 financial year. We are much closer to the completion of Phase 2D, which is currently above 90%.

We are still busy with Phase 3, which is targeting 12 villages including Maselapata, Sunnyside, Makhwibidung, Burgersdorp, Calais in Maruleng, Bodweni, Nsolani, Hoveni, Madhawa, Gazaza, Kampalanga, and Mangweni. Phase 3 of this project has so far benefited 10 SMMEs from a local economic development point of view, and 184 of our people benefiting through employment. We will be able to continue with work having set aside the budget of **R19.6 million** during this financial year. We want to thank our communities for their continued support.

We have two projects in Lesedi Cluster, the Ritavi Water Scheme Project and Lephephane Water Scheme Project. We have just completed Phase 4 in the Ritavi Water Scheme Project, and now have the contractor on site for Phase 5. We will be able to continue with the work around the Ritavi 2 Water Scheme with a budget of **R72.9 million**.

The Lephephane Phase 1 covering Longvalley and Rasebelana have been on 99% for sometime now, waiting for bulk connection. Phase 2C is also at 99% (Covering a portion of Khopo in terms of reticulation, and equipping of borehole), 2A is at 91% also reticulation in the remaining portion of Lephephane. Lephephane Bulk Water as part of Phase 2B is budgeted **R53.1 million** during this financial year.

We also have the Thabina Water Scheme Project Phase 6 is also nearing completion. We have recently completed work at the Thabina WTW where we were doing refurbishment and also replacing the meters. We also have the Maselepata Water Supply Refurbishment Project through WSIG, which is at 95%. Through that project, we are focusing on equipping and electrifying new borehole, constructing pump house, 135kl elevated steel tank, construction of water lines and standpipes

Maruleng Local Municipality

The Kampersrus Bulk Water Scheme and Scotia Project is allocated an amount of **R21.4 million**, while an amount of **R35 million** is set aside from RBIG for the Mametja-Sekororo Water Scheme Project.

Madam Speaker

Immediate water supply efforts

While all of this work continues, we still have an obligation to supply our communities with water in the immediate. And we do that through the boreholes and water tankering. We have tried to support our team in the

water services directorate, and have just recently handed over a fleet of 15 bakkies to the artisans to help in responding faster to community needs.

We are from Morutji village in Ward 07 of Greater Tzaneen Municipality where we handed over a borehole to that community, but there are many other communities that we still need to reach out to. We are aware of the water supply challenges in Mopye, we know of the water supply challenges in Pyapyamela, Burgersdorp, Mahala, Prisca, Gravelotte, Matiko-Xikaya, Loss My Cherry, Las Vegas, Butswana, Bochabelo, and even Metz village.

We have a total of 285 boreholes awaiting to be energized. And our work in ensuring that our people have water in the immediate should receive a massive boost with the budget of **R45 million** set aside, specifically for electrification of boreholes across the district. Perhaps, this represent a clear commitment, and also an opportunity for the Fifth Council to advance its efforts around ensuring that people in the district have access to potable water.

The project to extend the Tzaneen Dam Wall is now at 46%, and the revised completion deadline is now set for March 2026. To this date, it has so far created at least 241 work opportunities for our people. The end goal is that raw water storage capacity of the dam increase from **157 million** cubic meters to **195 million** cubic meters, in planning for the 20-year horizon.

This project is part of DWS Glewap program which entails the construction of N'wamitwa Dam to deal with more than 40-year horizon of generations after this from water sustainability point of view.

Madam Speaker

Quality assurance in water provision

Our inherent obligation is to provide water to communities is also linked intimately to the responsibility of ensuring that the water we deliver to our

people is of good quality. We have developed a Blue Drop Improvement Plan, and part of that include the recruitment of two professional registered scientists to lead in the preparation of the Giyani Lab to be ISO 17025 Accredited. The report we are giving today – DONE.

The recruitment of a specialist in instrumentations technology as well as two ECSA registered technicians to handle mechanical and civil works – DONE.

We have also developed a Corrective Action Plan for the Green Drop Status. And of course part of the work is to ensure that we recruit seven plant superintendents with Class V certification. Major boast to this plan is the utilization of the 10% MIG to refurbish at seven of our wastewater treatment this financial year:

- The Giyani Waste Water Treatment Works with a budget of **R6 million**.
- The Kgapane Waste Water Treatment Works with a budget of **R8 million**.
- The Lenyenye Waste Water Treatment Works with a budget of **R8 million**.
- The Lulekani Waste Water Treatment Works with a budget of **R9 million**.
- The Namakgale Waste Water Treatment Works with a budget of **R8 million**.
- The Nkowankowa Waste Water Treatment Works with the budget of **R8 million**.
- The Phalaborwa Waste Water Treatment Works with a budget of **R8 million**.

