



Address by the Premier of the Northern Cape Province, Ms Sylvia Lucas, on the occasion of the tabling of Budget Vote 1, at the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature, 30 May 2013

Mr Speaker and Deputy Speaker
Members of the Executive Council
Members of the Provincial Legislature
Mayors and Councillors
Traditional Leaders
Distinguished Guests
Comrades and Friends
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured to present to you the Budget Vote 1 under the auspices and custodianship of the Governing Party, the African National Congress. It is the responsibility of this Office as the pinnacle of provincial government to coordinate and strengthen all government institutions on a province wide basis.

On behalf of the leadership collective, allow me to express our sincere gratitude to the former and much-loved Premier of the Province, Ms Hazel Jenkins, for her loyal service to the people of the province. Premier Jenkins always consulted widely and served all our people in an inclusive manner. It is through her laudable efforts that we consolidated the operational machinery of the provincial government.

As the apex of provincial government, our constitutional obligation is to serve the public with humility and contribute towards the creation of a better life for all. We have travelled a long journey towards the transformation of the public service for effective service delivery. Effective service standards have been put in place, developed and adhered to.

The ANC-led government Ladies and Gentlemen, has made decisive interventions to improve the quality of life of the people of our country and indeed our home province. We have made

tremendous achievements to deliver to the majority of our people, basic essential services such as water, electricity, education, health, roads and rail infrastructure while simultaneously increasing the absorptive capacity of our economy to create more jobs and employment. We have intensified our battle to liberate the people of our country from the shackles of poverty, disease and under-development.

Mr Speaker, human resource development programmes have been developed and systems for information dissemination are in place. Every attempt is made to ensure that the principles of “Batho Pele”, which means putting our people first, are adhered to.

We will continue to facilitate and promote productive investment to achieve economic growth through stimulating the development of the respective economic sectors.

We are also committed to investing in housing and infrastructure to raise living standards, improve health standards and create jobs. We will, together with our communities, provide clean water, electricity and shelter to our people.

Through our collective and relentless efforts, we will strive to make a qualitative difference in the lives of women, children, the disabled and the elderly.

In true partnerships with civil society and faith-based organisations, we will together forge a common approach to safety and to renew our society’s moral character and standing. The partnership against HIV/AIDS was given further impetus when every sector of civil society recommitted itself to help turn the tide against the HIV/AIDS scourge.

Mr Speaker, through our performance monitoring and evaluation system we will also strive for continuous improvement in service delivery. Our mission is to work with all stakeholders to improve government performance in achieving the desired outcomes and to improve service delivery through changing the way government works, both in a creative and innovative manner. We are transforming government into an effective organisation which constantly collects evidence to gauge whether its policies and programmes are working, and as a consequence, we use this evidence to inform interventions we make.

As we apply ourselves to these and other tasks, we will be guided by the National Development Plan which seeks to radically transform the economy that will benefit all South Africans. It seeks to do so while protecting existing jobs and through creating millions more.

The National Development Plan proposes that we should enhance economic growth, significantly increase our exports to generate surpluses for investment, transform our education system to enable more people to benefit, increase employment to tackle poverty and inequality, and implement a broader social wage to enable the poor to participate more fully in the economic mainstream. The plan also provides the most coherent proposals to date to improve the effectiveness of the state.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in 2012, the South African Government adopted a National Infrastructure Plan that intends to transform our economic landscape while simultaneously creating significant numbers of new jobs, and to strengthen the delivery of basic services.

The Strategic Infrastructure Projects (or SIPs) cover social and economic infrastructure across all nine provinces (with an emphasis on lagging regions). These 18 SIPs include catalytic projects that can fast-track development and growth. Work is being aligned with key cross-cutting areas, namely human settlement planning and skills development.

One of the main SIPs in the Northern Cape is the SIP 5 Saldanha-Northern Cape Development Corridor and focuses on the expansion of iron ore mining production and beneficiation, as well as an integrated rail and port expansion.

Another SIP in the Northern Cape is SIP 16: SKA & Meerkat. SKA is a global mega-science project, building an advanced radio-telescope facility linked to research infrastructure and high-speed ICT capacity and provides an opportunity for Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, to contribute towards global advanced science projects.

