

# THE STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS BY PREMIER DAVID MAKHURA

**23 February 2021**

Madame Speaker, Honourable Lentheng Ntombi Mekgwe;  
Deputy Speaker, Honourable Nomvuyo Mhlakaza-Manamela;  
Chief Whip of the Governing Party, Honourable Mzikayifane Khumalo  
Members of the Executive Council;  
Presiding Officers of the House;  
Leaders of Political Parties represented in the Legislature;  
Honourable Members of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature;  
Executive Mayors and Speakers of Local Government;  
Director-General, Heads of Department and Government Agencies;  
Compatriots and fellow residents of Gauteng:

On behalf of Team Gauteng, I am immensely grateful to be given this opportunity to deliver the 2021 State of the Province Address before this august House.

Once again, I would like to say it is an honour to serve the people of our beautiful province as we sail through the many storms that life will throw away.

This year's address takes place at extra-ordinary times. These are profoundly difficult times circumstances when humanity has been going through and is emerging from the storm of a deadly pandemic with risks of existential proportions.

In his book titled "*Kafka on the Shore*", Japanese writer, Haruki Murakami opines:

"Once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about."

The rapid outbreak and wide reach of the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted people's lives, institutions and economies in a way not seen since the 1918-19 influenza pandemic and 1929 Great Depression.

The scientists and ecologists of our generation are warning that pandemics and climate-induced natural disasters are likely to be a more frequent feature of our times, constantly causing major disruptions and further destruction of lives and livelihoods.

In other words, we need to stop thinking that we will return to the old ways of doing things. We have to build pandemic-proof and disaster-ready institutions and systems as we embrace "the new normal".

Through this speech, I will give feedback about how we managed and performed in 2020 and will further outline the priorities of 2021.

Essentially, we have adapted the whole of government in the Gauteng City region to focus on **four priorities** this year:

**Firstly**, winning the battle **against the COVID-19 pandemic** and building resilient institutional and societal capacity to deal effectively with any future pandemics and disasters in the Gauteng City Region.

**Secondly, re-igniting the Gauteng economy** to take a lead in South Africa's economic reconstruction and recovery plan as well as Africa's industrialisation agenda.

**Thirdly, recalibrating social policy** to improve educational and health outcomes, fight crime and protect the most vulnerable sections of the population against urban poverty and hunger.

**Lastly, improving governance** across the Gauteng City Region to focus on delivering results and improving the quality of life of residents as well as enhancing ethics, integrity and accountability.

Madame Speaker, allow me to now outline, more comprehensively, the work we have done in 2020 and the specific actions we will take during this year to push progress and results in each of the four priority areas.

### **The battle to overcome COVID-19 in the Gauteng City Region**

Let us start by commending our President Cyril Ramaphosa, and the national government for leading the battle against COVID-19 very well over a protracted period of eleven months.

It has not been an easy process and many mistakes may have been committed but the determination to save lives and protect livelihoods is beyond question.

We must thank our President and the National Executive for leading our country well through the storm. We begin to see some glimmer of hope as we enter a new phase of vaccination.

Since March 2020, we have been through an emotional roller-coaster of pain, panic, anxiety, anger and anguish. Many lives have been lost and livelihoods destroyed.

In Gauteng alone, over four hundred thousand people have contracted the coronavirus and most painfully, almost ten thousand have succumbed to COVID-19.

Half-a-million jobs have been lost and 42% of small businesses were forced to close with no prospect of ever re-opening.

Those who contracted coronavirus can attest that, contrary to the views of denialists and conspiracy theorists, COVID-19 is no ordinary flu. It is a painful and deadly disease. It does kill!

Talking about the number of people who contracted coronavirus and subsequently died of COVID-19 is not just for statistical or epidemiological purposes. This is not an exercise in academic pontification.

This is a recount of profound loss. Many relatives, friends, colleagues and fellow compatriots have died as we sailed through the storm to try and get to the safer shores.

It is important to pause and talk about the pain inflicted by the pandemic if we are to heal the deep wounds and rekindle our wounded dreams. Acknowledging pain is not to signal fatigue or accept defeat. This, simply, is to underscore the human cost of the war against the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Murakami cautions us, survival does not mean we will ever be the same. We are wounded but not defeated. And we shall bounce back!

We must be very grateful to the heroic healthcare workers who faced this vicious virus and ferocious pandemic with tremendous courage and resolve to save lives.

We commend thousands of essential workers such as the police, security officers, public servants, the military, agricultural workers, energy workers and workers in retail shops who kept the country going under difficult conditions of lockdown.

Madame Speaker, please allow me to request the Honourable Members of our Legislature to rise in honour of healthcare workers of our province, our country, our continent, and the world at large! Thank you, thank you and thank you for saving lives! We salute!

We must make it clear that coronavirus is still around and the third wave is a real possibility as we approach Winter.

However, we must also say that without equivocation that vaccines constitute the decisive weapon against pandemics. The vaccination plan has to be rolled out urgently and massively to save lives and enabled the economy to recover fully.

We have come a long way in building a credible response and there is no time for complacency and cynicism. We need to put our country, our province and the people above any petty professional rivalries and political squabbles.