Madam speaker

Our people are also worried about the ageing infrastructure across the district, but the other biggest challenge facing us is the water theft and

vandalism. We have to act decisively against water theft and vandalism. We will be capacitating our peace officers, working with the police to ensure that we secure our water sources. To that extent, we are calling up our communities to help support the efforts that we will be leading as the District Municipality.

INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO DECENT SANITATION

Fellow councillors

Through the support from CoGHSTA as led by MEC Basikopo Makamu, the department is busy finalising the engineering designs for the Dan village sewer in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, with the aim of upgrading the infrastructure. The department will start with the project on the bulk sewer pipeline for Siyandhani.

The Census 2022 results shows that 94% of our households in the district have access to sanitation. We have to try and move closer to 100% coverage in terms of providing sanitation to our people in the district – which is key to our efforts around promoting public health. To the extent that we have set aside a substantial budget to continue with the Rural Household Sanitation Project.

Work has already started in all the five local municipalities. Here in BaPhalaborwa Municipality, **3360** households will have access to sanitation by the end of this financial year. In Greater Giyani, **5320** households will have access to sanitation by the end of this financial year.

In Greater Letaba, **3920** households will have access to sanitation by the end of this financial year. In Greater Tzaneen Municipality, we are reaching out to **5320** households this financial year. In Maruleng, we are reaching out to **1960** households this financial year. This brings to total **19 880**

additional households that will have access to sanitation by the end of this financial year.

FOCUS ON ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Madam Speaker

During our engagement with our people as part of the IDP/Budget consultations, they have raised sharply the issue of roads in the district. Even with the limitations that exist, there is ongoing work to improve the conditions of our major roads and internal streets.

From the District Municipality, through the Rural Roads Asset Management System (RRAMS) grant we have done visual condition assessment of the roads in all the local municipalities in the district. This assessment will help identify roads that need special attention through maintenance or tarring. The assessment is now at 93,7%.

Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality

Madam Speaker

Though with its own challenges, the road projects as part of the partnership between RAL and the Palabora Mining Company is also progressing, targeting our communities around Mashishimale and Lulekani. The Department will also be implementing the Letaba Ranch to Eiland road project.

The Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality will through its own funding be implementing the project to upgrade Honeyville to Dinoko Sebera and a further budget of **R9 million** is set aside through MIG to upgrade the road from gravel to paving. A project of upgrading from gravel to block paving the road from Aubrey carwash via cemetery to Kanana has a budget of **R7,3 million** during this financial year.

The Municipality has set aside **R8 million** in this financial year to upgrade from gravel to asphalt the road from Nkateko High School to Pondo combined school. A **R6,4 million** budget is set aside for the upgrade of the road from the clinic via ZCC in ward 02. The Municipality has also set aside of **R4 million** to start with a project of culvert bridge at Makhushane.

Greater Giyani Local Municipality

Madam Speaker

The Shangoni Gate to Kruger National Park project is under detailed designs stage. This project is key to the development and growth of the tourism sector in the district. The Department of Public Works will be implementing the road project from Xikukwane to Mbatlo.

The Municipality has completed work on the project to upgrade from gravel to pave in Siyandhani. The 2,6 km internal street project at Shikhumba is also complete. The work to upgrade 2,6 km of internal street at Hlomela has started. The 4,8km internal street project at N'wamankena has also started, and the 3,6km internal streets at Shawela. Other projects including the Muxiyani, Phikela, Ndhambi and Noblehoek are prioritized for designs during the 2025/26 financial year.

Through the MIG funding this year, the Municipality will be implementing the project to upgrade the internal streets at Nwamankena with a budget of **R21, 9 million**. The upgrading from gravel to paving at Khakhala is budgeted for **R30,4 million**, while internal streets upgrading from gravel to paving at Babangu has a budget of **R26 million**.

Greater Letaba Local Municipality

Madam Speaker

The 3km construction work on the Tshatshama Road is almost complete as led by the Department of Public Works under MEC Rachoene. Our people have raised concerns about the road Morebeng to Sekgosese (Wholesale), and we are engaging with the Department to find ways to prioritize that road.