SIP 8 deals with Green energy in support of the South African economy. Its aim is to support sustainable green energy initiatives on a national scale through a diverse range of clean energy options as envisaged in the integrated resource plan. In the New Growth Path, renewable energy and development of the associated green economy has been identified by the Presidency as one of the key means to address socio-economic imbalances in the country.

For this reason, the IDC was appointed by the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Committee as the provincial coordinator for SIP 8, while the Office of the Premier established a Renewable Energy Forum which ensures proper coordination and alignment of all renewable energy initiatives.

The Province is in the final phase of the development of a renewable energy strategy for the Northern Cape. The Province sees the opportunities of the Renewable Energy Industry and its significant spin-offs as an opportunity to transform the economy, while raising levels of social and material wellbeing of the Province.

SIP 14 deals with Higher education infrastructure, focusing on lecture rooms, student accommodation, libraries and laboratories, as well as ICT connectivity. It will also develop university towns with a combination of facilities from residence, retail to recreation and transport. There is also potential to ensure shared infrastructure such as libraries by universities, FETs and other educational institutions.

Mr Speaker, we are presenting this budget vote during the month of the 50th celebration of the Organisation of African Unity. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was established with the cardinal objective of promoting the unity, solidarity and cooperation of African States to achieve a better life for the people of Africa. Since its inception, the OAU and now its successor, the African Union, has not only contributed to the total liberation of Africa from the vestiges of colonialism and apartheid but has also provided a unique framework for Africa's developmental agenda.

The budget explicitly sets out the Office of the Premier's priorities to respond to the plight of our people, especially the poor and the marginalised sectors of our society. It also establishes priorities for the use of scarce resources and allocates them to specific programmes, activities and projects. It also strives to maintain sound and prudent financial management practices.

The total budget allocation of the Office of the Premier is R167.828 million, which is a decrease of R 1. 6 million or a 1% percentage decrease from last year. Goods and services amount to 28% of the total budget figure. Our transfer payment in terms of the percentage of the total allocation translates to 10% and capital payments stand at 1%. The Office of the Premier is divided into three Programmes and their budget allocations are as follows:

- Programme 1: Administration with an allocation of R75.324 million
- Programme 2: Institutional Development with an allocation of R61.184 million
- Programme 3: Policy and Governance with an allocation of R31.320 million

Ladies and Gentlemen, in order to meet with its Constitutional obligation, co-ordination of government policy implementation and programme of action, the office ensured that the following governance matters took place through its institutional corporate governance structures such as the Executive Council, Heads of Department Forum, Provincial Makgotla, Premier's Intergovernmental Relations Forum and Cabinet Clusters, to mention just a few.

The Office of the Premier played a central co-ordinating role throughout the financial year and will continue to do so on matters affecting the entire Provincial Administration on key projects and initiatives around the five policy priorities of Government; namely:

- Education;
- Health;
- Rural Development and Agrarian Reform;
- The fight against crime; and
- Creating decent work.

Mr Speaker, allow me to report on some of the highlights in the previous financial year that were carried out as part of our co-operative governance arrangements. Those that are worthy of mention are the launch of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA), the Deputy President's War on Poverty, the National Heritage Day Celebrations and the National Council of Provinces visit to the Province.

In order to stimulate province-wide economic development, the Director General facilitated project interventions that included the Northern Cape University Steering Project Committee, engagement with mines regarding the John Taolo Gaetsewe Development and solar energy projects in Upington.

As part of the Province-wide intervention the Director General also established a Joint Financial Management team that facilitated the Department of Health to implement its Financial Recovery Plan.

I can also report that strides have been made through Operation Clean Audit in line with the 2014 Operation Clean Audit vision. To date, six municipalities were identified for priority attention to be taken out of qualified audit opinions to unqualified audit opinions. The focus areas of the intervention were in the compilation of asset registers and GRAP compliance in compiling Financial Statements.

Mr Speaker, Education is seen as the foundation of every prosperous and progressive community, society and nation. It is on this premise that the Northern Cape Provincial Government is committed to ensure that we wholeheartedly, and with the resources at our disposal, invest in the education and development of our young people both in and out of school.

The Provincial Government views as extremely critical the need to assist students who cannot further or complete their studies due to a lack of finances. This is also in line with ensuring that we build a suitably qualified and skilled youth corps in our Province.