Honourable members, I would like to share with you some of the objective conclusions on the strengths and weaknesses as well as the lessons from our response to COVID-19:

- The province has established innovative, agile, and adaptive governance structures which ensured that there is a coordinated response to COVID-19 from national, provincial to local government level. Provincial and local government are now working together in a way never seen before, bringing us closer to the ideal governance model of a City Region.
- The work of the Gauteng Provincial Coronavirus Command Council and workstreams is informed by scientific advice, with an emphasis on data-driven and evidence-based decision-making. As policy makers, we understood the specific trajectory of the pandemic in our province and further enhanced our COVID-19 response in dealing with hotspots and in communicating key messages to the public.
- Coordination and collaboration with various sectors, departments and agencies helped a great deal when the pressure was high during the peak of the first and second waves. Close interactions and collective interventions with trade unions, business, the faith-based sector, civil society and the ward-based war rooms also helped to raise awareness in hotspots and ensure compliance; and address teething problems of PPE supply.
- We have expanded the capacity of the public healthcare system with **4265 new functional beds** and **4992 posts** created and filled between April 2020 and January 2021. Another 1425 beds are in the final stages of being made functional and operational with additional staffing from the start of the new financial year. This is a significant long term investment that will outlive the COVID-19 pandemic. What is important is to improve patient care, clinical outcomes, meet the ideal clinic standards and prepare the health care system for the NHI.

- The corruption allegations and irregularities pertaining to COVID-19 procurement and delays in the delivery of some of the health infrastructure revealed substantial governance weaknesses. Above all, the irregular and corrupt practices exposed by the Auditor General and the Special Investigating Unit constitute a serious dent in the progress we made in the past five years on clean governance and integrity. We must and we will set an example with all those involved in malfeasance, both in the public and private sector. They must be brought to book and all monies must be recovered by the state.

The Gauteng City Region's Response to COVID-19 has been objectively reviewed by several credible institutions such as the United Nations Development Programme, the Government Technical Advisory Committee of National Treasury, Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation and the Gauteng City Region Observatory.

Objective and balanced assessments of the performance of our country and government in response to COVID-19 are necessary to draw lessons in strengthening cooperative governance, evidence-based decision making and social compacting as well as good governance. Furthermore, these lessons will better prepare us for future pandemics and disasters.

One of the lessons we have learnt is that without social mobilisation and society-wide support, it will be difficult to win the battle against pandemics. Security forces and law enforcement agencies alone cannot enforce regulations and measures. It is only when communities adhere to the health protocols and avoid crowded places, closed spaces, and close contacts that we will contain the spread of the virus. When we become complacent and abandon health protocols, the risk of an increase in new infections becomes higher.

We are grateful to the members of the Premier's Advisory Committee on COVID-19 for providing data and timeously tracking the dynamics of the pandemic in Gauteng, which underpinned a science-driven and evidence-based approach to the battle against COVID-19.

We are very proud of the Gauteng-based universities and academic hospitals which have world-class researchers and clinicians who have been giving cutting edge leadership and breaking new ground about the global response to the novel coronavirus and the COVID-19 pandemic. South Africa's response to COVID-19 has demonstrated that our country has enormous scientific and industrial capabilities. We salute you all!

Last week, we entered a promising and positive frontier in the battle against coronavirus, with the rollout of the vaccination programme. We intend to vaccinate 67% (10.4 million people) of Gauteng's population. We call on the people of our province to get ready to vaccinate in large numbers. Vaccines save lives.

The administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine as part of the Phase 3B implementation study has enabled us to provide healthcare workers with the much-needed protection while we wait for more vaccines to be available for our vaccination campaign. This study is led by the South African Medical Research Council in two health facilities namely - Chris Hani Baragwanath and Steve Biko Academic Hospitals.

Gauteng has received 16 800 doses for the vaccination of healthcare workers in the next two weeks. Steve Biko Academic Hospital received 5 720 doses and Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital received 11 080 doses. To date, 5 214 healthcare workers in Gauteng have been vaccinated.

As more vaccine doses arrive, we will vaccinate **215 101 healthcare workers in Phase I** of the Vaccine Rollout Plan of our province. This will be followed 7 372 924 vaccinations in **Phase II focusing on essential workers and vulnerable sections** of the population such as the elderly and people with co-morbidities. We will conclude with **Phase III** of the vaccination programmed which will focus on 2 789 427 vaccinations for **the rest of the population over 18 years**. More than **150 vaccination sites** have been identified at primary healthcare centres and vaccinators have been trained across the province.

We in Gauteng have chosen to work with the national government, local government, universities, trade unions, civil society, and the private sector in responding to current and future pandemics and natural disasters. Humanity, solidarity and partnerships are indispensable. Both federalism and vaccine nationalism are counter-productive.

### **Gauteng is taking a lead in re-igniting economic reconstruction and recovery**

In the light of COVID-19, we had to adjust and adapt the GGT2030 plan to the changed environment. I would like to emphasise that GGT2030 remains the plan of action of the entire Gauteng City Region. We have a common vision and plan of action for the immediate and long term development of each metro or district, regardless of the changes that may happen from time to time in local and provincial government.

The Gauteng City Region is taking a lead in the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan announced by President Ramaphosa.

We are doing so focusing on our high-growth priority sectors and infrastructure investment projects that will unlock the transformation, modernisation and re-industrialisation of the different corridors and districts of our City Region.

