

**ADDRESS BY GAUTENG PREMIER PANYAZA LESUFI DURING THE STATE OF
THE PROVINCE ADDRESS, GAUTENG PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
JOHANNESBURG**

20 FEBRUARY 2023

Madame Speaker Ntombi Mekgwe;
Deputy Speaker Vuyo Mhlakaza-Manamela;
Chief Whip of the Governing Party Lesego Makhubela;
Members of the Executive Council;
Members of the Provincial Legislature and NCOP Delegates;
Executive Mayors of Gauteng Municipalities;
Provincial Leadership of SALGA Gauteng;
Leaders of Political Parties and Labour;
Former Premiers of Gauteng Province;
Esteemed Members of the Judiciary;
Members of the Diplomatic Community;
Provincial Commissioner and Heads of Law Enforcement Agencies;
The Auditor General of South Africa;
Chairperson of the Gauteng Ethics Advisory Committee, Dr Terrence Nombembe;
Chairperson of the Youth Advisory Panel Oagile Louw
Chairpersons of Chapter 9 Institutions;
Stalwarts and Veterans of the Liberation Struggle;
Captains of Industry and Trade Union Representatives;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen and
The residents of Gauteng:

Her name is Emma Sathekge.

She was a 15 year old student from Dr H Pete Secondary School, in Attridgeville
Pretoria.

On the 13th of February 1984, she joined other students at her school demanding quality education and a Free South Africa. What followed would go down in South Africa's history as one of the most, brutal and morally outrageous acts. A police vehicle drove over her tiny body and she later died at a nearby hospital.

This outrage pushed most of us into swelling the ranks of the student movements and the underground structures of our liberation movement. She died demanding a free and just South Africa.

Today; however, history is assigning us the task of not demanding but shaping a free South Africa into a society envisaged by Emma Sathekge and many generations before hers. Please join me in welcoming the family of Emma Sathekge as my special guests.

Emma Sathekge did not die in vain.

We are determined to bring to fruition what she and her generation sacrificed for.

She may be gone but she is certainly not forgotten.

Today, is almost 4 months since we took an oath to reposition our province of Gauteng. We committed and pleaded that our provincial growth and development strategy, **GROWING GAUTENG TOGETHER (GGT 2030)** will be supported with the following elevated commitments:

1. To accelerate Gauteng's economic recovery and reconstruction;
2. To declare crime, corruption, lawlessness and vandalism as the enemy that must be mercilessly defeated;
3. To drastically change the living conditions of our people in the 26 townships of our province, over 700 informal settlements and six provincially owned hostels;
4. We committed ourselves to strengthen the capacity of the state to deliver quality services to our people and. We further committed to improve and

capacitate government communications so that government can communicate better with its residents.

5. Improve Health and wellness of communities.

Madam Speaker,

FIGHTING CRIME, OUR APEX PRIORITY

If I had a choice, I would not deliver this State of the Province Address (SOPA), as our people have lost confidence in what we say. They think we talk too much and do less. My preference would have been to take you to different sites of Gauteng to showcase the work we have done. Let me assure you, we will talk less and do more. ***We are getting Gauteng back to work!***

Today, let's openly admit, our province is a home of heartless and merciless criminals. They do as they wish.

If this situation is left unattended it will be the end of all of us. Our situation is correctly captured by Kgothatso Madisha, a journalist from the Sunday Times when he wrote 'In our country we survive not because of protection from law enforcement but by grace of God and sheer luck of not crossing paths with gun totting criminals' He was responding to the completely unacceptable crime statistics of our country

So the issue of fighting crime should be our apex priority. We should unleash all our resources at our disposal to tackle crime. To this end, we are increasing our budget of fighting crime from R750million to multi-billion in the next three years.

- Starting from the 1st of April 2023, we will start to connect suburb, townships, business districts, schools and other public places with high tech, face and car recognition CCTVs.
- We will arm our residents with e-Panic buttons that will be linked to our law enforcement agencies, CCTVs and our new state of the art Integrated Command Centre

- We will unveil two new helicopters at the beginning of the next financial year and add four additional helicopters within the 2023/2024 budget cycle.
- The private security industry has pledged to add theirs as well to the pool of helicopters that will patrol our skies.
- To ensure that our police are not sacrificial lambs in the battles with criminals, we are at an advanced stage to procure 180 state of the art drones that will infiltrate areas that are difficult to patrol and police. These drones are equipped with technology that can capture the direction of a bullet and where they come from.
- We have procured 400 new police cars so that from the 1st of May, every ward in our communities will have a 24hr patrol car equipped with proper gadgets.
- Six-thousands (6000) young man and women have been recruited to monitor and police Gauteng 24/7, they will invade our streets from the 1st of May 2023.
- The almost ten thousands (10000) private security companies have agreed to combine their resources with ours under a joint command structure so that we can fight crime together in our province.

