

Policy and Budget Speech 2009/10 for the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature Presented by the Speaker, Honourable Jackson Mthembu

27 August 2009

Madam Deputy Speaker;
Premier of our beautiful Province: DD Mabuza;
Honourable leaders of our political parties and Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature;
Chairperson of SALGA Mpumalanga, Mayors, Speakers and leaders in our system of local government;
Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders and our honoured traditional leaders;
Heads of the provincial state organs supporting our constitutional democracy;
Acting Director-General, Head of Departments and other leaders of the public service;
People of South Africa and the Province in particular;
Distinguished guests, friends and comrades

Madam Deputy Speaker, before I proceed, let me wish the Muslim community a happy Ramadan season.

Allow me on this occasion of the first budget speech of the fourth Legislature of Mpumalanga to wish all the Honourable Members of the Legislature a successful five year of service as elected public representatives.

The year 2009 will be one of the most remarkable years of our democracy, as we will all be working together to realise the core aspirations of our people to attain a better life. We say this because, in our own estimation, it is not often that a nation is called upon to strain every part of its collective body to attain a dream. And such is the injunction that history has imposed on us during the 22nd April 2009 elections.

Since we all know that August is a Women`s month, we would also like to take this opportunity to salute all the women of our country who contributed immensely to the liberation of our people. These struggle icons and heroines are a representation of both history and hope, they also remind us that ours is a task in a struggle for a continuous renewal and of building the nation so that the dream of a better life becomes a reality for all South Africans. They also represent a celebration of the revolutionary trenches of our people as they defeated apartheid, and posed a challenge to all of us to act in ways that do not betray or disappoint the expectations of our people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the people of the Republic of South Africa and the province in particular, let me extend our sincere congratulations to our outstanding champions who have performed outstandingly well during the 12th IAAF World Champions in Athletics, in Germany, Berlin. I refer to our brothers and sisters Mulaudzi Mbulaeni and Caster Semenya who both obtained gold medals on 800m Men and Women race respectively and also our own Khotso Mokoena for obtaining a silver medal in Long Jump. Indeed you have made us proud as a nation.

To our own girl champion Caster Semenya, you did us proud amid the pressure, race and the gender discrimination you have suffered which were aimed at sidetracking you from becoming the world champion, congratulations once more.

We therefore call upon the UN and other international Gender institutions to take decisive steps and strongly reject this abuse and discrimination under the auspices of gender testing.

We therefore declare that never again in our lifetime will we allow such an insult, abuse and discrimination of our athletes. Let`s use the women`s month as an anchor to fight such evil deeds in our sport.

PRE FOURTH LEGISLATURE OF MPUMALANGA

Madam Deputy Speaker, the previous Legislatures of Mpumalanga has made some remarkable milestones during its term which are worth mentioning during the course of our speech.

We wish to express our profound gratitude and appreciation and also say that, we are fortunate to assume the presidium of this house following in the footsteps of our comrades and colleagues, former Speakers and Deputy Speakers Elias N Ginindza, Cynthia Maropeng; Siphon William Lubisi; Thoko Mabhena; Nkwenkwezi Phosa and Boy Nobunga. I must further say that we assume the leadership of this institution at its matured stage. Thanks to the above hands that steered this ship to this level of maturity.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we do not seek to rewrite the history of this house but to accelerate the noble vision and objectives our predecessors have put in place as we execute our tasks with diligence and honour.

Let me further pay special tribute to all the members who passed on while serving as Honourable Members of this house, among them is: Phillip Radebe, Ephraim Mogale, Clyde Morgan, Thoko Mabhena, Steve Mbuyiswa and January Che Masilela. As we honour these late compatriots our hearts are filled with pride for we have never failed their memory in pursuit of a better province, country, continent and a better world. Would we be asking too much to request that some of the buildings in the Riverside Government Complex be named after them?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to say that we have indeed been able to do much better on the implementation of the 2004 elections mandate of a people's contract to create work and fight poverty. However, and not unexpectedly, it is obvious that we still have a lot to do in championing gains and the interest of our people, who want nothing else but a better life for all irrespective of race, gender, colour or creed.