The Municipality will also be continuing with work to upgrade the roads through the MIG funding, particularly the internal streets. It has set aside **R19,8 million** for Burkina Faso street paving. **R10 million** is set aside for Ramoroka street paving. **R16 million** for Maupa street paving. **R3 million** is set aside for Masakaneng street paving, while **R5 million** is budgeted for the rehabilitation of Eugene street and storm water management.

The Municipality has also set aside **R5 million** for the purchase of graders and a further **R3,6 million** for the purchase of TLBs. **R13,2 million** for road maintenance. Construction of Boshakhe Bridge will also be done this financial year with a budget of **R2 million**.

Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality

Madam Speaker

The Department of Public Works Roads and Infrastructure has completed the 6km of the Thapane access road to Nwamitwa. The Department will implement the Ga-Moroka to Mawa, and Mhanghweni-Mafarana road. Dr CN Phatudi to Shiluvane, and the Burgersdorp to Callais road are all scheduled for maintenance by RAL.

The Municipality will be implementing the Dan Access road project with a budget of **R17,8 million**. The work entails rehabilitation of the road from R36 to D5011 at Teba. **R1 million** is set aside for the upgrading of Topanama street from gravel to paving. **R12,8 million** is set aside for the upgrading of Thapane street from gravel to paving. **R13, 1 million** is

budgeted for Lenyenye internal streets upgrade from gravel to paving. For the upgrade of internal streets in Nkowankowa B and D, a budget of **R34, 3 million** is set aside. **R31,7 million** is set aside to upgrade the street from Serutung to Malengenge.

Other streets to be prioritized include the Plantation street in Tzaneen Old Industrial with a budget of **R7 million**. The Tzaneen Ext 13 internal streets, and other internal streets in Tzaneen, Nkowankowa and Lenyenye. **R3,9 million** is set aside for the Petanenge Pedestrian Crossing bridge.

Maruleng Local Municipality

Madam Speaker

The Municipality will be implementing the Lorraine – Bellville Nkopedjile access road, having set aside a budget of **R13,4 million**. The Essex road has budget of **R23 million**, the Metz internal street Phase 1 project has a budget of **R18,4 million**. The Makgaung internal street project is budgeted for **R16, 5 million**.

The Hlohokwe to Sofaya Road has a budget of **R6 million**, and **R8 million** for Hlohlokwe/GA Mohlala access road. The rehabilitation of Lorraine access road has a budget of **R5,3 million**. The rehabilitation of The Oaks to Finale Access road has a budget of **R55,3 million**. The Bismark road is scheduled for preventative maintenance by Road Agency Limpopo.

INITIATIVES TO BUILD THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND JOB CREATION

Madam Speaker

We continue to support and promote the economic sectors in the district in order to grow the economy, focusing in the main on agriculture, mining, tourism and manufacturing. Our vision remains that of being the food basket

of Southern Africa and the tourism destination of choice. We have set aside **R1 million** for the review of the LED strategy.

Through our partnership with Limpopo Connexion, we are at the tail end in finalizing the proof of concept to establish Broadband Network Infrastructure that will be able to assist our people in the rural setting, but will also include the Nkowankowa township.

The model envisages to use traditional authorities offices as Public Free Hotspots Wi-Fi Zones, in line with the imperatives of the ongoing process in the review of the White Paper on Local Government on meaningful governance for traditional leaders. This is critical on four fronts:

- To demonstrate the need for increased fibre network in the district of Limpopo Connexion per the objectives of the Limpopo Development Plan.
- To increase internet connectivity so as to ensure that the youth of Mopani district participate in Sunrise Economies per the vision of the Limpopo Development Plan such as the 4th Industrial Revolution and internet economy in general including content creation. In general to ensure that SMMEs in the district have the internet connectivity to access global markets particularly leveraging on the Africa Free Trade Market and BRICS.
- To unlock opportunities for local SMMEs as broadband service providers to connecting to the Limpopo Connexion Infrastructure – that is buying from Limpopo connexion and selling to the market.
- To contribute to the decolonisation of space from a spatial perspective and return traditional council as centres of activity and social cohesion.