In order to strengthen our fight against crime, we need to revamp our legislation on three crucial areas:

- Registration of cars, because cars are a common denominator in violent crimes; either stolen or get away vehicles.
- Elimination of illegal guns and
- The need to migrate our Province to use less cash in business transactions

The current number plates system is running out of the numeric and letters. We want to take advantage of this situation to introduce new, hard to copy and tamper number plates.

As we speak, we have issued the Government Gazette on the 17th of February 2023 for consultation and comments on new security features. This new system will also assist in managing the abuse of temporary number plates. We call upon SADC to create a new database of all vehicles within the region so that we can have a common verification platform.

We have also issued strict instructions to our law enforcement agencies to pull off those who continue to drive cars without number plates or fraudulent temporary permits. The abuse of fake blue lights are in the increase. A special unit to eliminate this phenomenon is being assembled.

Those with illegal guns are now playing God. They decide who lives and who dies. Together with the private security industry, we have found a solution that will assist in tracking stolen guns and locate them wherever they are in our country. We will firstly migrate our law enforcement agencies guns in this system then members of the public.

To contribute to our desire to use less cash in business transactions in our province, we urge our retailers and other businesses to join the hospitality industry in eliminating cash transactions. If we all do so, we will see less, business robberies, cash heists and ATM bombings.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence is on the increase. We have allocated a specific fund to respond to GBV including strengthening green doors project and working with Ikhaya Lethemba.

“Operation Okae Molao” has had demonstrable results. The Minister has hailed this programme and has encouraged all other Provincial Commissioners to replicate our model in intensifying their provincial operations.

I want to thank the Provincial Police Commissioner, Lieutenant General Elias Mawela and his team. As a sign of appreciation, as the Gauteng Government we have donated 75 cars and mobile police stations to the police.

FIGHTING DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Our leader, the late **Oliver Reginald Tambo**, once said "**A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children doesn't deserve its future**".

Drugs are on the verge of wiping out an entire generation.

I want to take this opportunity to thank thousands of parents that called our drug fighting call centre and said, "please come and save my child". We have heard you. By next month, through our treatment and aftercare service, we will have reached out to over 75 000 young people who were using drugs. We are now expanding our farm in Cullinan at Dr Fabian & Florence Treatment Centre and other drug facilities with an additional 1 351 new beds.

Lehlohonolo Sekgobela (30) born in Parktown, Johannesburg says he carries an empty box of matches everyday as a reminder that he cannot go back to using drugs. He declares:

"I smoked dagga and drank alcohol back in my high school days, but the habit got worse when I was doing my first year at tertiary in 2009. I started trying ecstasy with my friends at res, we went on to smoke crystal meth, cocaine, cat, and rock; and it became an ongoing thing."

But mercy came to his rescue when he was admitted at one of our Treatment Centres. Sekgobela is now a member of the Intsikelelo Youth Development Foundation, an organisation that assist other fellow addicts to overcome drug addiction. He is also a committee member of the Local Drug Action Committee (LDAC) in Kwa-Thema. He is also in the House as a guest.

TOWNSHIP INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND HOSTELS

The freedom we fought for, will remain meaningless if our townships, informal settlements and hostels remain in squalor with sewerage flowing freely together with uncollected garbage.

The gap between our townships and suburbs is growing unabated. This gap must be closed and this SOPA is setting a firm foundation for that mission.

We will endeavour to convert our townships, informal settlements and hostels to be better and respectable.

IMPROVEMENT OF TOWNSHIPS

We are of the strong view that our townships are our new gold. With new malls and filling stations rapidly going up in our townships, we must ensure these investments benefit our people.

This house, unanimously adopted the **Township Economic Development Act**, a blue print on how we will support township businesses and fund them.