FOURTH LEGISLATURE OF MPUMALANGA

On the 22nd April 2009 our people dared all forms of weather conditions and gathered in various polling stations in all the corners of our country and the province to cast their votes to the political parties of their choice. It is in these elections where 65% of national voters voted for the African National Congress (ANC) to continue with the transformation of our society as per its people's-centred manifesto.

The province also highly contributed to such a success where 85.81% of voters, voted for the African National Congress (ANC) to continue with the implementation of its tangible and sound people's driven manifesto.

This manifesto speaks to five priority areas of service delivery for the 2009 - 2014 election cycle, which are: ***creation of decent work and sustainable livelihoods, education, health, rural development, food security and land reform and the fight against crime and corruption.*** The above priorities will be our key areas of consideration when exercising our oversight function over the executive.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as we resume the fourth Legislature of Mpumalanga, we are gathered here today, in an environment of global economic meltdown. The world is in a global financial challenge which requires all of us to tighten our belt to ensure that we are more efficient in the utilisation of resources with greater responsibility and an economical mind.

As the fourth Legislature, we are in an era where we need to be more considerate, prudent and sound on the use of resources allocated to us both administratively and at political level. As we deliberate on the resources allocated to the Legislature, we need to do so, being able to maximise and save whilst delivering quality oversight and public involvement.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are presenting to you today the first policy and budget speech for the fourth Legislature of Mpumalanga. This is the beginning of the continuous constructive and critical engagement regarding our responsibilities as the fourth Legislature of Mpumalanga.

OUR THEME

Madam Deputy Speaker, The democratic system of government in South Africa is underpinned by the principle of separation of powers. The Constitution of the Republic South Africa stated and I quote, ***"There shall be a separation of powers between the legislature, the executive and judiciary, with appropriate checks and balances to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness"*** close quote.

The essence of the doctrine of separation of powers is to prevent the concentration of power in one centre. In practice, this means each arm of the state keeps watch over the power of the others while performing distinctive functions and exercising powers exclusive to the others.

The Legislature is one of these three arms of the state, and has a role to play in holding the executive arm accountable through oversight, with an aim to foster delivery of services to the electorate in keeping with the approved budgeted programmes.

It is in this context that we call for ***working together to intensify oversight over the executive to foster services delivery***, so that we keep the promise we made to the citizens when we requested them to vote us into this legislature.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we thus present this budget as a transitional budget from the third Legislature to the fourth Legislature under the theme: ***"WORKING TOGETHER TO INTENSIFY OVERSIGHT TO FOSTER SERVICE DELIVERY TO OUR PEOPLE"***

Madam Deputy Speaker and Honourable Members,

The President of the Republic, Jacob Gedleyehlekisa Zuma in his reply to the debate on the State of the Nation address in the National Assembly had this to say, open quote: "We have noted too, Honourable Speaker, that this House will seriously hold the Executive accountable. As Hon Thaba Mufamadi said, this will be a "strong activist Parliament". As the national executive, we welcome increased oversight to assist us in achieving our target of effective and efficient government.

We will work harder and smarter and the South African people will be beneficiaries of this constructive robust role of Parliament", close quote. Indeed we concur with the President of the Republic of South Africa in his assertion regarding the constructive robust role of Parliament and the Legislature.

CORE FUNCTIONS

Madam Deputy Speaker, the third legislature, focused most of its time in dealing with committees work and site visits. This responsibility resulted in the development of political committees` strategic plan which was implemented over the MTEF period.

The plan resulted in the establishment of the political committees reporting mechanisms, which was aimed at addressing and monitoring the adherence to the political imperatives as the 2004 elections mandate dictated, "a people`s contract to create work and fight poverty in ensuring a better life for all".