These sectors are:

- Automotive, Aerospace and Defence
- Transportation and logistics
- ICT and digital services with a focus on the gig economy
- Energy, with a focus on new technologies and diversifying the energy mix
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Food, Beverages, Agro-processing, and agribusiness
- Construction and Infrastructure
- Financial services
- Cultural and creative services
- Industrial Cannabis

As the industrial hub of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Gauteng City Region has adopted a strategic posture of leading the way in the industrialisation and re-industrialisation agenda of our country and continent.

To this end, the development of the single multi-tier Special Economic Zones (SEZs) is the primary anchor of our industrialisation agenda. It is our goal to have at least one SEZ in each district or metro, specialising in distinct sectors and industries in each corridor.

Honourable Members, having spoken about the pain and anguish inflicted upon us by COVID-19, we have some good news for you. The progress being made at the Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone (TASEZ) is inspiring. The three spheres of government are investing R3.3 billion in infrastructure, which has unlocked R4.3 billion investment by suppliers and a further R15.8 billion investment announced by Ford Motor Company on 8 February. This is the biggest foreign direct investment since the 2010 World Cup. TASEZ will produce over 200,000 vehicles by 2022.

Working with the Mamelodi community, entrepreneurs and SMMEs, TASEZ is providing non-financial and financial support to 262 SMMEs, Grades 1-7. Over R1.7 billion (47% of infrastructure spent) worth of SMME already allocated and another R531 million of work will be allocated to township SMMEs in the coming months for the built programme to construct the first set of factories.

Within the next 12 months, a total of 3288 new permanent jobs will be created at this SEZ - 1200 by Ford and 2088 by the suppliers. In addition, 8600 construction-related jobs have already been created during Phase I.

Women, youth and people with disabilities will play a significant role in the project with more opportunities expected to be created in the next two phases.

The Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone is a prime example of our vision of spatial and economic transformation and integration of township enterprises, Black-owned, women-owned, and youth-owned businesses into supply chains of big corporates.

TASEZ is a perfect model of a social compact between different sectors. It is an example of how government can cut red tape and make quick decisions that are able to attract and safeguard investment.

We will ensure that all SEZs follow a similar model.

The success of the Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone has also created a new momentum for the development of the Gauteng-Eastern Cape Freight Rail Corridor which will be fully operational by 2025. This will facilitate a swift movement of goods out of the Gauteng City Region SEZs, industrial parks and agri-parks, including the much higher volumes of vehicles from Silverton and Rosslyn to the seaports for export.

We are working closely with the Sedibeng District Municipality, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition and the Development Bank of Southern (DBSA) on the development of the Vaal River City Special Economic Zone, a project that is a game-changer for the economy of Sedibeng. The Vaal SEZ company has been established to ensure that the feasibility study, master plan and the regional spatial development framework and SEZ are approved by the end of this year. The DBSA has committed R1 billion to the development and upgrading of bulk infrastructure in the region in order to unlock all major developments in the Sedibeng district.

I am happy to report that work on the West Rand SEZ is progressing well. Approximately 100 hectares of land was made available by Sibanye Still Water Pty Ltd, along the N12 Corridor. We are working with the West Rand District Municipality, Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, the African Development Bank, Sibanye Still Water, Busmark, West Rand Mega Park and Bokamoso Ba Rona small-scale farmers on this initiative. We will get final approval of the SEZ this year so that construction of bulk infrastructure can commence before the end of this year. We are working hard to ensure this SEZ is completed by 2024.

The City of Ekurhuleni is the manufacturing and aviation hub in the SADC region. We officially opened the OR Tambo International Airport (ORTIA) IDZ in March 2019 which focuses on jewellery manufacturing and agro-processing.

The implementation of four precincts of the IDZ attracted R1,5 billion investments. This IDZ is a key component of the multi-located Ekurhuleni SEZ which will attract more value-adding industrial and electronic manufacturers and agro-processors.

The province and the City are also working closely with ACSA and the aviation industry to improve ORTIA's competitive advantage as part of the aerotropolis rollout. The construction of the Midfield Cargo Terminal and the development of the Western Commercial Precinct are underway. These two developments augur well for OR Tambo International Airport as a regional hub for long-haul passenger and cargo airlines.

The City of Johannesburg is the economic hub of our province and financial nerve centre of our continent. We have improved collaboration significantly over the past year and are coordinating efforts in unlocking investment in the CBD as well as in the northern and southern parts of Johannesburg. Most of these projects are now back on track after five frustrating years since the 2016.

President Ramaphosa announced, during the State of the Nation Address, that the Lanseria smart city master plan has been signed off by all stakeholders, including the private sector, the four municipalities involved and the DBSA, which is funding the bulk infrastructure without which the project will not succeed.

The Gauteng provincial government and municipalities are tackling all issues that will improve the ease of doing business and enhance the attractiveness of our City region as the preferred destination for domestic and foreign direct investment.

As the Gauteng City Region government, we are marshalling resources to fund bulk infrastructure in order to unlock social and economic development in our five corridors and districts.

We are also cutting red tape to fast-track development approvals.

We are building a network of schools of specialisation that are providing sector-specific skills in line with the identified high-growth sectors in each district.