We want this act, the Township Economic Development Act to migrate from paper to practice.

As the Gauteng Provincial Government , we commit, as we do now.

As of 1 April, we will use 60% of the R34 billion goods and services budget to support township initiatives. We are establishing a digital database (township business register) of all businesses in townships.

We are told that the reasons our spaza shops are struggling is because they don't have a collective buying power.

We have now finalised a financing model to allow township businesses to have their own bulk buying mechanism through the establishment of township-based warehouses and distribution centres, such as the ones we already launched in Katlehong and Mamelodi.

We have also adopted a prototype for these retail shops (loosely known as Spaza shops) so that we can differentiate them from shops owned by foreign nationals. We are now firmly reclaiming our shops in the townships.

The township residential rental market or the “backroom economy” has been part of township economy since the beginning of time. We are upscaling the formalisation and upgrading of backroom properties.

We are empowering **aboMastandi** to be in the real estate industry.

I am pleased to announce that 2000 applications have been validated for funding for aboMastandi and 40 loans have been approved to the tune of R50 million, which has the potential to create employment. We want to ensure the timeous lodging of zoning applications and direct collaboration with municipalities on the delivery of this project of backyard dwellers.

With our Gauteng Broadband Network, we will provide reliable internet in the townships and make free WiFi available in strategic areas in our communities. We are bringing free WiFi in our communities

Honourable members, the taxi industry plays an important role in our township economy. Together with the taxi industry, we will continue to invest in this sector.

We have put together a taxi fund to the tune R20 million as a seed capital for the taxi association to raise money in the market.

Taxi ranks will be our future shopping stations. We will be launching taxi ranks of the future, a one stop shop, for taxi parts and tyres, banks, restaurants, and many other related businesses such as filling stations. A new model of taxi rank of the future will be unveiled. We are excited about this project.

All major sporting and government gatherings will now be held in our townships to support township economy. We are proud, after 11 years, this year's Gauteng Sports Awards were held in the township of Soshanguve and they were a major success. This initiative boosted lots of township business. We are now walking our talk.

INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

We must be the generation that should end informal settlements in our lifetime. We need to begin a process of managing, formalising and ending informal settlements. As part of ensuring that informal settlements don't escalate in our province, we are concluding the establishment of a 24-hour anti-land invasion tactical unit. This unit will be fully equipped and backed by legal brains to stop the lawlessness of invading other people's land easily.

Madam speaker, we are intervening in 731 informal settlements in our Province. Of this, we have mapped and enumerated 639 and we are upgrading 179 informal settlements at a budget of R3.1 billion.

Today we have released 482 number of service stands. This is our new way of speeding the building of houses in our communities. This means instead of people waiting for a RDP house we will release fully serviced stands with roads, water and electricity.

HOSTELS

I want to start by apologising to our hostel residents for the total neglect of hostels in our province. I grew up at Block 4 Sethokga, Hostel, Tembisa with my late uncle. Hostels used to be beautiful and friendly.

On the 13th of December 2022 we met with the Izinduna to share and consult with them on our plans regarding the improvements of hostels.

As government we own 6 hostels in Gauteng, namely: George Goch; Denver; Jeppe; MBA; Murray and Roberts; LTA Rethabile.

We are converting hostels into liveable spaces and we are rolling out the services to them as well.

Already, all the 6 hostels under our care have been installed with free WiFi and data. We've appointed service providers who will clean these hostels frequently.

We are repairing all broken windows, roofs, toilets, doors etc in these hostels.

- We will install showers, toilets, reconnect electricity, collect refuse frequently with cleaning services by personnel from the Gauteng Government;
- From the 1st April all the 6 hostels will have weekly mobile health clinics with doctors and nurses;
- We will introduce new Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in the hostels and provide women living in hostels with privacy and support;
- All the six hostels will have CCTV cameras to manage crime as well as a 24-hour patrol to ensure that our hostels are safe.

Lomsebenzi esiwenzayo sisebenzisana neziinduna, kanye nomphakathi.

HOMELESSNESS

With slow growth in the economy and the negative effects of COVID-19 pandemic, the number of homeless people in our cities has increased drastically. To mitigate urban hunger, we have introduced a draft policy to manage this matter with our local municipalities.