Madam Deputy Speaker, we take this opportunity to mention some of the key issues emanating from the third Parliament, to which we must exercise our minds and chart the way forward.

a. Oversight

For the past fifteen years, the Legislature has been operating without an oversight model. However, wonderful work has been done under such circumstances. As part of its strategic objective of enhancing its oversight role, the fourth Legislature of Mpumalanga has sanctioned for the development of an institutional oversight model. The model will be accompanied by a framework and processes for its implementation. It is expected that the model will be readily available by the end of the December 2009.

Key elements of the model should include amongst others: *Parliamentary outreach oversight, Budget Process oversight, monitoring quarterly, half-yearly and annual reporting, audit reporting, Oversight visits and Local government Oversight as well as oversight over national departments through our NCOP permanent delegates.*

The Legislature in its endeavor to be performing its parliamentary work better, and smarter, needs to have such a parliamentary framework or a model which will take into consideration all spheres of government in its work.

Resources will be made available for the model within the current allocation. Where additional resources are required, the due budgetary process will be adhered to over the medium term period.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as part of "*working together to intensify oversight over the executive to foster services delivery,*" we have targeted to hold 325 Portfolio Committees meetings 65 budget meetings: 5 per vote (13 votes), 65 Quarterly Reports meetings: 5 per vote (13 votes) 39 mid-year meetings: 3 per vote (13 votes) and 65 Annual Reports meetings: 5 per vote (13 votes), 70 Select Committee meetings (inclusive of 40 meetings for SCOPA), 40 set of reports and minutes and 12 oversight visit per annum per committee. All of these meetings will require a revolutionary commitment from our Members and indicate that the over 1.3 million people voted correctly by voting for our parties and most importantly, our parties were equally correct for bringing us to this legislature.

b. Law Making

In this regard we owe our respects to those who have traversed the 15 year journey with us. We wish therefore during this Policy and Budget Speech, to pay our special respect to the following honourable members who completed 15 years of service as members of this august house, some have spent some of their 15 years period in Cape Town as Members of Parliament, they are Hon Premier: DD Mabuza, Hon KC Mashego-Dlamini, Hon JL Mahlangu, Hon AF Mahlalela, Hon SW Lubisi and yours truly.

Let us further pay special tribute to all members who occupied these chambers for the past fifteen years who are no longer members of the 4th legislature. They are BJ Nobunga, Tsietsi Tolo and MS Ginindza. It is with great pride and profound recognition of their collective and individual contribution to the life of this august house. Working together we have laid a solid foundation and erected a stronger upper structure from which generations to come shall continue to defend, deepen democracy and respond to the future challenges of our province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, over the past 15 years we have dedicated our efforts into our core functions, particularly making laws. We have passed a total of 76 Acts, between 1994 and 2009.

We have remained firm on our objective of building a better country, as pronounced by former president Dr NR Mandela on the occasion of the Final Sitting of the 1st democratically elected parliament on the 26th of May 1999. He said, "These have been no trivial laws nor mere adjustment to an existing body of statutes. They have created a framework for the revolutionary transformation of society and of government itself, so that the legacy of our past can be undone and put right." We remain on course and we dare not linger on our objective.

Part of the legislations passed included our own Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature Services and Administration Act, 2008. The Act aimed at delinking the Legislature from the public service and asserting its autonomy.

During the year, the Legislature will be initiating the processing of passing the Financial Management of Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature Bill 2009. This Bill presents clear responsibilities for the executive authority, accounting officer, and to all officials who are granted delegation of authority to manage finances in the Legislature. It also clearly articulates the oversight mechanism for the Legislature.

In this regard, as the Legislature of Mpumalanga, we have established an Ad Hoc Committee that will be responsible for the provincialisation of the National Act and facilitate the accountability of the

Legislature with regard to resources allocated during the appropriation. This is one of the major priorities of the current financial year.

The committee resumed its working by summoning the Legislature to appear before it, to account on its strategic plan and the Annual Performance Plan for 2009/10. This has been done with the firm view that we cannot as the Legislature, expect other people to be accountable for the use of public money when we, as parliament, are not accountable. Transparency, accountability, prudent and sound financial management will be key to the implementation of this proposed act.

