

SOPA Debate
MEC Mac Jack
Northern Cape Provincial Legislature
Tuesday, 9 July 2019

Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Provincial
Legislature;

Premier Dr. Zamani Saul;

Members of the Executive Council;

Members from the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature;

Traditional Leaders;

Director General, Heads of Department and Leaders of
Public Service;

Political parties present;

Members of the media;

As we enter a new era of hope to further improve the
basic living conditions and lives of all our people, we
draw inspiration, courage and determination from a
rastafarian of note, Jimmy Cliff, who once sang a song,
“Remake the World”, and I quote:

“Too many people are suffering,
Too many people are sad,
Too little people, got everything,
While too many people got nothing”.

As I thought about that song, we need to mobilise the Northern Cape community behind the vision of a Modern, Growing and Successful Northern Cape Province.

Over the past 25 years of democracy, concerted efforts were made to address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the Province. Today, we look back full of pride because of what the ANC, its allies and the people of this country have achieved.

Although much has been achieved, we could have moved faster and the quality of services could have been much better. Many of our people are still longing for their own home, a decent work opportunity, good health services, quality public education system, safer communities and many more.

The Freedom Charter remains our inspiration and our strategic guide to realising a better life and a South Africa that truly belongs to all who live in it.

The Freedom Charter is the living soul of our country's progressive Constitution and is the foundation of Vision 2030 of the National Development Plan (NDP).

Everything we are doing is in pursuance of the vision of the NDP to address the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. The responsibility weighs upon on all of us as the struggle for radical socio-economic transformation still continues.

The Premier outlined the plan of action for the Northern Cape Provincial Government during his maiden State of the Province Address aligned to his vision of a modern, growing successful Province. This is amongst others, exactly what is going to be the mandate of the 6th administration, in particular the education sector.

Honourable Speaker

During the presentation of the State of the Province Address the Honourable Premier gave a comprehensive account on progress made on our shared commitments made by a caring ANC led government in the betterment of the lives of our beloved people and in the path to alter the socio-economic and environmental challenges facing their existence.

We all know that at the heart of this progressive government is to construct a better future by decisively dealing with structural unemployment, abject poverty and growing inequalities hence the creation of decent work remains a major priority for this Government.

In order to improve the basic living conditions of our people, it requires the Provincial Government to create enabling environment for economic development and job creation to reduce the level of poverty amongst our people.

Honourable Speaker

Our economy has not been fundamentally transformed to serve all people. Unemployment remains high, particularly amongst the youth. Gender based violence has reached crisis proportions and drugs, violent crimes and gangsterism are wreaking havoc in many schools and communities.

The public and private sector must take concrete steps to bridge the gap between skills and labour market, including the implementation of internship programme specifically for young men and women. It is in this light that we welcome the announcement by the Premier Dr. Zamani Saul for the intake of 400 young people that will commenced their training at the TVET College yesterday.

We must further drive innovation and the digital revolution, increase levels of investment in the economy, accelerate the provision of infrastructure to support the economy and meet basic needs.

The development of a Provincial Integrated Broadband Strategy and Implementation Plan is in line with the objective to improve access through the provisioning of an infrastructure network especially in our rural areas, to improve service delivery and operations through e-innovation. This will allow greater access to information, modernise the way we work and deliver services to our people.

Honourable Speaker

The last 25 years have seen many achievements in education, from the creation of a single non-racial education system to the accomplishment of almost universal enrolment in the early years of school. The focus has now shifted towards the quality of education while improving access.

Education and health remains our apex priorities for the 6th administration to radically improve access and the quality. The 4th Industrial Revolution is upon us, and modernisation and innovation is critical in the public service.

The integration of ICT and digital equipment becomes therefore imperative in the public, specifically in health and education the further improve the quality and access to these services.

We live in a modern world, where technology impacts on our life, work and how we do things. Access to ICT at home, work and at our schools means that Education can truly become a life-long activity.

The Department of Education embraces the vision of the Premier as we are working towards a modern, growing and successful Province. Therefore we have procured state of the art technology and software to enhance the teaching methodology for Mathematics and Physical Science, specifically in Grades 9 to 12.

In 2020, we will introduce coding as a subject in the Foundation phase. Teachers will be trained in the foundation phase to implement this computer related program.