From the District Municipality's budget, we have set aside **R1 million** as part of the 4IR project. On that note, we may as well report that we have set

aside R1,5 million to continue supporting the work of the institution of traditional leaders in the district as led by Kgoshigadi Sekgopo. We may as well commend the Department of Public Works on its work to construct and refurbish the offices of our traditional leaders. We have seen the construction work at BaShayi-Ditlou, which is set to be completed during this financial year.

Through our partnership and MoU with Letaba TVET College, we had induction on spaza shop training yesterday (2nd of July 2025). The Spaza Shop Training is part of the efforts by the District to support the Presidential Executive Order on the Standard Draft Bylaws for Township and Village Economies pronounced on 16 November 2024.

Twenty-five (25) Spaza Shop Owners that applied and met the criteria will be trained over a 3- 6 month period on Small Business Manager: Owner Skills Programme, NQF Level 3 accredited by W&RSETA and using Artificial Intelligence tools/applications for sustainable SMMEs business continuity in the 4th Industrial Revolution.

To this end Letaba TVET College has secured funding from National Skills Funding and Limpopo connexion will make a significant contribution on how spaza shop owners/operators can use artificial intelligence to ensure sustainability. Participants will receive a stipend of R2500 during the course of this training.

The application to the European Commission for Solar Business Labs for Youth Start-Ups led by AWARD and in collaboration with Letaba TVET College which we spoke about last year has gone past various stages, but the process is ongoing. The objective of the program is to train small business enterprises for youth in the district including graduates from TVET Colleges.

We have, in the past financial year supported 100 SMME to take their services and products closer to the people through marketing initiatives such as the Africa Free Trade Expo, the Rand Easter, Show, Marula Festival, the Durban Indaba, and through our Pop-Up Markets.

Madam Speaker

The conceptualised Moshupatsela Mopani District Municipality DDM LED Initiative is gaining momentum and is set to go beyond the boundaries of the farm and will anchor local economic development in the district.

The concept in collaboration with Mukhufhi AgroProcessing and Essential Oils a local SMME attracted total pledge investment of R9.8 Billion at the Limpopo Invest Conference in October 2024 and was also subsequently announced by the Premier of the Province Dr Phophi Ramathuba during her State of the Province Address. The Moshupatsela farm project is anchored by 5 strategic pillars.

1. To establish a technology business incubation centre that will serve as nerve centre for supporting SMMEs on standards, compliance and measurements
2. To resolve the energy issues of the district by leveraging on the competitive and comparative advantage on Renewable Energy in the district starting with a solar farms in Tzaneen (Moshupatsela 62MW) and Giyani (KaNgove 150MW). This is part of implementing the Renewable Energy Strategy of the province and aligned to the Limpopo Development Plan which points to renewables as one of the sunrise economies.
3. To revitalise the manufacturing economy by ensuring that specific components of the solar projects are manufactured in the district.
4. To realise the vision “the food basket of Southern Africa” by aggregating and actively supporting SMMEs and small hold farmers

alike in the avocado and poultry value chain including linkages to mainstream market opportunities.

5. To support and grow the textile industry and ensure SMMEs are mainstreamed into the school uniform value chain.
6. To contribute to revenue generation

We are currently consulting provincial and national Treasury, expecting feedback in the next few weeks in terms of SCM processes. The process will then be subject to Bid Adjudication and finalisation. The long-term view is also the capitalisation of Moshupatsela farm including 1% (approximately R59 million) of the project cost to be ringfenced in support of LED in the district.

We also have long-term plans to establish a Research and Innovation Unit within the Planning and Economic Development Directorate. The terms of reference have been finalised and this will be a major boost to the institution and the people of Mopani once implemented.

The work around the acquiring of the international licence for the Hoedspruit East Gate Airport is also continuing. There is a 20-year lease signed with the Air Force to utilize the runway. The service provider for the Solar Plant in Hoedspruit has appointed sub-consultants to engage in pre-feasibility studies. The construction of The Oaks shopping all is above 60%, and the anchor shops are set to open by the end of August 2025.

The Limpopo Department of Transport and Community Safety led by MEC Violet Mathye has recently signed the new subsidy contracts with the Great North Transport, Mathole Bus Services and Risaba Bus Services. The subsidized bus companies are obliged to sub-contract some of their operations to empower local bus operating companies.