Through industry action labs, we are building industry-specific partnerships and sector-based social compacts.

One critical area of infrastructure investment is about building and ensuring access to high-speed internet. This is crucial for harnessing the opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution.

We are implementing the Gauteng Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) Growth and Digitalisation Strategy which has four pillars: Digital Infrastructure, Enabling Environment, Enabling Technologies, and Human Capital Development. This will enable our City Region to build a dynamic digital economy that offers employment to the youth and opportunities to entrepreneurs.

Guided by the Gauteng 4IR and Digital Transformation Panel, we are rolling out several initiatives to achieve the following:

- Reliable connectivity that provides inclusive access, supports new business, creates new players and markets, and improves government services.
- Improve Gauteng's competitive positioning through 4IR and other technologies.
- Improve research, development, and innovation.
- Develop skills for the future of work.
- New approaches to developing policies, frameworks, and standards (e.g. interoperability, privacy, and security) in the context of a rapidly changing world.

Over the past eleven months of COVID-19, the provincial government has shifted the delivery of more public services onto digital platforms.

More public facilities including schools, hospitals, clinics, libraries and government offices are now connected through the Gauteng Broadband Network (GBN).

The COVID-19 data centre was also established and artificial intelligence tools were deployed to enhance decision-making in a way never done before.

Wi-Fi hotspots at all public facilities have enable many people, especially in townships, to stay connected an access online information and services.

Working in partnership with Tshimologong Centre, the Gauteng Innovation Hub and the University of Witswatersrand, we continue to invest in digital skills and promote digital entrepreneurship.

The #DigitalSistaz intervention that targets females, was introduced to develop, and build a sustainable ICT talent pool which includes skills in Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, and the Internet of Things.

We are continuing to work with the Public Private Growth Initiative (PPGI) to make Gauteng the best and preferred location for the ICT global companies and startups.

In addition, the work we are doing with the Global Business Services or Business Process Outsourcing Sector has led to over 30% growth in jobs in this sector in the last three years in Gauteng.

Building and maintaining an efficient road network and providing affordable and reliable public transport is crucial for the people and economy of our province.

We have now aligned the building of all the new roads to our economic reconstruction and recovery plan to unlock the investment in various corridors and districts. In order to address the unacceptable and costly delays in road construction, the Department has now established dedicated technical capacity.

We have made a commitment to construct and rehabilitate 18 arterial roads to integrate and improve the movement of goods and services in the province. Limited activity in the construction sector due to COVID-19 slowed down some infrastructure projects.

However, we are pleased that the construction of phase 2 of the N14 has been completed as well as the R28 that connects the West Rand and Sedibeng districts.

Substantial work is also underway to patch, rehabilitate and resurface major roads that were affected by the recent heavy rains.

Our investment in public transport infrastructure-logistical hubs, intermodal facilities, rolling stock, buses and taxis remains key.

Although the purchase of additional coaches for the Gautrain is discontinued due to the downward trend in demand, we are going ahead with the plan for the expansion of the footprint of the Gautrain to the Eastern, Western and Southern parts of our province.

The establishment of Gauteng Transport Authority is taking us closer to the single, integrated, inter-modal, reliable, safe and affordable public transport system across the Gauteng City Region. We will have a single ticket for all modes of transport in Gauteng by the end of this financial year.

The minibus taxi industry plays a critical role in the public transport system of our province and we have long expressed our intention to stem out the violence and integrate the industry into the comprehensive public transport system.

Between 2015 and 2019, we had many engagements with the taxi industry about the challenges facing the sector. Ongoing conflict, violence, instability and murders saw the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry into Taxi Violence in September 2019, to probe the underlying causes of the conflict and the people involved.

We are happy to report that the Commission concluded its work in December 2020 and released its report publicly this month. The findings and recommendations of the Commission are wide-ranging and far-reaching.

The Executive Council has welcomed the Commission's Report and further mandated the MEC for Roads and Transport to move with speed in implementing the recommendations of the Commission, especially to ensure effective regulation and transformation of the sector.

I would like to thank retired Justice Jeremiah Shongwe (Chairperson), Mr Rudolph Lungile Mabece, Mr Hlula Msimang and Ms Dimakatso Mamiki Selesho (Secretary) for their diligence in handling such a delicate task.

As the Gauteng City region, we have been taking a lead in building a post-apartheid urbanism and sustainable urban agenda. Spatial injustice needs to be confronted with a radical counter-narrative of inclusive, sustainable and transformative urbanism.

In achieving this objective, urban land use is a strategic tool for transforming social, spatial and economic relationships among our diverse people in order to integrate them so that they live together as equals.

Since the start of the sixth administration in May 2019, we have also completed 18 154 units and 14 677 sites to the residents of our province. We have registered 13 789 title deeds and have formalised 52 townships.

Significant work is taking place on the revival of urban renewal projects in line with the commitment we made in 2019.

We introduced the land release programme, which allows government to provide serviced sites for people to build houses for themselves.

We are happy to report that 9151 sites have been identified across the province and the handover process was affected by COVID-19 regulations. The administrative processes are being completed to ensure that the handover process starts in March.

We continue to make progress in the formalisation of informal settlements and upgrading of hostels across the province. This work is part of our programme of transforming Gauteng, specifically the townships, to improve urban quality of life.