This is the beginning of more things or changes to be implemented within the organisational environment of the Fourth Legislature of Mpumalanga. The provincialisation of the National Act will be concluded before the end of the financial year 2009/2010.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this financial year, our target is to process a minimum of four Bills which will culminate into legislations. As we speak, we are on course with the target noting that already we have received three Bills for processing which are: the Mpumalanga Appropriation Bill of 2009, Mpumalanga Gaming Amendment Bill, 2009 and the Financial Management of Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature Bill of 2009. However, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are still optimistic that other Bills might be introduced during the course of this financial year, which will be processed and they will be added to our deliverables.

c. Public Participation and Involvement

In order to deepen our democracy we need to invest more resources on this form of civic engagement and we shall achieve civic cooperation as written by Robert D Putnam, he said, "Network of civic engagements are an essential form of social capital: the denser such networks in a community, the more likely that its citizens will be able to cooperate for mutual benefit." We can draw inspiration from the sentiments of Putnam and say, the closer the channel of communication between parliament and its voters, the closer are our public representatives to the voters, the more we shall achieve stability in all the regions of our province.

It will be irresponsible of us to fail to honour and reward the thrust of our popular vote and remain aloof from our voters who constitute the body and flesh of our parliamentary democracy. Madam Deputy Speaker, as we ponder and look at our past, we need to ask ourselves whether our approach to public participation and involvement positively respond to the character and demography of our province. It is unfortunate that during the past fifteen years of democracy we have not put in place a comprehensive public participation model.

In order to address the above setbacks, we have set ourselves a tight target of adopting the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature Public Participation Model by the 31st of December 2009.

The Legislature have existing mechanisms on carrying out the mandate on public involvement, such as educational workshops, information material distribution, the use of electronic media, petitions, Road shows etc. However, such mechanisms have not contributed to heightened and maximised public participation in the institution. Positive mechanisms for public participation are employed in the institution but there is also a need to document these mechanism hence a need for a model with the following key elements:

- Strengthening Public Hearing approach and modalities,
- Improving on the political and administrative management of sectoral parliaments,
- Heighten public education programme
- Strengthen petition processes, and
- Involvement of civil society in sittings of the Legislature.

In this regard, we will be holding 5 sectoral parliaments as one of the mechanisms. Apart from that, we intend to have 32 sittings of parliament this year to consider all legislative processes.

Support to Members

For effective oversight to take place, there needs to be strong support to Members of the Legislature from the administration. The current challenge emanating from the positioning of Committees and Research staff cannot be overemphasized noting that they are inadequate. The Office of the Chairperson of Committees has not been accorded the authority and respect it deserves over the past fifteen year. It has been serving as an *ad hoc* structure with very limited control and management of committees work. The work of committees has been left to individual chairpersons to manage even though the Chairperson of Committees was in office.

This has resulted to the need to review and capacitate the Office of the Chairperson of Committees with a Manager who'll take overall management and advisory function to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Committees respectively and other support staff.

Madam Deputy Speaker, all of the above will be taking place before the end of the current financial year. We will make financial resources available within the current budget and over the MTEF during the appropriation adjustment later this year.

If we can get things right on the support to Members, we will be getting nearer to the realization of our vision of being a 'World-Class African Legislature'.

Giving effect to this new thinking amongst Members on the roles and functions of the Legislature, we would also require a new shift and mindset in our administrative support services. We will undertake an organisational review of the Legislature so as to streamline both the financial and human resources to the core function.

Furthermore, once all has been done, it will require the highest levels of good work ethics, ethical and professional conduct of all staff and management. Respect, dignity and good reputation will be required from administrative staff so that they uphold the honour the Legislature and its Members deserves, at all times.

Welfare of Members (Capacity Building, Wellness, Members Services and tools of trade)

In order to improve our institutional support for Members and members service, we shall during this financial year capacitate the Office of the Deputy Speaker by allocating both financial and human capital to specifically deal with all issues pertaining benefits and tools of trade for members.