We have a system in place to support and care for the homeless. To date, we have relocated almost 3 000 homeless people and we are giving them meals, medical support, clothing and shelter. We are putting systems to prepare to give them support during the coming winter season.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Non-Government Sector received more than R2 billion from the provincial government. With this amount of funding, we should be impactful in the fight against social ills. However, this sector, not all of it, is riddled with squabbles and accounting irregularities. We are now appointing an independent audit team to audit all our Non-government organisations (NGOs) and redirect them to the new mandate of our provincial government. Our mandate is simple, care for the elderly, the vulnerable and the poor.

To mitigate urban hunger, we have set aside R64 460 million for food parcels, especially for people in poverty stricken communities.

In the current financial year, Gauteng has contributed R26 million for dignity packs programme. Our dignity packs includes a bar of soap, toothpaste, deodorant, body lotion, toilet roll, sanitary towel, facecloth, and toothbrush. We truly care for our weak and vulnerable society

EDUCATION

Honourable members, our province continues to provide quality education for our children. Education is critical for economic development and improving the socio-economic conditions of our people.

Madame Speaker, Honourable Members, please join me in congratulating the 2022 Matric Class for the sterling work they did in achieving a pass rate of 84.4%: which simply means that out of every ten (10) learners that wrote matric in Gauteng, eight (8) passed. Of the eight (8), six (6) passed with a Bachelor pass. We are contributing

43 298 distinctions to the national education system, of these 20 769 come from township schools. This is a monumental achievement!

In the 2023 academic year, 4000 young people have received bursaries to the value of R360 million outside NSFAS. We are the only province which invests this amount of money in education and youth development.

As an honour and an investment in our youth, every learner that obtained number 1, 2 and 3 in every township high school, will receive a 3 year bursary at a university of their choice. This is a whopping R360m investment. On top of that, these learners will also receive a laptop to make their studies easier.

A great achievement to note is the progress made by Gauteng in closing the gap between former model C and township schools pass rate from 12% to 9%.

Today, here, I have invited students that received total marks, that is 100% pass in Maths, Business Economics and Economics, and out of a total of those learners, 24 comes from township schools.

I am honoured that today they are my guests. May I ask the house to join me in congratulating these super achievers.

We do not want to sit on our laurels. So, we are now benchmarking Gauteng against international countries by participating in international examinations such as Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS), where we are ranked 11th and Singapore being number one worldwide.

Madam Speaker, our education system is overcrowded which is exacerbated by high levels of in-migration. Unless we do something differently, our education system will collapse.

Addressing this issue and learning from the experience of unplaced learners in Grades 1 and 8, Gauteng has budgeted R6 billion from our provincial coffers to build new schools in high pressured communities.

We have received a major boost of R1.5 billion from National Treasury to finally demolish mobile and asbestos schools. We will rebuild 18 new schools in Gauteng.

Mindful of the fiscal constraint, we welcome this support from National Government as led President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa.

In this regard, I would like the house to note that, for the first time we will access resources from private sector financial institutions to fund infrastructure projects upfront, after which they will be built, maintained and transferred handed over to us.

Within the coming weeks, we are going to the market to solicit proposals from private companies to build these schools. We will not compromise on BEE and Township beneficiation.

To give our learners a competitive edge and to prepare them for the post-matric world, we will continue to roll out Schools of Specialisation. To date we have 21 Schools of Specialization and by the end of this administration, we would have 35 of these schools. I want us to congratulate Mr Mashiane, principal of Soshanguve Engineering School of Specialisation with focus on automotives.

He and his students were honoured for Visionary Clean Tech Student Award in Abu Dhabi. Mr Mashiane, representing his school, will be going to the Students for Advancement Global Entrepreneurship World Cup 2023, in California USA.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

We are pleased that the number of children registered in our ECD sites has increased. As part of the process to bolster our education system, we are now ready to build an ECD of the future, starting with Tshwane (in Soshanguve). We are committed to rolling out ECDs of the future across the 5 corridors.

The ECD of the future will have classrooms with indoor splash pools, ICT centres, a water recycling area and mini sports areas. Coding and Robotics will gradually be introduced into the curriculum to meet the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Honourable members, young people constitute 39% (5 million) of the total population in Gauteng. About 2,3 million of these young people could be classified as not in education, employment and training.