We are equally aware of land invasions, especially where we have identified land for serviced stands and the building of human settlements. We are working with Municipalities and law enforcement agencies to stop land invasions across the province.

Infrastructure investment enables us to achieve multiple objectives such as improving the quality of life of Gauteng residents, unlocking private sector investment, broadening empowerment and creating jobs. It is also through infrastructure development and investment that we are able to transform the spatial settlement patterns and economic geography of our province.

Creating a new regulatory environment and financial instruments which support the growth township businesses is one of the economic policy thrusts of the ANC-led administration.

In addition, we are using infrastructure projects, to support township enterprises as well as Black-owned and women-owned businesses. In this regard, we have allocated a total of 917 infrastructure maintenance projects to registered township-based SMMEs, to the value of R598 million.

In line with the commitment, we made in 2019, we have empowered 50 emerging black firms as contractors and sub-contractors, including women and youth-owned businesses. We have trained 20 emerging contractors through the contractor development programme. In addition, 154 township-based SMMEs are subcontracted to various new infrastructure projects to the value of R131 million.

We have completed public consultations on the Township Economic Development Bill, and we received invaluable inputs from members of the public and government institutions at all levels. We will table the Bill in April for consideration by the Gauteng Provincial Legislature.

Madame Speaker, this year, 2021, should see the passing a historic piece of provincial legislation that will remove the institutional and regulatory obstacles that hinder the development and growth of township businesses.

The new Township Economic Development Act that should be passed by the Legislature seeks to address the following:

- Creating new developmental regulations and by-laws that will make it simpler, easier and cheaper to formalise more than 90% of informal businesses, thus enabling these businesses to access financial and non-financial support from government and the private sector.
- Setting up an institutional and legal mandate for the creation of the Township Economy Partnership Fund which will pull both public and private sector resources to fund township-based businesses, especially small business and start-ups that find it difficult to access funding from financial institutions. The seed funding for this initiative is already available. Details will be announced by the MEC for Finance and the MEC for Economic Development.
- Creating a legal framework for provincial government and municipalities to support the development of township real estate, turning taxi ranks into business hubs and providing infrastructure in township high streets or commercial nodes.

As Gauteng was losing 660 000 jobs during COVID-19, we had substantial activities through our social development, youth development and infrastructure initiatives to create both short term and permanent jobs.

Government departments created 15 152 jobs in the social sector, while the infrastructure sector yielded 6 909 job opportunities, giving a total of **22 000 jobs** that managed to put bread on the table and enhanced the employability of those who participated.

Gauteng municipalities created **10 581** work opportunities through social, infrastructure and environment programmes in the midst of COVID-19.

The Welfare-to-Work programme has created **3 000 jobs and small business opportunities** for young mothers, moving them out of child support grants.

The Tshepo 1 Million programme created opportunities for **94 839** young people to formal placement in jobs, internships, learnerships and business opportunities.

To summarise, government social development and environmental programmes, infrastructure projects, youth development initiatives and women empowerment interventions have created more 130 000 short term and long-term employment and business opportunities. This has mitigated the negative impact of 660 000 jobs lost in our provincial economy during the first half of 2020.

The point that must be made is that government can make a direct contribution to job creation and business development, while simultaneously creating an enabling environment the private sector-led massive in employment.

**Recalibrating social policy – getting optimal educational and health outcomes, winning the war on crime and tackling poverty and hunger**

As the provincial government, we have always insisted that education is the number one priority in our social policy and human development endeavour.

The COVID-19 pandemic put the 2020 academic year at great risk and caused many anxieties among parents, learners, educators and authorities. Never have we witnessed such large scale disruption of education since the dawn of democracy.

As a result, there were growing calls to throw in the towel and cancel the 2020 academic year. However, the advice by scientists and insistence by government that schools should re-open under strict health protocols, helped to save the academic year. Lots of adjustments had to be made to ensure continuity of learning under difficult conditions of COVID-19.

We thank our educators and learners for showing great resolve and resilience, especially the Class of 2020 and their educators.

As the Minister of Basic Education announced the Grade 12 results yesterday, Gauteng has maintained the second position after the Free State province, with a pass rate of 83.75%.

Our province had the second highest number of learners who wrote exams for the National Senior Certificate in 2020 - 110 191 learners.

Let us look at the quality of the results much more closely.

We are pleased that despite all the odds of COVID-19, six Gauteng districts are in the top ten best performing districts in our country. Of the six, five are placed number 1-5 best performing districts. Some of these top five districts have township schools in Atteridgeville and Olivenhoutbosch. This tells a story of system-wide performance.

The throughput rate has improved from 77% in 2019 to 79% in 2020, accounting for almost 8 out of 10 learners who started school twelve years ago having completed Grade 12 in 2020. This is a mark of progress. Our goal is to increase the throughput rate to 95% by 2030.

Gauteng contributed the highest number of bachelor passes in the country in 2020, at 49 679 as compared to 43 494 in 2019. Learners from township schools are staking their claim in the number of bachelor passes and distinctions coming out of Gauteng. Again, this is an indication of the progress we are making, given the size of our education system.

MEC Lesufi will release the results on Wednesday, giving more details about the performance of the Class of 2020, who braved COVID-19 and refused to allow their dreams to be disrupted by the pandemic. We salute our learners and their educators!