The Select Committee on Members Affairs has undergone an intense exercise of reviewing our old facility Handbook and has produced a comprehensive "Handbook for members of the Legislature". This Handbook shall, when finally adopted by the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature regulate the probity of our members during their term of office and provide guidelines on support for MPL with necessary tools of trade and benefits.

It is our firm belief that this new handbook shall go a long way in ensuring that individual members are accorded the necessary support as per prescribed guidelines, we should never be found wanting in term of institutional support for members even at the most extremities of our cycle of existence including provisions during an unanticipated times where one of our own shall have demised.

For optimal performance of individual members, provision of training and development for members is necessary, the Select Committee on members Affairs has been tasked to finalise the formulation of the Framework for Capacity Development of Members for the period 2009-2014.

As a transitional measure we shall allocate primary resources to ensure that all Members undergo intense and qualitative capacity development. We will further improve capacity to the management of Members Affairs and Members Interest by employing a dedicated team of staff that will deal with these matters.

Research Support

Research services are a critical facet in our parliamentary work and oversight. Our Research is currently not well resourced and it is isolated from external research institutions. The absence of a formal institution of higher learning in Mpumalanga, contributes negatively to this predicament. Research and development is essential for building of a developmental state.

In our attempt to improve this function we shall build stronger working relations with established academic and research institutions. A concept is being developed on how we will ensure stronger relations between Mpumalanga legislature and relevant research institutes including the Human Sciences Research Council, National Research Foundation, TUT, IDASA, Parliamentary Monitoring Group, Universities etc. These relations will be up-and-running by the end of March 2010.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is our firm belief that you cannot have researchers who are not associated or affiliated with a research institution and still expect them to perform quality and professional research work. Currently we have only four researchers who are rendering service to six portfolio committees and four select committees. All these committees oversee thirteen executive portfolios and approximately nine public entities. This excludes the work of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts that oversee all of the above, including our local municipalities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as we conclude our organisational and budget review in December 2009, we will be able to have adopted a clear plan of addressing this major challenge, noting that we need more researchers as in yesterday. We believe that today is better than yesterday, and tomorrow will be far much better than today in this regard.

INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Asserting the autonomy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature (de-linking)

The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature having, over a long period, gained an incisive knowledge into the constitutional and legislative realities of the macro organisation of the state, undertook a strategic change management initiative, commonly known as de-linking, to meet the demands of the rapidly changing legislative and governance landscape in South Africa.

Asserting the autonomy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Legislature is a program aiming at fulfilling the constitutional requirement of all Provincial Legislatures, as provided for in section 116 for a Provincial Legislature to determine and control its internal arrangements, proceedings and procedures. The strategic thrust of this ingenuity, from the 15 years of learning and experience, is to create an opportunity for new parliamentary course of action for the Legislature going forward.

This wide-ranging and overarching change initiative will further the strategic agenda of transformation of the Legislature into a people centred and World-Class African Legislature, working towards a better quality of life for all through excellent services underpinned by participatory democracy and good governance.

To this end the following milestones have been recorded:

- Passing of the enabling legislation to provide the legal basis for the Legislature to effect the de-linking programme in a more accountable manner;
- Development of new policies while reviewing the old ones to align them with the new legislative framework creating policy space for the Legislature to determine its own internal processes;
- Job Evaluation exercise has been conducted across all functional areas of the institution giving the scientific basis for remunerating staff;
- New remuneration structure has been adopted resulting in a complete de-link of the Legislature from the Public Service, resulting in an improvement of our conditions of service;

- Establishment of a process towards the acquisition of Enterprise Resource Planning to enable the Legislature in implementing best practice in areas of Human Resources, Procurement, Finance Management and Asset Management.

Although the Legislature has achieved qualitative advances in this area, however, due to the complexities involved in the de-linking project, it is crucial to take a step back assessment, and identify challenges and weaknesses before going forward with the remaining aspects of the de-linking project. Accordingly, a review session has been commissioned to evaluate the progress thus far and further take the de-linking project to its logical conclusion.

