



**Budget Speech by the Speaker of the Free State Legislature,
Hon. M.G. Qabathe
2017/18**

Honourable Deputy Speaker

Honourable Premier

Honourable Members of the Free State Provincial Legislature

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Hon. Deputy Speaker, before I present the budget speech, please allow me to extend words of condolences on the passing of Dr. Rantlai Molemela, we appreciate his efforts

and dedication in contributing on the welfare of the inhabitants of the Free State Province through soccer. His dedication and commitment to this course shows that he was a philanthropist, may his soul rest in peace. I also want to thank the Honourable Premier for naming the former Seeisa Ramobodu stadium after Dr. Rantlai Molemela.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I am humbled and honoured to present to this august House the budget of the Free State Legislature for 2017/2018 financial year. The year in which we celebrate the life of a globally renowned struggle stalwart, a tireless Campaigner who united the world against apartheid namely **Comrade Reginald Oliver Tambo**. In commemorating and celebrating the life of this political giant, **our liberator** for all people black and white, we will continuously learn from his undying philosophy of humanity, liberty and equality.

It is comrade Tambo who advocated the vision of the leadership of the African National Congress when he said: "We have a vision of South Africa in which black and white shall live and work together as equals in conditions of peace and prosperity.

It was a vision espoused by the leadership of the African National Congress and realized through the first democratic elections in 1994. A vision enshrined in our Constitution, as we mark the **Twentieth Year of our Constitution and inception of our National Council of Provinces**, I am glad to inform this House, that some of our youth from our universities participated in a dialogue in Cape Town as part of a national programme to celebrate our Constitution under the auspices of the National Speakers Forum. The programme will roll out in provinces and it will therefore give the Legislative sector an opportunity to reflect on our aspirations and commitments we made to the

citizens of our province and our country. The theme driving the event is: “Following up on our commitments to our people.”

Honourable Members, irrespective of our political ideologies, it remains our collective responsibility to continuously assess progress in the implementation of the commitments made to our citizens. Oliver Reginald Tambo alludes to this commitment of creating a better life for all, when he wrote: **“the fight for freedom must go on until it is won, until our country is free and happy and peaceful as part of the community of men, we cannot rest.”**

So, Hon Deputy Speaker, as long as we are challenged by the scourge of poverty, unemployment and inequalities, **we cannot rest.**

Honourable Deputy Speaker, the vision and mission of the Free State Legislature, is that of **an Activist Legislature that Champions Democracy**. We champion and deepen democracy through:

- law-making
- oversight
- public participation and education
- promoting good governance
- ensuring adherence to the Bill of Rights
- adhering to Chapter 3 of the Constitution

In doing our work, we will seek to create a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist society, as envisioned by Oliver Reginald Tambo when he said:

“We have a vision of South Africa in which black and white shall live and work together as equals in conditions of peace and prosperity.”

Deputy Speaker, we need not to tire nor rest in our fight against racism, and therefore we denounce and discourage any racial attacks and farm killings.

Re tshwela ka mathe diketso tse tshwanang le e etsahetseng Spur. Moroporopo wa monna ya tshosetsang bana le basadi.

Re theoletsa Mmasepala wa Mangaung tlasa boetapele bo hlwahlwa ba Executive Mayor Mme Olly Mlamleli for instituting disciplinary measures and suspending their employee, Chris Kruger, who went to face book after the Spur saga and said:

“All blacks are bastards in my eyes she should be bleeding if I was that man.....for sure blacks belong in the locations and not in public places in town”.

We applaud the Bloemfontein Courant for reporting such a case. Even in ourselves at the Legislature we had to institute disciplinary measures and expel a staff member for calling other members **baboons**.

Ons is geskok en teleurgesteld in die **onlangse aanranding van ‘n bejaarde boer van Villiers in ‘n plaasaanval. Die slagoffer was met ‘n ysterstaaf geslaan, vasgebind en vuurwapens, selfoon and bankkaarte is in die rooftog gesteel**; soos berig in die Volksblad.