During the year under review, we continued to invest in the modernisation of our education system. Over 10 000 classrooms were ICT enabled, 10 000 LED boards have been installed in classrooms, 20 000 laptops were distributed to educators and 200 000 tablets were distributed to learners.

Last year, we made a commitment that this ANC-led provincial government will focus on increasing enrolment and performance in the foundation phases. We are now paying greater attention to ECD and primary schools.

In accordance with the directive, I gave to MEC Lesufi at the beginning of this term, the evaluation report of all Grades will be published annually.

As announced by President Ramaphosa in the State of the Nation Address, one of government's priorities this year is to regain lost time, improve educational outcomes from the early years through to high school.

Our plans in regaining lost time include:

- Reviewing the time-table option per school to minimise the impact of the rotational timetable on syllabus coverage.
- Adjust daily/weekly timetable to cater for interventions and/or catchup.
- Reduction in the number of days allocated for formal examinations in June to make additional days available for teaching and learning.
- Promote writing of June examinations until the last day of school in June and marking to take place in the winter holidays.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought home the stark reality that 19% (3 million) of Gauteng residents are unable to meet their daily nutritional needs.

The food security intervention was one of the most successful in our COVID-19 response. Between April and December 2020, we provided more than 650 856 households with food relief, reaching over 3.2 million people in Gauteng. This is the biggest food security effort ever undertaken by the government.

The private sector and Non-Profit Organisations also supported an additional 1 million people in Gauteng.

The COVID-19 income relief grant for the unemployed reached more than 600 000 unemployed people in the province.

A total of 2 344 homeless people were provided with shelter, three meals daily plus psychosocial support, medical assessments, and treatment for substance abuse.

More than 1,3 million girl children have benefited from the Dignity programme.

Going forward, we will intensify work on combatting urban poverty, hunger and homelessness in Gauteng. We are supporting the creation of community and household food gardens, to ensure that the 3 million food insecure people participate in growing food for themselves so that no one goes to bed hungry.

Over the years, many of us have tended to under-estimate the full potential of Gauteng's agricultural and agro-processing sector. We need to vigorously promote urban agriculture as a key sector for employment, entrepreneurship and food security.

In keeping with our commitment to support Black farmers and agro-processors over the next five years, I can report that we have facilitated the commercialisation of 9 Black farmers and five Black agro-processors. Sixty-eight Black smallholder farmers were linked to markets through facilitated engagements with fresh produce markets and Retailers.

With the partnership and collaboration of the fresh produce markets and the township retailers, we are confident that we will be able to facilitate 350 black smallholder farmers with market access by 2024.

More work will be done in agricultural nodes such as Hekpoort in Mogale City, Devon in Lesedi, Bantu Bonke in Midvaal and Sokhulumi in the City of Tshwane.

We call on the municipalities to release land and provide support to those who want to be involved in agriculture as a business, including the youth.

To be a thriving and prosperous province, a place of great promise for everyone, we need to make Gauteng safe. We need everyone to feel safe and be secure.

We have adopted a coherent and integrated 5-year Gauteng Policing Plan which is supported by resource allocation.

The success of this plan is demonstrated by the highly visible and effective Operation - “O kae Molao”. Since March 2020, a total of 2 919 operations were undertaken with other Law Enforcement Agencies, targeting various crimes including the illicit economy, theft, counterfeit goods and GBV.

It is for this reason that the Gauteng provincial government has decided to provide additional resources to the law enforcement agencies.

On Saturday, 20 February 2021, we handed over 50 high-performance vehicles fitted with cutting-edge crime-fighting technology to the SAPS as part of our commitment to fight crime.

In addition, four mobile police stations are currently being manufactured and will be delivered during the first quarter of the 2021/22 financial year. The mobile police stations will help the police to provide services in high density areas where there are no police stations.

We have also made a commitment to tackle Gender-Based Violence and Femicide frontally and decisively by providing **five (5) Community Service Centres (CSC's)** and **eleven sedans** prioritised Victim Empowerment Centres.

Although we are not required by law to provide resources to the SAPS, we have decided to do more than oversight by joining hands with the police and fight crime together. We are doing all these to enhance police visibility and police response in crime hotspots, on highways and in public spaces on a 24-hour basis.

From the crime stats released by the Minister on 19 February, the Trio crimes are decreasing, especially house and business robberies. We are also happy that crime in our province overall has gone down by 9.6% between October to December 2020.

However, I am utterly perturbed by the increase in gender-based violence and femicide, the crimes against women and children. This underscores the reality that women are under siege and we must respond with all arsenal to completely put a stop to the violence and killing of women and children in our society.

There should be no place to hide for men who abuse or kill women and children in this beautiful province. We must find perpetrators of GBVF and bring them to book, regardless of their place or influence in organisations and society.

Last year President Ramaphosa declared Gender-Based Violence and Femicide as another pandemic facing our country. The President, in marking Women's Day last year said, "South Africa is in the grip of two pandemics - the coronavirus pandemic and the scourge of Gender-Based violence and Femicide, this cannot continue. We can no longer, as a nation ignore the deafening cries of women and children for protection, for help and for justice."