Madam Speaker

The Department of Agriculture continues to support efforts around food security in the District. In the past financial year, the department allocated **R15,8 million** to support Xidzekenene and Duvhazi in Greater Giyani Municipality, Mohlakamosoma-Lenokwe in Greater Letaba, and Benevaju in Greater Tzaneen – this through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program. The projects included the construction of 1ha shade nets, drip irrigation system, tensiometers, pump station, fertigation unit and reservoir, as well as ablution facility and pack shed.

For this financial year, the department will target Itimeleng Ba-Makhutswe with a budget allocation of **R7,5 million**. The contractor is already on site and set to complete in the coming weeks. The budget to upgrade the Metz dam wall is set at **R6 million**. The department will also assist Anius Eden in Maruleng with fencing and subdivision of grazing camps with a budget of **R2,5 million**.

In Greater Tzaneen Municipality, the department will support Thabina Irrigation with a budget of **R3,5 million**. In Ba-Phalaborwa, the department will support Madikhabeshe Farming with a budget of **R4 million**. Tanani Matiko Disabled and Multipurpose Centre in the Greater Giyani Municipality will be supported with a budget of **R4million**.

As part of our contributions to the sector and efforts around food security, we drilled boreholes to support four farming cooperatives. Kuhlula Farming Project in Lefara, ward 22 of Greater Tzaneen Municipality, Tswaranang Disabled Project in Lephephane village, ward 34. We also drilled a borehole for Khwezi Lehlabile Agricultural Coop in Khaxani village in the Greater Giyani Municipality and Kurhula Benfarm Cooperative in Benfarm Village, Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality.

This we did this on the occasion of the Executive Mayor's birthday celebration on Monday, but key is that it was in response to the clarion call of the Freedom Charter: **The Land Shall Be Shared Among Those Who Work It**. It is the demand of the Freedom Charter that as government we should assist farmers with implements, seed, tractors and dams.

Madam Speaker

At least 31,6% of the population in this district is young people between the ages 15 and 34. Therefore, much of our work should be geared towards the support of young people – this we should do through partnerships and collaborations.

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) continues its efforts around support to young people in the district. In the 2024/25 financial the NYDA was able to issue out grants to 122 young people. The Agency also supported youth business enterprises, majority of them owned by young females.

To help contribute to efforts around youth economic development, we have set aside **R2 million** – this of course forms part of our partnership agreement with the National Youth Development Agency through an MoU approved by council. Through this contribution and the portion that will come from the NYDA, we will be able to provide support to deserving youth owned enterprises and cooperatives within Mopani District Municipality to fully participate in the economy.

Through the Expanded Public Works Programme, working with the local municipalities we were able to create **2260** work opportunities in the

district. We are again going to use the **R7,8 million** EPWP fund to continue with efforts around poverty alleviation through this programme.

Madam Speaker

MUNICIPAL TRANSFORMATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Building decent shelter to the people

MEC Basikopo Makamu has pronounced during his Budget Vote that work to start with the construction of 146 units in Talana as part of the community residential units will start during this quarter. The environmental impact assessment for the establishment of a mixed residential area in Hoedspruit has commenced. The layout plan for 405 stands has been completed.

We remain committed to the goal of creating communities where our people can live, work and have access to economic opportunities. That is why we continue to contribute towards projects on township establishment. We will during the 2025/26 financial year be implementing the Maphalle township establishment project with a budget of **R700 thousands**, the Mamaila Kokobetona with **R700 thousands** as well as Meidingen 1 with a budget of **R700 thousands**.

Through the Municipal Planning Tribunal, we approved the construction of a shopping complex on part of the remainder of Farm Makhushane Location 28LU, as well as a shopping centre and a filling station on Farm Ben 26LU in the Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality. We also processed the application for a Solar Plant and Auxiliary Purposes – a ZZ2 project in the Greater Letaba Municipality.

We have as part of our disaster relief efforts in the past financial year distributed 590 mattresses, 662 blankets, 40 tents and 22 tin houses. Through our partnership with SANTAM, we were able to conduct awareness

campaigns on disaster risk-reduction, and they have also donated a Disaster Management Awareness Trailer and two printers

Working with local municipalities, we hosted 145 fire awareness campaigns in our communities, targeting mostly our primary school learners. We responded to 256 structural fires, including the Eden Square Mall fire. We responded to 452 veld and forest fires, and 64 vehicle fires. We have conducted 770 fire safety inspections across the district.