Therefore, as a province, we continue to place youth development at the centre of our planning. I am happy to announce that the Provincial Cabinet, has approved the Gauteng Integrated Youth Development Strategy (GYIDS) 2030.

Honourable Members; The Youth Strategy is a blueprint of how this government will respond comprehensively to the socio-economic challenges facing young people in our province.

In addressing the youth challenge, the Gauteng government has, over the years, committed to procure goods and services from youth owned businesses. Between April and December 2022, procurement spend amounted to R1.6 billion in youth owned companies.

The future belongs to young people and they must be taught now how to run government.

The Gauteng Youth Advisory Panel members, in addition to providing oversight, have also been assigned to departments to participate in strategic decision-making processes that have an impact on youth development.

I want to thank the members of the panel, in particular the co-chairperson, Oagile Louw, for their diligence, in this regard.

Through the Presidential Youth Employment Stimulus programme, the province has provided more than 100 000 youth with workplace experiences.

By the end of this term, 152 000 young people would be employed by this provincial government. Of this: 100 000 for our Expanded Public Works Programme, 40 000 educational and general teacher assistance and 6000 Crime Prevention Wardens.

Madam Speaker; Women bear the brunt of poverty. They are pillars of families in society. We continue to pay attention to women empowerment and gender equality. We are the only province that has integrated gender responsive budgeting. I am happy to report that the budget allocation towards women empowerment in this financial year runs into the billions of Rands.

Through the LGBTIQA + (**LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, INTERSEX, QUEER/QUESTIONING, ASEXUAL**) Desk located in the Office of the Premier, we will continue to strengthen efforts to mainstream issues of this community.

Over the years we have committed to ensuring the inclusion of people of disabilities in all of our programmes. We have set a target of 7% in the procurement spend and support for companies owned by people with disabilities. We note that our performance is not at the level at which we had envisioned and therefore, recommit ourselves to meet empowerment of people with disability.

ROADS AND TRANSPORT

Residents of Gauteng; we are pleased to report that e-Tolls have been scrapped. Together with the Ministries of Finance and Transport, we will make a joint announcement in this regards. Together with national government we are on the verge of agreeing on all matters that will finally allow us to gazette switching off the gantries. Matters related to debt repayment and the money collected from paying customers and as well as funds not collected from non-paying customers.

As the generation that grew up in the dusty streets of our townships, we cannot let our next generation choke on the same unpaved streets due to continued failure of Government to catalyze development.

Over the past few months, we have engaged with municipalities and all, with the exception of Tshwane and Joburg, have agreed to partner with through a Memorandum of Understanding. Now we are now taking over the leading role in making sure that tarring dusty streets in our townships is a priority.

I am pleased to announce that the Naledi-to-Park Station, Mabopane- and Saulsville-to-Pretoria train lines are back in operation. We are working with PRASA to speed up the opening of the additional lines, such as the Vereniging and the Germiston train lines.

We are also in discussions with the Limpopo Provincial Government to formally start a process to link Gauteng and Limpopo through a new faster and efficient rail network.

SPORTS, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION

Sports play a critical role in economic development. Gauteng is blessed with abundant artistic and athletic talent; thus, our approach is to use sport and the arts as a vehicle for economic empowerment and transformation.

We are now starting sports development at ECD centres not only at primary schools. As part of our investment in future school sports, all our ECD centres will have a dedicated Sports Wednesday.

As part of our investment in sports, we are going to upgrade desolated dusty, run-down sporting fields in the townships. We are taking a firm stand to roll out artificial pitches in all frequently used township grounds.

We have initiated a process to build a soccer museum within the FNB precinct which will be used to archive and curate the rich history of soccer in our province, and in the country as a whole.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The public health system in Gauteng is the largest and most significant in South Africa. It occupies a strategic role in providing health care, training and research in the Southern African region.

We strongly believe that the challenges of distribution of medication, queue management, file management and medico legal will be minimised if we invest in the digitisation of our health facilities.

We are decongesting the flow of traffic in our healthcare facilities through the Central Chronic Medicine Dispense and Distribution (CCMDD) programme, which allows the distribution of medication close to patients' homes. We have registered over a million people for the dispensing and distribution of medication.

We are fast-tracking the application with National Treasury to give us our health infrastructure budget in advance so that we can rehabilitate and build new hospitals in Gauteng especially in Olievenhoutbosch, Diepsloot, Daveyton, Orange Farm and other townships in our province

We are aware of the seriousness of the recent measles outbreak, and our systems are in place to respond to this emergency.