The Gauteng Government launched the Gender-Based Violent Brigades programme, which facilitates and strengthens survivor-focused, resourced and co-ordinated response to GBV. To date, we have recruited, screened and inducted 620 GBV Brigades. The Brigades are raising awareness in communities and assisting victims of GBV to open cases and break free from abusive and toxic relationships.

I am pleased that to date, 40 000 households have been visited by the GBVF Brigade for psycho-social support. The fight against GBVF must not only be fought in communities, many young women in institutions of higher learning are victims of this pandemic.

Working together with the police and NGOs, the provincial government conducts candle lighting sessions at which victims and families are provided with feedback on their cases.

We urge the police not to turn their backs on women who go to police stations to open cases of gender-based violence and not to re-victimise them. Police must enforce protection orders and must apply the law on defaulters. There can be no mercy for perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence.

We would like to thank the private sector companies, especially Tracker, Business Against Crime and Crime Watch, for working with law enforcement agencies in "O Kae Molao" and othe crime prevention operations.

Community mobilisation is a critical pillar of our safety strategy. This pillar is executed through establishing functional community policing forums and deployment of community patrollers as a force multiplier. It is only when communities co-operate with police and come forward with information that crime will be fought effectively.

We have a total of 4 234 Community Policing Forum members who are trained and equipped with properly labelled reflectors to increase police visibility, specifically in high-crime areas.

Last year, we made a commitment to employ 400 additional traffic police officers, over the next three years, in order to increase visibility and enhance road safety in the province.

I am pleased to announce that 157 traffic officers have been employed. We will add more officers this year until we reach our target of 400 in 2022.

The three metropolitan municipal areas, Tshwane, Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni collectively account for 82% of all road fatalities from all the roads in these areas. It has also become clear that most fatal crashes occur at night, on weekends and within urban areas.

Without fear of contradiction this can be attributed to the abuse of alcohol. As South Africans, we cannot continue like this, something drastic must be done.

This year, we will review and tighten the regulations governing the sale of alcohol in Gauteng.

MEC Mazibuko and Provincial Commissioner, Lt General Mawela, are working very well with metro police and traffic departments on crime prevention and traffic management operations. The problem we had in some metros which were not keen to cooperate with provincial law enforcement agencies, has now been resolved.

Our municipalities must also focus on the enforcement of by-laws and improve the functioning of Municipal courts. Municipalities must ensure they prevent invasion of land. We cannot allow this to happen in Gauteng.

The happiness index will show that the year 2020 was a difficult and unhappy one for our sporting fraternity and creative industries. COVID-19 shut down most activities and performances, destroying livelihoods of many people and denying us spaces and platforms of entertainment and social cohesion.

The Gauteng provincial government responded to the situation with a number of interventions to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19:

- Gauteng Social relief Fund was established to provide some relief to 2 145 artists and athletes during the lockdown and 140 NGOs benefitted from the Grant in Aid.
- National Commemorative days as well as many cultural activities were moved online. This created an entirely new way of doing things that could not be imagined before the outbreak of the pandemic.
- Growing influence of eSport as a safe avenue for young people to engage in gaming. The provincial government hosted GauFive e-Games #FIFA21 tournament which was attended by gaming professionals and amateurs and contributed significantly to the provincial digital economy.
- The Gauteng government also expanded online library services and further installed gaming devices in community libraries and this helped young people in the townships to participate in gaming.
- The Gauteng Provincial Government has decided to intervene in the matter of the Mandela Museum to safeguard the interests of the public. The Mandela Museum is an emblematic heritage site which has a critical role in engendering a sense of identity and pride within the Soweto community and increasing public awareness and appreciation of the historical and cultural role of Soweto in South Africa and internationally.
- The Gauteng government also worked with the PSL to support all measures that led to the completion of the 2019/20 season in Gauteng, under strict COVID-19 protocols.

## **Improving governance in The Gauteng City Region**

We have constantly asserted that a capable, ethical and developmental state is an indispensable weapon in our struggle to create the Gauteng of our dreams.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reaffirmed the need for a caring, capable, competent and ethical government that can deal with developmental imperatives, especially during pandemics, natural disasters and systemic crises.

Our response to the pandemic has also enabled us to strengthen seamless coordination and collaboration within the integrated Gauteng City Region and it has made the rollout of the District Development Model more practical and urgent.

We have achieved so much in strengthening inter-governmental relations in the past twelve months than we have ever done in the past twenty years. We have one Plan for the GCR and One Plan for each district and metro.

The matter of great concern is that the financial position of many municipalities deteriorated during COVID-19 due to the loss of over R8.75 billion in revenue between April and July 2020 in municipalities.

The loss had negative implications for service delivery and affected the resilience of municipalities. This resulted in a decline in spending on Capex projects by 42% and a decline in cash collection due to suspended credit control measures. Several municipalities struggled to pay their creditors such as Eskom and Rand Water.

We are working with all our municipalities in the province to improve their financial viability which was impacted by the national lockdown. We have a Multi-Disciplinary Team of Revenue Experts as part of the Debt Management Committee (DMC) to help struggling municipalities to develop an Integrated Revenue Enhancement and Debtors Management Plan and to ensure accurate billing.

As a result of the work of this committee, an amount of R1.62 billion was paid by the provincial government to municipalities between April 2020 and the end of December 2020.