To support the work in the community services directorate, we have set aside at least **R20 million** for the purchase of specialized vehicles, and a further **R5 million** for the purchase of fire and rescue equipment – this we will do through internally generated funds

To ensure compliance with food hygiene and safety, working with other stakeholders, we conducted 169 Inspection blitz in the district, resulting in 121 448 kg and 24 006 litres of condemned foodstuff destroyed. We have conducted 382 formal health workshops and around 5 800 informal workshops. Part of the efforts to support school vendors included workshops, and we have issued out 3258 certificates of acceptability.

At the level of council we adopted the climate change response strategy, and to support projects aligned to the strategy, we have set aside **R500 thousands**. We have set aside **R1,5 million** for the development of and maintenance of air quality station, and **R1 million** will go towards the development of environmental framework. We will also continue through collaboration with the Clean Earth School Competition, as well as workshops on alien and invasive species awareness campaigns.

Employment and training opportunities

The District Municipality filled 54 external posts during the 2024/25 financial year, and also offered training opportunities to at least 240 young people. We have, through partnership with EWSTA, trained 100 unemployed young people at NQF Level 04. They were placed in our water plants for practical purposes.

We have 05 young people who are on the programme funded through the Financial Management Grant. We had 31 young people from Letaba TVET as part of the work-integrated learning, and 36 were participating from South African Advanced Skills Institute in collaboration with SALGA. Another 15 learners received training on electrical as well as fitter and turner, supported by Mectom Training and Development.

Through the LGSETA FETC Programme, we had 50 young people who were trained on Disaster Risk Management. We will be applying through the discretionary funds for further assistance to train more young people. We plan to serve as the host employer for both Mopani and TVET colleges in order to provide practical work experience for young people in the district.

We have just recently completed the intake of another 200 learners who are to participate in the LGSETA Learnership programme, with 100 on local economic development and the other 100 on water and wastewater process control. Through our partnership with Limpopo Connexion, we have 1662 young people who are receiving training on Artificial Intelligence (AI). The course is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of AI.

Work around the establishment and launch of the Tshwane University of Technology campaign is well underway. Renovations of the facilities has

started, and we are set to start see the first intake in January 2026 with applications opening in September 2025.

Social transformation and health

Few days ago, I had the opportunity to visit few **initiation schools** sprawled across the district. I requested the municipal manager and the male team of his senior managers to accompany me to do oversight work on this important cultural passage of transitioning boys into men. None of them joined me and I went there alone. I have since requested a meeting with him and the others to come and explain the reasons and circumstances that led to undermining the office of the executive mayor. We have since agreed that such a meeting will take place in one of the Initiation schools.

On a serious note, we can report that except for the incident in Ga-Maake under Greater Tzaneen Municipality, who are receiving proper medical care, all your initiates are safe and the environment, including health and hygiene is of remarkable standard. We have not lost any life so far and we implored on the principal traditional surgeons to maintain such. In the next few weeks, we should welcome them into our communities and fully integrate them into society. We wish them well in their journey.

The fight against the scourge of gender-based violence and femicide is real. There has been a number of cases reported here in the district, just in the past two months, including that of Ndzalama Mlondobozi from the Greater Tzaneen Municipality who was allegedly killed by her lover. The case of the 24-year-old, Glenda Malatji from Mantswi village who was also killed by her lover last month. Collectively, we should be able to heighten awareness and intensify our fight against this scourge.

I have been made aware that two young men, Sello Matima and Sello Matsena from Greater Letaba Municipality under the leadership of Kgoshi Phooko have taken an initiative to raise awareness on GBV by walking from Sekgosese to the Union Buildings on bare foot. They started on the 24th of June, and are at Maubane Toll Plaza this morning.

Fellow councillors

Allow me to also take this opportunity to all say our farewell to Senior Manager Mme Sonia Maswanganyi. Monday was her last day with Mopani District Municipality, having served her resignation notice. We want to appreciate her dedication and unwavering commitment to excellence during her time with the Municipality.

We have seen her bring innovation to the management team, and through her leadership, the Corporate and Shared Services Directorate has been the shining directorate, consistently receiving unqualified audit opinion from AGSA. It was not always like that, but through her leadership she helped contribute in turning the tide. And of course, having seen her deep-seated craving for excellence, we have no doubt that she will achieve greater things in all your future endeavours.

ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Madam Speaker

We have a responsibility as a democratic local government to promote democracy and sound governance. Today, we can also report to our people that we still have a stable council with functional committees, and continue to engage with all stakeholders within the IGR framework.