The reputable consulting firm has been appointed, and interaction with the staff has taken place so as to inform the Legislature of the issues that require further attention, and is expected to present a final report before the end of September 2009.

We request all employees, Members and the Provincial Treasury, who is my predecessor in the Legislature, to support this change management effort which intends providing the Legislature with a possibility to regain and reconfigure its internal arrangements, processes and procedures. We will always be indebted to her for the capable stewardship displayed during the conceptual and early implementation stages of a project of this magnitude

Speaker`s Forum Of South Africa And The Sector Policy Support And Budget Support

The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, represented by the Speaker, participates actively in the forum of all South African Legislature Speakers. During the third legislative term, the Speakers took a decision to formalize and institutionalize the legislative sector of South Africa and a Memorandum Of Understanding was entered into. The European Union remains the strategic partner in the funding of the sector-wide programs through the Sector Budget Support Programme.

Key to the legislative policy and strategic outcomes are the following:

- Share learning and development opportunities for Members and employees working for the sector;
- More regional and continental opportunities for dialogue and information sharing on best practice;
- Participation in international parliamentary organisations;
- Involvement in development of electoral systems and voter education;
- Establishment of national norms and standards without undermining the autonomy and independence of the participating legislatures; and
- Coordinating the involvement in parliamentary election observer missions.Â

We will be tabling such a memorandum and relevant policy positions of the Speaker`s Forum to this august House for adoption in due course.

Communications

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Legislature is the knowledge and information institution which means it receives, publishes, processes, preserves and store information relating to the institution. This information is generated through a number of legislative events, projects and processes. It is therefore vital that the institution communicate that kind of information to the public utilising various forms of media channels. This should take into consideration the level of literacy, vastness and diversity of our Province.

The implementation of the communication strategy that was thoroughly researched, should be intensified to ensure effective communication of legislative processes to every corner of the Province.

Through the strategy, a platform for the public to interact with the Legislature presiding officers on Legislature issues and issues that affect them will be created. The nature of the institution demands for

intensified content management which will assist in the realisation of achieving a vision of being a world-class African Legislature in terms of the content that is produced in our Media Production unit.

This in the nutshell strengthens the content of the following: Website, Newsletters, Pamphlets, Leaflets, Media statements, Media Opinions, Advertisements and Radio and Electronic Jingles.

Strengthening this field will position the Legislature and build a better institutional image and profile.

By the end of December 2009 we will be receiving a report on the reviewed communications strategy with recommendations. This will assist us with the relevant and prompt means of engagement with the public as we strengthen the fourth Legislature of Mpumalanga as the representative of the people.

Information Communication Technology

Madam Deputy Speaker, over the past two years, we embarked on the stabilisation of the ICT infrastructure and also providing technical support on ICT related areas.

We have further improved the infrastructure with the *revamping of the chamber* to the tune of *ten million rand*, and we need to regularly maintain it with an annual fee of *nine hundred and seventy four thousand rand*.

However, Madam Deputy Speaker, I must hasten and say that over the past three months we have been encountering a maintenance problem of the system. The matter is receiving the attention it deserves with the then Department of Public Works, as they are the custodian of all government infrastructure.

We have further established a *video conferencing facility* with the funding from the European Union Legislature Support Programme. This facility will enhance our engagement with our counterparts in other provinces and in Parliament. We intend to maximise the use of this service with the permanent delegates to the NCOP on mandates and briefings on legislative processes.

The Legislature has set aside *R2,3 million* to replenish its entire stock of *computers*, of which 19 are for Members and include mobile internet connectivity. This is to ensure that the committees` and the other work of the Legislature is enhanced.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as alluded to earlier, the Legislature is busy with the process towards the acquisition of *Enterprise Resource Planning* to enable the Legislature in implementing best practice in areas of Human Resources, Procurement, Finance Management and Asset Management.