The Emfuleni municipality, which was placed under partial administration in 2018, continues to experience serious challenges which are negatively affecting its capabilities to provide uninterrupted services to residents. We are working with national government and State-Owned Entities to address service delivery and governance challenges.

We will not rest until we have helped the municipality to resolve all its challenges and ensure it continues to provide uninterrupted services to residents.

We welcome the report and recommendations of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), released on 17 February 2021. The findings confirm the challenges that we have been addressing working with the municipality and the people of Emfuleni. We remain committed to working with the SAHRC to implement all recommendations within the next 60 days.

This year, we will rollout the open tender and integrity management systems in all municipalities in order to improve the ethical environment. Most municipalities have been receiving poor audit outcomes from the Auditor General and there is no implementation of the remedial action.

We remain committed to integrity and ethics in the Gauteng City Region. The procurement irregularities and corruption allegations during the pandemic have forced us to go back and review the efficacy of all the anti-corruption measures. We will strengthen our prevention, detection, investigation and resolution procedures and push ahead with the institutionalisation of clean governance.

The implementation of the open tender system, the introduction of integrity management measures, the significant advances on clean audits and the 4-year old partnership with the SIU stand as testimony to our commitment to fighting corruption as well as promoting clean governance.

We have finalised a total of 73 forensic investigations and 66 cases were referred to law enforcement agencies for criminal investigation and civil recovery processes.

The allegations and actual incidents of corruption and irregular procurement during COVID-19 have reversed any gains made in the past five years and have significantly eroded public trust. We must go back to the drawing board.

We are going to shine a spotlight on every department and agency that is not taking clean governance seriously. We will tighten prevention, detection, investigation and resolution systems and crack the whip on departments and agencies that are bringing the name of our province into disrepute by defrauding the public purse.

Members of the Executive Council have submitted their details for the lifestyle audit that are being conducted by the State Security Agency. The outcome of the lifestyle audit will be made public.

We have expanded our vetting of senior officials to the level of supply chain management officials. To this end, 65% of senior managers and 70% of supply chain management officials have been vetted by the State Security Agency and the rest shall be completed this year.

I am determined to ensure that the Office of the Premier leads by example in all respects.

Madame Speaker, in the 2020 National Batho Pele Excellence Awards led by the Department of Public Service and Administration, the Gauteng Office of Premier received the Best functioning Provincial Department award in Bronze.

I am proud to also announce that our Director General, Ms Phindile Baleni received the Best Provincial Director General award in Silver.

These awards underscore various independent assessments done by the Auditor General and the Gauteng City Region Observatory's regarding the performance of the Office of the Premier as the centre of government.

The Office of the Premier and the Provincial Treasury obtained clean audit reports for eight consecutive years since 2012/13.

However, there is some regression in the 2019/2020 financial year across all Departments and entities. We are not going to retreat from our goal of seeking to achieve 100% clean audit outcomes.

The sixth administration has a duty to maintain and even surpass the track record of the previous administration. During the fifth administration, we improved clean audit outcomes from 54% to 65% and the balance of the departments and entities obtained unqualified audit reports. We eliminated disclaimers and adverse findings completely from the audit outcomes of the province because we cracked the whip.

We will hold Accounting Officers answerable where there are poor audit outcomes.

I am happy to announce that, through the Special Litigation Unit in the Office of the Premier, we continue to reduce medico-legal claims and other court cases against the provincial government through mediation. This process is also assisting government to deal with the syndicates that have been looting the public purse through fraudulent claims in our healthcare system.

We have institutionalised Ntirhisano to ensure government works with and in communities regularly. One of our achievements was to establish ward-based teams to help with the reduction of transmission and infections by promoting non-pharmaceutical interventions. The interventions included monitoring of adherence to health and safety protocols. It also included unannounced visits to government service delivery sites to assess the experience of residents.

We will continue to engage with all stakeholders through virtual and digital platforms post the State of the Province Address to further share our plans for building the Gauteng of our dreams.

## Conclusion

Madame Speaker allow me to conclude by reminding the people of Gauteng that we live in a historical epoch which has changed the common sense of our time. At both micro and macro social levels, we have had to change the way we live our lives in order to contain the spread of this deadly coronavirus.

We are equally conscious of the fact that in the eyes of the people clean governance means an ethical state geared to meet the social needs as well as the economic and political empowerment of citizens to shape their own destinies.

To meet these legitimate expectations of citizens, we have to act decisively against the unscrupulous, the rogues and the thieves who lack a sense of shame that they even use the emergency conditions of a deadly pandemic as an opportunity to loot the public purse. Trust has been eroded and lives have been lost.

Trust will only be restored when all those responsible are thrown behind bars for betraying popular trust, most of which stems from the poor and urban precariat whose fragile lives are hanging by a thread on the margins of social existence.

I wish to re-assure the people of Gauteng that we remain unfazed and will focus on all the four priorities outlined in this State of the Province Address.

We may be shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic, but no storm will break the determination of the people of Gauteng to be pioneers and makers of their own history.

We have learnt from history and our struggle that “**Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards**”, as pointed out by Søren Kierkegaard.

This province will bounce back and move forward in a way that lives no one behind.

I thank you once again on behalf of the entire Team of the Gauteng City Region.

God Bless Africa!