To this end, 487 young people have received assistance through the Premiers Trust Fund; of which 159 new students and 328 continuing students from various parts of the Province were granted bursaries to take up further study at universities, colleges and Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges for the 2013 academic year. The funding covers costs for registration, tuition and study material. The Northern Cape Premiers Trust Fund will continue to fund academically deserving students that form part of the scarce skills identification programme of the Provincial Government.

Mr Speaker, the Mme re ka Thusa Women Development Trust was successfully re-launched during February this year under the theme “An era to intensify the struggle of women against poverty”.

The Trust was established to help expedite the advancement and economic development of female entrepreneurs across the Province. This is in accordance with the Millennium Development Goal of halving unemployment and eliminating poverty and capacitating women with the relevant skills, expertise and resources.

The board of Trustees is in place and the office has finalized the recruitment of operating personnel. During this year the Trust, in partnership with the regional SEDA office, embarked on an outreach programme aimed at marketing its services and products to women in all five districts of the Province.

Ladies and Gentlemen, during this financial year we will execute our responsibilities within the parameters of our budgetary constraints and maintain prudent fiscal discipline in terms of the staff component and our programme of action.

The Office will continue to make its input and contributions in various fora in order to ensure the success of the project to establish a university in the Province by 2014.

The role of the Premier's Support sub-programme is to provide efficient and effective personnel, strategic, operational, and administrative and secretariat support to the Premier. The strategic objective of this sub programme is to ensure that the Premier fulfils her constitutional, statutory and political obligations and to implement the electoral mandate through providing effective and efficient support and assistance to the Premier. The total budget allocated to Premier's Support in fulfilment of all its strategic functions is R15.133 million.

In order to continue its existing institutional corporate governance arrangements, the Executive Council Support through secretarial services, provides strategic policy and operational support to EXCO and EXCO Clusters in order for them to function optimally. For this work, the unit has been allocated a budget of R7.352 million. This unit is also responsible for the management of the Executive Council outreach programme; which liaises with communities to understand and report back on their needs as well as monitor responses from national and provincial Departments.

As a means of ensuring better coordination, the Provincial AIDS Council has been moved to the Office of the Premier to oversee Government intervention efforts to combat the AIDS epidemic. This newly established unit has been allocated R3.7 million for this financial year.

The Provincial Operation Clean Audit Committee, under the custodianship of the Director General, will continue with its efforts of improving audit outcomes at Provincial and Local Government level. The committee intends to consolidate all assessment efforts done per

municipality and will summon each municipality to account to the Executive Council. Certainly, consequences will follow should there be no positive and tangible action after the accounting session in turning around the situation for the better.

The Office of the Director General also ensures that the Provincial Government functions efficiently by providing strategic coordination, logistical and committee support to the Heads of Department structure, as well as other substructures of the Provincial Administration. To successfully carry out this work the office has been allocated R13.154 million.

No office can exist without sound financial management and the Financial Management Unit is always up to the task. The unit is responsible to effectively and efficiently manage and administer the resources of the Office of the Premier in complying with all relevant legislation and prescripts, thus achieving fiscal discipline and a healthy and transparent state of financial affairs, as well as influencing positive audit outcomes for the office. Due to the stricter implementation of internal controls regarding procurement, the Financial Management Unit was able to decrease irregular expenditure in comparison to the previous year. The budget allocated to this unit is R27.227 million.

The Security and Records Management Unit ensures that there is accountability and enhanced transparency through the implementation of sound Records Management Systems, telecommunications and messenger services. The unit also contributes to improved productivity through provision of a safe and secure working environment. This unit has received an allocation of R8.758 million.

An institution's soundness can also be measured by its Human Resource Management. Critical to this function in the office is to coordinate and provide strategic leadership to all Provincial Departments with regard to transversal corporate matters to enhance transformation of the public service.

The key focus of the Human Resource Administration component is to manage and co-ordinate the human resource administration functions in the Office as well as provincially. One of the highlights of this unit has been the Persal functionality which improved the accuracy, reliability and integrity of information through the Persal Clean-up initiative. This saw a reduction in the vacancy rate from 35% to 15%. The unit, as the co-ordinator of the HR Forum, also advised other departments on HR compliance issues. For this financial year HR Administration has received R3.828 million.