During the current financial year, we have made available an amount of *ten million rand* for the study and the phasing-in the acquisition of the system. The total cost of the system at current value will amount to *twenty five million rand*, and this amount will be covered over the MTEF.

International Relations and Co-operations

On CPA

Madam Deputy Speaker, during this financial year we have been bestowed with the critical responsibility of the Deputy Presidency of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association-Africa region. On the same nerve, we are currently serving as secretariat to the CPA-South Africa. The above implies that the Mpumalanga Legislature is now at an anchor position of building parliamentary democracy in Africa.

We are honoured and highly privileged to host the 41st CPA Africa Region Conference in 2010. Over 20 African countries including Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, Uganda amongst others, will be descending to the province, represented by 1000 delegates for this important Conference. This Africa Regional conference will optimise our dream of being a tourism destination, particularly from the continent.

In this regard, it is essential to allocate sufficient resources and human capital to effectively coordinate inter-parliamentary relations. We will allocate human capital and financial resources to ensure that we successfully execute the task at hand. Whilst, we are at planning stage of this, we will be engaging the Provincial Treasury during the Appropriation Adjustment Process for the funding of the conference.

On APAC

Again Madam Deputy Speaker, we would like to congratulate Hon AF Mahlalela for his election as the Chairperson of Association of Public Accounts Committee (APAC) and Hon RC Mahlobogoane to the Executive Committee of APAC. We wish them all the best in their new responsibilities. As a Legislature, we will continue to support their participation in the Association.

International Study Tours

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are committed to the principle of learning best practices from other state legislatures. We have committed ourselves to undertake two international study tours, one per cluster per annum. These tours will equip Members with valuable insight and understanding of other legislatures legislative processes.

International Co-operations

Madam Deputy Speaker, noting that the province at Executive Council level has established relations and cooperations with other countries` provinces, such as Mozambique- Maputo, Egypt- Ismalia, Germany- North Rhine Westphalia and Canada- Alberta, we have discovered that these agreements were based on executive challenges only, and never took into consideration the Legislature needs. As a result, we never benefited maximally from the agreements entered into.

In addressing the above challenge, we have already instituted measures to deal with this matter between the Legislature and the Executive, in ensuring that we include aspects of parliamentary cooperation on the agreements. It is also our view that we can learn best practices from these countries` provinces on parliamentary matters.

Political Parties Support

Madam Deputy Speaker, in enhancing multi-party democracy, we have provided funding for political parties participating in the legislature on an equitable and proportional basis. Over the past MTEF, we have been allocating resources to political parties so that we have a vibrant and dynamic Legislature, particularly at a political level. These resources were allocated for caucus and constituency allowances so that public representatives are able to execute their responsibilities as dictated by their parties.

During this financial year, we have again, allocated an amount of **R12,6 million** which represents 39% increase from the previous allocation. The allocation will be equitable and proportionally distributed.

ORGANISATIONAL AND BUDGET REVIEW

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have noted that there is an immense task at hand for the 4th Legislature of Mpumalanga as alluded to, above. The primary step for us now will be the review of the organisational structure to meet the new mandate of the 4th Legislature. The organisational structure will focus on the beefing-up of the core functions, particularly Committees` work with competent Researchers, Committee Co-ordinators and Committee Secretaries. We will also strengthen the Office of the Speaker in order to give proper political leadership. For the Office of the Chairperson of Committees to effectively manage, monitor and evaluate committees work, we will have to review its present form.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at administrative level, we will also be able to review the programme structure of the Legislature to be in line with the new mandate. Key to that will be the clear distinction of the core functions support, from general administrative support functions.

In this regard, the location of non-core functions will be removed from the programme that deals with core functions, such as communications which will be moved to corporate services. We shall also begin to establish the internal audit functions in-house immediately, so that after the expiry of the existing contract, we have a fully functional unit.

We will further review other support functions and determine their relevancy to the new mandate and beef-up areas such as ICT, Human Capital Management, Members Interests and Benefits, Monitoring and Evaluation. We will also look at the possibility of incorporating the Treasury Functions to the Speaker's Office. All of the above will be undertaken with the consultation of all affected stakeholders.