It is such cases that indicate to us that we need to do more to focus on nation building and social cohesion and therefore Hon Deputy Speaker, the Speaker's office will be more robust to lead programmes that seek to educate and unite our communities, amongst others, we will hold:

- Dialogues and symposiums on Patriotism, know your country and your province and the right to vote
- Through games, music and drama, we will unite in action, whilst sending a positive message across of building unity and cohesion.
- Through Africa day celebrations we will continue to bring awareness and fight against Afro-phobia and xenophobia
- We will observe national calendar days and other important dates, not by debates only like we normally do, but by actions
- For human rights we will drive a campaign to ensure that our communities know their laws, rights and responsibilities
- For Women's Month (August), we will continue to highlight the plight of women and play oversight on the Police about gender-based violence cases. Also on judiciary, on the effectiveness of protection orders and child maintenance claims.
- For rural and farming communities we are going to roll out health and sanitary programmes. We also appreciate the contribution that we received from Colgate/Palmolive South Africa of 6400 toothpastes and toothbrushes for rural and farming communities for oral health.
- On Youth Month (June), we will continue to host youth parliament and also attend national youth parliament. This time, we are taking the programme down

to municipalities. Municipal Speakers are encouraged to host municipal youth counsels and children counsels, to talk about the right to learn and to expose them to career-pathing linked to the country and the province's needs.

- On Workers Month (May), working together with the Department of Labour and CCMA, we will enhance our oversight and public education on compliance to labour laws. We will forge a social cohesion between farmers and farm workers/farm dwellers.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I am delighted that as **an activist Legislature that champions democracy**, we have undertaken social outreach programmes such as:

- "He-for-She" programme, which is a national programme from the National Speakers Forum; we had hon Member Ramokhoase conducting a workshop for male counterparts to engenderize the gender agenda. In order for men to be more sensitive and actively participate in matters dealing with female victimization and inequalities.
- Virginia Community Development programme and Master Nakedi Games to educate youth and keep them away from social ills like substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and gangsterism. These programmes were led by the Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

LAW-MAKING

Hon. Members one of our constructive roles is to frame and pass legislation that is geared towards the development of the lives of our people. Through legislation and public involvement and participation we are able to reach scores of our people and addressing the societal challenges facing them; the challenges associated with **poverty, unemployment and inequality**. It is through legislation that we guide the behaviour and conduct of our institutions to realise our provincial and national goals; it is through legislation that we convened here today to present the budgets of our departments and the Free State Legislature.

Our continuous relations with the National Council of Provinces in processing Section 76 legislations are yielding positive results and I need to mention that continuous sessions are being held between Legislative Sector and the NCOP to further strengthen these relations.

During the Financial Year 2016/17, the Free State Legislature considered and passed important pieces of legislation and these include inter alia the following:

- i) Special Adjustment Appropriation Act
- ii) Finance Act
- iii) Appropriation Act
- iv) Free State Finance Management Amendment Act
- v) Adjustment Appropriation Act

Mohlomphehi Motsamaisi wa dipuisano re thabela ho fetiswa ha Sekamolao sa Tshebediso ya Dipuo ka hara Provinsi ya Freistata le Sekamolao sa Matlo a Marena.

Sekamolao sa Tshebediso ya Dipuo ka hara Provinsi se tla fana ka taolo tshebedisong ya dipuo ka hara Provinsi le ho ba le dikamano le baahi ba provinsi.

OVERSIGHT

Hon. Deputy Speaker, the oversight function by the Legislature over the Executive Authority is a constitutional mandate; it is a mechanism of checks and balances aimed at ensuring accountability by both the Legislature and Executive Council. Let me borrow from an African proverb that says:

"Milk and honey have different colours but they share the same house peacefully"

Hon. Deputy Speaker on many occasions "the oversight mechanism" has been misconstrued to be a tool for political point-scoring and therefore becomes adversarial; however "oversight" is inherently a barometer on the performance of Executive Council and the Legislature itself. It must be regarded as a robust tool used to identify shortcomings and proposing measures to address those shortcomings. It would therefore be advantageous on the part of all Hon. Members to differ politically on issues of policy but work together on the implementation of such policy. Irrespective of our ideologies, we as Members of the Legislature need to share and complement our efforts to address the challenges facing our inhabitants. The teeth and the tongue no matter how many times the teeth bite the tongue they still stay together in one mouth and they still cooperate with one another to chew and digest food.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, we are confident that with the appointment of staff in the vacant positions in Procedural Services, our committee system will be fully functional. We are

also mindful of further capacitating the committee system through intensive training of its human resource. In this instance, a Memorandum of Understanding with the Central University of Technology will be concluded and will leverage effective oversight and quality report writing.