Mr Speaker, given the serious skills disparities that continue to exist in our Province, we must equip our people with skills that will enable them to participate effectively in the socio-economic mainstream of our country. We are still witnessing a very high youth unemployment rate and it is incumbent upon us to widen access to learning, and employment opportunities.

Of concern, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the plight of the large numbers of young people dropping out of the general schooling system, the Further Education and Training (FET) and higher education institutions, with some joining the labour market that they were never prepared for.

A province-wide Human Resource Development Strategy will be developed, approved and implemented to comply with Outcome 4. As a result, the Human Resource Development Unit has been allocated R21.862 million in order to render human resource development and performance management services to ensure compliance with all relevant policy imperatives.

Mr Speaker, the Office of the Premier is also tasked with various Provincial transversal co-ordinating roles such as ICT, Communication, provision of legal services and monitoring and evaluation.

We have successfully implemented a Finnish funded initiative, namely the Information Society Programme (INSPIRE), in our country. Through INSPIRE, we developed a Northern Cape Information Society Strategy, using the Foresight methodology and will shortly be submitted to the Provincial Executive Council for consideration.

In the coming financial year, we will implement the Corporate Governance and Governance of Information Technology Policy Framework, thereby ensuring that our Information Systems are aligned to our business goals. To carry out this work, the unit has been allocated R10.998 million.

The strategic objective of the Legal Services unit is to render a comprehensive, co-ordinated legal advisory service to the Northern Cape Provincial Government. Support in terms of litigation, contracts, legal opinions, drafting and certification of legislation are provided. The work performed by this unit, in essence, leads to good governance as per Outcome 12 and enhances

service delivery. For this work, the unit has been allocated an amount of R5.242 million.

The Employee Health and Wellness unit is a workplace intervention and monitoring unit that provides informed, responsive and research based leadership that will ensure successful implementation of wellness programmes in the Province. The unit is also responsible for co-ordinating workplace programmes of the Sexually Transmitted Infection National Strategic Plan. They have received an allocation of R 2.792 million.

Ladies and Gentlemen, during the previous financial year, as part of Women's Month the unit, in conjunction with the Cancer Association, hosted an information sharing session to enlighten staff about the various cancers that they need to be aware of. For this financial year the unit has been allocated an amount of R2.792 million.

Mr Speaker, a key aspect of the work of the Communication Services Unit during the previous year was communication linked to Output 12 of the outcomes based performance model. This included work done regarding media liaison, production of media adverts and events management services.

Key communication activities included assistance provided to the Presidency with the successful War on Poverty outreach programme that was held in the Siyancuma Municipality. The unit also played a key role in assisting the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture with the programmes for Commemorative Days. A highlight during the year under review was the successful hosting of the National Heritage day celebrations which was led by the Deputy President, Mr. Kgalema Motlanthe. The unit also played an instrumental role during the successful launch of the national 16 Days of Activism Campaign, which was attended by the Minister of Women, Disabilities and Children, Ms Lulu Xingwana.

In an effort to expedite follow-up and resolving queries received through the Presidential Hotline, the Communications Unit serves as an interface between the various Government Departments and Municipalities. The work done in relation to this has seen more queries being resolved effectively and resulted in a turnaround in the performance rate from 46% in January 2013 to 95% by January 2013, thereby placing us in third position compared to other Provinces.

During this financial year the unit will seek out unique and innovative ways to continue to

manage and promote programmes through communications and marketing campaigns, production of media and provision of media production services for the Office of the Premier, as well as the Northern Cape Provincial Government. The unit will also endeavour to promote development communication through direct interactive communication with Northern Cape communities and provide the public with access to information.

Also on the agenda for the unit will be to develop and implement the Northern Cape Provincial Government communication strategy, with the assistance of various departmental communicators, through the Cluster working process of government to ensure effective communication of common messages. For this work they have received an allocation of R3.842 million.

The Programme Support unit ensures an efficient and effective developmental provincial government through provision of management support to all units in the programme. One of the highlights of this unit was the coordination of the repositioning of the Public Service in the Northern Cape as a means of professionalizing the Public Service. This unit has a budget allocation of R3.097 million.