Healthcare facilities in townships must be the preferred healthcare centres for our people. Mamelodi Regional Hospital is an example of how we are changing the face of public health from the worst performing facility to a world class facility.

In the new financial year, we would have completed and operationalized six new clinics that will finally bring much-needed services to the people of Hammanskraal, Daveyton, Soshanguve and Sebokeng.

STATE CAPACITY

In recognising that we have the largest health care system on the continent, we are now moving with urgency to establish a State-owned Pharmaceutical Company. We have completed the baseline study and it strongly supports the establishment of a Pharmaceutical Company. This will ensure no hospital and clinic in our province will run out of medication.

We have also mandated the Provincial Treasury to lead the implementation of the State-Owned Developmental Bank. We clearly spelt out the role linked to the historic market failure that we seek to address, especially the glaring neglect of our townships by the existing financial institutions.

We are pleased to report back that the legal due diligence exercise has been completed. We are now entering a new phase of broader and wider consultation on the appropriate and most feasible model to execute this very important transformative task.

The State Security Agency (SSA) was authorised to conduct lifestyle audits on the Premier and all Members of the Executive Council (MECs). No conflict of interest was found. The new MECs will undergo a similar process to ensure that we conclude on this matter.

In addition, we are subjecting our public servants to lifestyle audits. This next phase involves the Director General, Heads of Department, Chief Executive Officers of GPG entities and officials in high-risk areas like Supply Chain Management and Finance.

We remain committed to releasing the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) reports and will continue to implement the recommendations of the final investigations reports. We have put measures in place to address the identified weak internal controls and refer matters to the Special Tribunal to assist with the recovery of funds lost to the

State. On the 13 of December 2022 we released three SIU reports, which are Tembisa Hospital, Anglo Ashanti and Driving Licence Testing Centres (DLTCs).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Madam Speaker, collectively, all local government municipalities in Gauteng owe Eskom R8.6 billion. Of this, R6 billion is owed by Emfuleni Municipality alone. We must intervene to assist Emfuleni, a municipality that has a great potential.

Recently, we led a delegation to meet with the officials and stakeholders of Emfuleni, and Eskom management. Working together with the municipality, we are developing tangible programmes to assist this municipality with its challenges by appointing a capable Municipal Manager and Chief Financial Officer.

The other municipality that is worrying us is Tshwane, which has deteriorated, is struggling to pay Eskom and the latest Auditor General report has painted a bleak picture of a collapsing municipality. We will intervene in that municipality as a matter of urgency.

Let me take this opportunity to bid farewell to the Mayor of Tshwane whom I never had the opportunity to meet.

Last Friday, I did a site visit to Khutsong which galvanised our resolve to ensure the wellbeing of our residents. On this walk about, led by the Mayor and Councillors, we were accompanied by interested parties and representatives of the scientific team from the African Centre for Disaster Studies.

This scientific team is assisting the province to immediately find a workable solution to prevent loss of lives and ensure food security and the wellbeing of our residents.

If we do not act, this community will be swallowed by sink holes. I want to take this opportunity to thank Mzamo Bogatsu, a young man who risked his life to save an old man from the sinkhole at Ward 8, Khutsong. Mzamo is our guest this evening.

Every day, we are inundated with emergency calls as houses are collapsing. We have now reached a stage where we have to declare a state of disaster in this municipality. The Minister is preparing the necessary paperwork for the declaration, but in the interim, we are providing the following solutions:

- Establishing a permanent Emergency Disaster Site;
- Early detection of sink holes;
- Provision of psychosocial support to effected families;
- Running a public campaign about dangers of sink holes and
- Urging communities in dangerous areas to migrate within reasonable time to areas made available.

The Vaal River/Dam disaster is receiving our immediate attention as well. We will continue to assist our residents in that area.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Honourable members, Climate change is here to stay. The air quality in the region continues to deteriorate. The water quality and now quantity is on a decline. This places vulnerable sectors more at risk. As government we are making efforts to mitigate against the factors which contribute to climate change. Among other efforts in combating climate change, we are investing in green technology and planting trees.

We've now entered an era of disasters. We have to be ready as the provincial government.