We continue to observe relative labour peace in the Municipality, and we should appreciate the role played by all stakeholders at the level of the local

labour forum. SAMWU has elected its new leaders, and we congratulate them.

We are on a qualification audit opinion for a second consecutive year. Our resolve as the Fifth Council is to deliver unqualified audit opinion as we steadily build a culture of good governance and accountability.

The Executive Mayor has signed formal commitment Action Plan with the Auditor General on specific deliverables to ensure the Municipality do not regress, and part of the commitments include the following:

- a) To monitor and prevent water losses.
- b) To ensure regular and adequate monitoring of boreholes.
- c) To ensure proper repairs and maintenance.
- d) To apply consequence management in the area of non-compliance.
- e) To ensure that councillors and employees declare their business interests.
- f) To put in place effective measures to ensure that transgressions are thoroughly investigated, and accountable officials held responsible.

Having said that, we congratulate Greater Giyani Municipality, Greater Tzaneen Municipality, Greater Letaba Municipality, and Maruleng Municipality for sustaining the unqualified We continue to audit opinion. We further wish to applaud their meticulous spending on MIG. Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality remains on qualified, and together with Mopani District Municipality should be working on improvement.

We continue to elevate the issue of accountability, having committed to deal decisively with corruption, mismanagement, wastage and under-performance. The case of EPWP volunteers who were paid without work is been investigated internally, but we have also opened criminal cases, now under investigation by the South African Police Services, through the Hawks.

We have also finalized few cases where officials have been dismissed, and others resigned. The Chief Financial Officer is suspended and we can report that she is currently undergoing disciplinary proceedings on charges of financial misconduct.

Currently the Municipality has a total of thirty-four cases (34) cases on its litigation register, with 28 cases instituted against the Municipality and five (06) cases instituted by the Municipality. The municipality has been awarded costs in two interlocutory proceedings and two final proceedings respectively. We are currently in the process of recovering in four cases.

Performance management system is now embedded to our daily work as the Municipality. All employees have signed performance agreements, including employees at entry level posts. The performance assessments for 2024/2025 financial year are scheduled will be done this month.

We have quarterly feedback meetings in the form of Imbizo where we give an account in the implementation of the targets agreed in the SDBIP. Our last interaction with our people as part of the Imbizo programme was at Mogapeng village last month. We also had an opportunity to host the District Ward Committee Conference last week.

MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Madam Speaker

Our goal is that of provision of sound financial management and reducing financial dependency on grants. And to achieve this, we have to increase revenue generation and implement financial control systems. The complex journey towards a funded budget is still elusive, but we remain fully committed and focussed on the task.

The main difficulty is around the historic commitments to both Lepelle Northern Water and the Department of Water and Sanitation. Treasury has

assessed our budget trends to be on a positive trajectory, provided we continue to honour the repayment agreements, and to that extent we have set aside **R72 million** to reduce this historic debts with an additional **R48 million** to be put aside during the adjustment budget.

We are from a special council last week, and formally we have applied to participate in the Municipal Debt Relief Programme, which if successful, will see the entire debt extinguished and we start from new slate, giving us added impetus in our sustained efforts to deliver water to our people in the district.

We continue to implement the consultancy reduction strategy, which of course include skills transfers. And to that extent, there is ongoing work to fill the vacancies in the Budget & Treasury Directorate with skilled, experienced employees who should be able to take over the work done by consultants, especially in the financial reporting.

We reported last year of our plans to establish a Financial Reporting Unit within the BTO. The progress update we can give to our people today – DONE. We have appointed a manager to head that unit along with two accountants. This work should help us to reduce drastically our spending on consultants during the 2025/26 financial year and into the future. Our commitment is to stay true to ourselves and focus on our core mandate, living up to the expectations of our people.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

Madam speaker

We congratulate the two municipalities in the district that received additional budget during the reallocation. We know that Greater Letaba Municipality received an additional R15 million from MIG funding. We know that Maruleng under the leadership of Mayor Tsheko Musolwa has consistently

been receiving additional funding, this time receiving an amount of R25 million.

We wish to congratulate the PED Directorate for having received a 1st Runner Up award from SALGA for its innovative Revenue Enhancement Strategies through Creative Arts & Energy LED Initiative.