As a means of contributing towards continuous service delivery improvement, the Efficiency Services unit provided professional organisation development support by ensuring that Provincial Departments comply with the legislative framework on organizational design. As part of their provincial oversight function to ensure consistent application of job evaluation processes across all Departments, the unit performed quality assurance on behalf of eight departments and two public entities. They have a budget allocation of R4.545 million.

The Labour Relations Unit in the Office of the Premier is responsible for ensuring sound labour relations and industrial stability through effective dispute management, collective bargaining and support to Provincial Departments. They also played an integral role by facilitating and monitoring the Pension Redress Project for Public Service officials. Their allocation for this financial year is R3.462 million.

Mr Speaker, The Programme Policy and Governance Unit is responsible for strategically managing policies and strategies towards the achievement of sustainable growth and development, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the Government Programme of Action. Added to this responsibility is the management and co-ordination of Provincial Intergovernmental Relations, including the African Peer Review Mechanism, International

Relations and official development assistance and the maintenance of Protocol. Their budget is R2.176 million.

The Monitoring and Evaluation capability of the office will be greatly improved as work has begun on a province-wide nerve centre, which will be fully operational during the second quarter of this financial year. This will improve the collation of and quality of information received from local and Provincial Government departments relating to specific outcomes and outputs. An allocation to the tune of R11.945 million has thus been awarded to the Provincial Policy Management Unit.

The Nerve Centre will be a centralized data-sharing hub where all departments will upload the data under their control. The data will be shared with all other government departments. There is also a public view where non-sensitive data can be accessed by the general public.

The Nerve Centre will for the first time provide a common platform where government's performance can be measured. It is envisaged that the Nerve Centre will have a walk-in self-service facility where Members of the Executive Committee, Heads of Department and other managers can access reports through a simple touch-screen environment.

Mr Speaker, the Special Programmes Unit is responsible for coordinating the programmes of all sectors, be it Government, civil society or Business that are aimed at the restoration of the moral fibre of society. They also act as the Secretariat for the Moral Regeneration Movement and drive the programmes of Transformation or Batho Pele in the Province. The latter is Government's contribution towards the overall process of transformation and renewal in our country.

A highlight of the work undertaken by this sub-programme during the previous financial year was the launch of the Techno Girl programme. The Ministry of Women, Children and People with Disabilities adopted Techno Girl as a key government programme in terms of the Ministry's mandate to drive Government's Gender equity, equality and empowerment agenda. The programme is aimed at developing interest in the sectors of engineering and technology. Girls from especially historically disadvantaged backgrounds are encouraged to focus on subjects such as Maths and Science. Currently there are 59 companies participating in the programme, with Transnet having an intake of 1300 girls. In the Province there are 119 girls in the programme and the target for this year is 500. During the launch of the programme last year one of the learners, Boitumelo Olifant, said that she assisted Transnet with marshalling a train

and how to drive it. She also highlighted the importance of taking up Maths and Science. For this year the Special Programmes Unit has been given an allocation of R14.885 million.

Mr Speaker, given the fact that our budget has been reduced by a baseline of R10.255 million over the 2013/14 MTEF period; we had to do a thorough reprioritization exercise in terms of goods and services so as not to negatively affect policy priorities and core spending activities.

The Office of the Premier is determined to ensure that the machinery of state is geared towards serving the people in keeping with the vision of Batho Pele. This transformation of the state must also be matched with a corresponding change in society, including the private sector and other important institutions in civil society.

During the inauguration of President Jacob Zuma in 1999, he stated that everything we do must contribute in a direct and meaningful way to the improvement of the lives of our people.

He called upon us to make a commitment here and now, before the eyes of the world, and I quote, that:

“For as long as there are South Africans who die from preventable disease;
For as long as there are workers who struggle to feed their families;
For as long as there are communities without clean water, decent shelter or proper sanitation;
For as long as there are rural dwellers unable to make a decent living from the land on which they live;
For as long as there are women who are subjected to discrimination, exploitation or abuse;
For as long as there are children who do not have the means nor the opportunity to receive a decent education;
For as long as there are people who are unable to find work;
We shall not rest, and we dare not falter.

Let's get back to work to ensure that our people enjoy the fruits of freedom.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I now present to the House the Budget of the Office of the Premier for consideration and adoption.

I thank you