For the reasons above, we are establishing a combat ready Disaster Management Centre with state-of-the-art disaster management equipment. It will also house helicopters, drones, and highly skilled personnel that can respond within the shortest possible time. Areas prone to disasters such as, Jukskei River in Alexandra Township will receive additional support to relocate within the shortest possible time when the disaster centre is in full force.

ENERGY

However, the energy crisis remains one of the biggest challenges to our accelerated economic recovery. We welcome the declaration of the National State of Disaster by President Cyril Ramaphosa during his SONA.

Gauteng Province electricity deficit is focused at 4058 mega volt-ampermps (**MVA**) in 2025 this is slightly to be highly given Eskom inability to generate more from its current fleet.

As Gauteng, we have been working on finding solutions to the energy crisis. We have established an energy crisis response team that engages with the National Energy Committee and working with local government and energy experts.

We acted with urgency and convened the inaugural energy solutions EXPO to solicit views on what exists in the market with the idea of creating partnerships to assist in finding lasting solutions.

We were pleased with the overwhelming response from the industry experts who provided much-needed knowledge on what we can do in the immediate, and medium, to long term. Commercial banks, Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) and other funding institutions are eager to partner with us to respond to this challenge

To set the ball rolling, as the Gauteng Provincial Government we are releasing R1.2 billion towards resolving the energy crisis in Gauteng.

In few weeks, we will appoint 6 developers who will commence the construction of a 800 megawatts solar farm in Merafong.

This will be followed by the installation of roof top solar panels in government buildings especially hospitals, clinics and schools

We will engage with Johannesburg Municipality's City Power as well as Tshwane's Rooiwal facility with an intention of supporting them to expand and generate more power

We will meet with owners of Kelvin Power Station to establish how we can partner with them to limit loadshedding in Gauteng.

From next week, we will advertise a call for proposals for alternative suppliers of energy that can contribute to solution of the energy crisis and the reindustrialization of Gauteng.

We have learnt from the procurement of PPEs. We will work with the Gauteng Ethics Advisory Committee and the Auditor General to ensure that the processes are transparent, fair and equitable.

Honourable Members, from the 1st of April, we will also invest in roof-top solar panels in health facilities, schools and libraries to ensure they have energy and can provide much-needed services to our communities.

Together with municipalities, we will roll out smart metering. We will ensure that, through this process, our young people will be trained, skilled and equipped in the energy space.

GAUTENG PROVINCIAL TREASURY

We have been inundated with concerns about unpaid invoices that could not be paid or were disputed, impacting negatively on our financial performance, thus leading to a huge infrastructure under expenditure.

Within this context, we will establish a newly fully fledged invoicing dispute resolutions unit that will serve as an ombuds for disputed invoices. This unit will be obliged to resolve disputed invoices with 7 working days unless the matter is with other agencies of the state or it involves acts of corruption.

To this end, we will establish a Procurement Plan Analysis Unit to combat unspent infrastructure budget and avoid rushing projects that are not ready for implementation.

We are proud of the following departments which are now paying service providers within 15 days instead of the traditional 30 days:

- Treasury;
- E-Gov;
- Human Settlements.

We are proud as Gauteng that 12 out of 14 departments have been paying service providers within 30 days.

We've started implementing stringent consequence management for failure to pay service providers within 30 days.

CONCLUSION

As I conclude. Our people are not difficult.

They are just asking all of us gathered here, to do one thing, and one thing only, to do our work! To do our work within budget, time without misusing public funds.

If we do our work, there will be no need for our residents to pay for private medical aids, they will use the public health system.

If we do our work, there will be no need for residents to pay their hard-earned money for private education, they will use the public education system

If we do our work as government, there will be no need for our people to pay for their own CCTVs, Alarms, Burglar doors, private security guards, etc because the police will be policing our communities.

If we do our work, they will no need to worry about the cost of fuel, as we will have a dependable public transport.

If we do our work, our people would not to have pay for generators, solar panels, inverters because there will be no load-shedding.

As long as all of us gathered here, honourable members, are not using public schools, it means we are not doing our work.

As long as all of us gathered here, Honourable Members, are not using public hospitals, it means we are not doing our work.

As long as all of us gathered here, Honourable Members, are not using public transports, it basically means, we are not doing our work.

Honourable Members, lets go and do our work! Gauteng, let's go to work!

I thank you!