We congratulate our communication unit for having received two awards from SALGA National Communicators Forum in February this year: One, for being the Most Proactive and Responsive District Communication unit in South Africa, and the second award for its usage of social media platforms

Last year we celebrated the appointment of Mr Raymond Mdaka as the Head Coach of South Africa's under-20 national football team (Amajita). Today, we join the rest of the people in the district in congratulating him for leading the team in winning the Afcon tournament held in Egypt during the month of May. We must as well appreciate the Mayor of Greater Tzaneen Municipality Cllr. Gerson Molapisane for having organized a successful homecoming ceremony for our coach.

We celebrate the achievements of Prudence Sekgodisho from Greater Letaba for making history at the World Indoor Championship, becoming the first-ever South African woman to win a medal at the World Indoor Championships. But we also celebrate her recent achievement at the Diamond League, in Morocco.

We celebrate Donald Ramphadi for his bronze medal at the quad doubles wheelchair tennis event at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, the first-ever African medal in the wheelchair tennis.

We also celebrate our grannies, Vakhegula Vakhegula led by Mama Beka Ntsan'wisi for having hosted yet another successful Grannis International Football Tournament in April this year.

CONDOLENCES

During the year under review, we lost a giant of our liberation struggle, Mr Tito Mboweni, the “Duke of the Duchy of Mogaebaskloof” whom President Ramaphosa described as “larger than life” because he touched the lives of many people and was respected by all sectors of society.

Three of our soldiers from here in the district who were deployed as part of the SADC Mission and UN Stabilization Mission in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo succumbed in combat.

Rifleman Derrick Maluleke from Hlaniki in the Greater Giyani Municipality. He, together with Corporal Matome Justice Malesa from Mashishimale in the Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality, and Rifleman Calvin Louis Moagi from Lorraine village in Maruleng Municipality were the brave soldiers who were committed to peace, but unfortunately lost their lives in defence of the vulnerable people in the DRC. We once again offer our profound and deepest sympathies to their families.

We have also lost four of our employees. We lost MJ Mongalle in December last year. He was just elected as the chairperson of SAMWU at the time of his passing. We lost Nkuna TE who worked as a general worker. Last month we lost Seale ML who was a fire fighter, and last week we laid to rest the mortal remains of Mashimbye GJ who worked as an operator. May I request that we rise to observe a moment of silence in their honour. May their souls rest in peace.

IN CONCLUSION

We thank you, madam speaker as well as Mme Lewele, the leader of caucus at the level of the PMT, comrades in the caucus, our colleagues in council who continue, without compromise to enrich our debates and hold the executive management accountable. We also acknowledge the work of Ntate Tshepo Mogano, the Municipal Manager, his team of senior managers, and the entire administration.

This budget is not ours. It belongs to the 1,3 million people of this district. And as we proceed with our work, the words of His Royal Highness Ndabezitha Siyandhani should continue to echo through the corridors of our thoughts like whispers of wisdom. All these millions of rands mean nothing if it doesn't translate to better service delivery on the ground, he cautioned us during IDP Rep Forum ahead of the adoption of this budget.

Working with our people, we have recorded steady progress, but we remain fully aware of the task that lies ahead. As we continue with this journey, we are once again reminded of the words of President Nelson Mandela during his final state of the nation address speech when he said, and I quote: **"There is no time to pause. The long walk is not yet over. The prize of a better life has yet to be won."**

Imbued by his undying spirit, let us march forward with the programme of building better communities together, pushing the struggle by few more meters – ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME.

IN FULL SHAKESPEAREAN STYLE, ECHOING THE GRANDEUR AND RHYTHM OF THE BARD

"Good citizens, most noble allies, and worthy stewards of this fair district — hear me now as I render thanks with a heart both full and humbled. Your presence here this day doth speak of care most rare, of spirits knit in common

cause. Like Brutus to his Romans, or Henry unto England's host, I say: We are not divid'd, but one in purpose, one in toil. Yet mark me well—this is no time for rest, no hour to lay down arms. The struggle for fair service, for justice sweet as summer's rain, must onward go! Let none say we falter'd; let none whisper we stood idle when duty call'd. So join thy hands with mine once more, and swear—by all we hold most dear—to labour, fight, and strive together till brighter dawns break o'er our homes. For so long as we are true, no night is endless, nor task too great. Go now, but go as one—and may our deeds outshine our words!"

I thank you

Kea leboga

Na khensa