Madam Deputy Speaker, once all have been done, we will then embark on a budget review process where we will be costing the new priorities and ensure that as we plan for the five years of the 4th Legislature we are able to allocate the correct baseline, sound and efficient resources to address our mandate and are able to *work together to intensify oversight to foster service delivery to our people*.

The budget review will be the final step towards building a solid administration for the new election mandate, and our timeline is set to be by the end of October 2009.

On Legacy Projects:

Nation Building,

We believe that the Legislature represents the unique space to lead national dialogue and create national consensus on issues of national concern and national interest. As the democratically elected representatives of our people, we bring together the diversity of experiences, cultures and views to be channelled towards formulating a common path to realizing a better quality of life for all South Africans.

Through Public Affairs, the Institution will embark on nation building exercise wherein Drug Abuse programme will be looked at together with the other role players. The Legislature believes that on involving the Public on issues concerning them we can beat the scourge. We will be partnering with business sector and religious community for this course.

Voter Education,

During 2009 elections, Mpumalanga had a sizeable number of spoilt ballot papers, which is the worrying factor to the institution as people were willing to participate in the elections of the country, but due to lack of voter know-how, they could not participate effectively.

This in essence means that voter education should be intensified and be started in time to allow the proper coverage of the whole Province to deal with the Local Government Elections. The Legislature will make use of the Parliamentary Mobile Unit to intensify its Public education and voter education campaigns to assist in drawing as many people as possible. We intend partnering with the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) in this regard.

War on Poverty

Madam Deputy Speaker, during this term, as the Legislature we will ensure that we place the issue of poverty at the apex of our oversight and ensure that we graduate our communities, particularly the vulnerable out of poverty and build a better life for all.

Our strategy will be to ensure that we build partnership with civil society in realizing the dream on eliminating and eradicating poverty.

We shall further encourage individual Honourable Members to conduct community work in their constituencies as our little contribution to the war on poverty.

Human Rights

The interface between the Legislature and civil society is the cornerstone of building a culture of human rights. This approach strengthens participatory democracy at all levels. The Constitution provides for participatory democracy and makes provision for civil society participation in both the national and provincial legislatures.

Our attention will be on farm-workers whose human rights are daily violated. We will be partnering with farm-owners organizations, Human Rights Commission, Department of Labour, Criminal Justice System including the police and other Chapter 9 institutions. We will engage every stakeholder through dialogues, campaigns, and legislative process to ensure that farm-workers are no longer victims of human rights abuses.

As a voice of the poor and the vulnerable, it is our constitutional obligation to ensure that all related legislations are implemented without failure, and that all South Africans are contributing towards this noble objective of respecting human rights of others.

Madam Deputy Speaker, allow me to table the Budget of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature for the 2009/10 financial year. The Budget as reflected in the appropriation as vote 2, has increased with 63% from R97,2m to R158, 8 million for the 2009/10.

Summary Budget allocation per programme is as follows:

Programme 01: Administration:	R69, 914 million
Programme 02: Facilities for Members & Political Parties:	R47, 066 million
Programme 03: Parliamentary Operations:	R41 858 million
Total Budget:	<u>R158,838 million</u>

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Madam Deputy Speaker, as we present this budget for your approval, we would like to once again express our profound appreciation to colleagues in the House and the Ad Hoc Committee for their robust interrogation of our plans.

We would further like to express our appreciation to the Secretary to the Legislature Mr RM Moropa, the Secretariat, Management and Staff for their unconditional support as we resumed our leadership responsibilities of the fourth Legislature of Mpumalanga.

I also extend my sincere thanks to my family: my wife, kids, mom, brothers and sisters for their invaluable support provided to me all my life as I serve the people of the province and the nation. To all Members of this House, let us continue with ***working together to intensify oversight to foster service delivery to our people*** and be a catalyst in delivering a better life for all.

I thank you.