We are excited about this new program as it will stimulate critical thinking and problem solving amongst learners. We understand that learning is flexible and can take various forms such as formal learning, informal training, or self-directed learning. In its pursuit of creating opportunities for learners to strive for knowledge and achievement in new competencies, the NCDoE has identified Multi-Purpose Interactive Learning Laboratories as a vehicle to boost youth development by providing exposure to a multitude of virtual disciplines through 3D-modeling, simulations, reality and interactive charts.

An investment into these laboratories will undoubtedly improve productivity and learning outcomes – in particular personalisation and adaptive techniques. As a hub of technology to support teaching and learning these laboratories will combine innovative technology with innovation in policy and practice and has the potential to deliver transformative and sustainable impact on teacher development and learner performance.

We regard early enrolment of learners as a priority for the start of a successful academic year. Over the years, the start of a new school academic year has become synonymous with parents queuing at District office, seeking placement for the children.

As from next year, we will also be introducing for the very first time, an online admission system. For the past 2 years we have been administering the admissions electronically to pilot the system. This new system will enable parents to enrol their children from the comfort of their home.

The Northern Cape is a rural province, and therefore we will have dedicated centres in each District to assist parents applying online, especially those who does not have access to the internet. In return, the online admission system will further assist the Department to speed the placement of learners where school spaces do exist.

The migration of Early Childhood Development (ECD) from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Education, including the process introducing 2 years compulsory ECD before all children can enter Grade 1, is well underway.

On a national level the consultation processes has commenced to ensure that all systems are in place for a smooth transition and aligning all programmes in ECD centres with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF).

We have prioritised the youth of the Northern Cape and assistance will be provided in the form of a R36million Premier's Bursary Trust Fund, a 3 year internship and apprenticeship programme, a R7million youth skills development project to empower young women and men.

We are further unlocking the energy and creativity of our young people, by building their skills and capabilities, which is critical to the eradication of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Education is the singular most important investment any government can make and plays a significant role to design your future as a successful person in life and a responsible citizen in society.

A gift of knowledge cannot be stolen and can bring you to the top of your dreams. The greatest treasure that one can achieve is Education.

Before I conclude Honourable Premier, allow me to reflect that, we have 135 schools offering Grade 12 in our Province, of which 69 schools perform below 70%, 12 schools below 50% and 1 school below 40%. In order to turnaround the situation in these schools, we have decided to adopt these schools, and the school performing below 40% will be allocated to Premier Dr. Zamani Saul, as per his request during the State of the Province Address. The schools that are classified as underperforming schools are as follow:

- Below 40% -Valspan High School in Jan Kempdorp
- Frances Baard, below 50% - 4 schools

- JTG, below 50% - 3 schools
- Pixley Ka Seme, below 50% - 3 schools
- ZF Mgcawu, below 50% - 2 schools

In conclusion, we are under no illusions of the difficulties and obstacles we will encounter along the road towards a better future for all.

We firmly believe that the coherent and achievable plan as set out by Premier Dr. Zamani Saul is in accord with the needs and aspirations of the people from the Northern Cape.

As I conclude, allow me to quote Dr. Zamani Saul during his maiden SOPA address, *“The 6th Administration is committed to building a new integrated service delivery and governance system.*

A system that will be people centred, with the sole purpose of creating a better life for all, whilst prioritising the poor and vulnerable people of our Province.

A public service that focuses on capitalising every opportunity, that enables and allows our people to realise their full human potential and restore their human dignity.

A Public Service that is concerned about the delivery of services where and when the communities need them most, underpinned by the ethos of Batho Pele.

A Public Service that understands and is passionate about its role as the bridge between the prevailing material conditions of the people and the better life that they desire.

Our ultimate goal as an activist 6th Administration is thus to ensure the delivery of the right quality, right quantity and timely public services and interventions that will bring about positive change in the material conditions of the poor and vulnerable citizens of the Northern Cape. Nothing less is and will be acceptable”.

Jimmy Cliff, “Remake the World” song further highlights the following and I quote:

“Remake the world, with love and happiness,
People, put your conscience to the test,
We got to prove that we the best,
Wipe strife and poverty,
Get racism from you sight,
Remake the world,
Be you black or be you white”.

Remaking the world starts with the farm, village, small town, city, Province of the Northern Cape, country and the continent.

Indeed we will remake the world by remaking the Northern Cape.

Let us recommit ourselves in spirit and deed towards a modern, growing and successful Northern Cape Province.

I thank you!