Hon. Members, together with Office of the Leader of Government Business, we need to strengthen governance relations regarding the management of Questions for Written and Oral Replies; also the attendance and appearance of Members of the Executive before committees of the Legislature; and resolution tracking and implementation. To achieve this goal we are considering amending the Rules and Orders of the Legislature with the main focus on compliance and oversight. These amendments will be finalised during the forthcoming year and a report by the Rules and Orders Committee will be tabled in the Legislature for consideration.

We are also delighted to report to this House that the complement of our Household Committees is established:

- i) The Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests;
- ii) The Government Assurances Committee; and
- iii) The Committee on Budget and Oversight; and
- iv) The Ad-hoc Committee on Petitions

We are in the process of finalising the allocation of both human and financial resources to these committees to ensure that they become fully operational.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION

Hon. Deputy Speaker, we have indicated on many occasions on the importance of public education and participation in law-making and other related stakeholder programmes. We are currently assessing programmes on public education and participation with the intention of improving on this important constitutional obligation. Our early finding on our assessment of public education and participation points to the timing of hosting and identification of stakeholders for public education and participation programmes. Hon. Deputy Speaker, the following are challenges we need to address to ensure effective and responsive public education and participation programmes:

As democracy deepens, it challenges us to do more, in terms of public participation. The example that we can make is on the case of Land Access Movement of South Africa (also referred to as LAMOSAs), on Section 76 bill, which has been referred back by the Courts due to inadequate public participation processes.

The second issue is time allocations for our public participation processes: The challenge we need to address is to ensure effective and responsive public participation by considering the times of hosting public education and public participation programmes. *The current arrangement is that public education programmes are held when many of the relevant stakeholders are at work. In this instance, important legislation is considered without expert advice from the public. For instance, if a portfolio committee on Education conducts public hearings when most of the educators are at*

work, inputs would only be received from the ordinary members of the public and as result inputs to the legislation would fall short of expert inputs.

Motlatsa-Motsamaisi wa dipuisano, phepetso e nngwe eo re tobaneng le yona ke ya hore hangata ha dikomiti tsa Lekgotla la Ketsamelao di etsa mosebetsi wa tsona wa ho nonya setjhaba maikutlo le ho etsa dipheiso molaong (public participation), ho bonahala hangata hore setjhaba ha se pheise molaong empa setjhaba se tla bua ka mathata a sona a kamehla a kang phumantsho ya ditshebeletso tsa mantlha jwalo ka metsi, matlo, motlakase le phumantsho ya mesebetsi. Kahoo, ke maikemisetso a rona hore ha dikomiti tsa Lekgotla la Ketsamelao di etsa mosebetsi wa ho nonya setjhaba maikutlo re be le sebaka sa ho mamela dingongoreho tsena.

It is our intention therefore to consider establishing a “Help-Desk” to record public issues and matters related to basic service delivery. These issues should then be compiled into a report that should be tabled in the Legislature for further consideration. Further discussions with the Chairperson of Committees would follow to make this exercise realisable.

One important aspect of public education and participation is our management of constituency offices. Rule 36 of the Standing Rules and Orders Eighth Edition: 2014 stipulates that on occasion Hon. Members are required to table reports from their constituencies on matters affecting those constituencies. Fact-finding plans are underway to determine the function of constituency offices to make them instrumental in issues affecting communities. The Office of the Speaker will engage with the Chief

Whip of the Legislature to consider establishing sustainable processes of tabling of constituency reports

Provision of Communications & Marketing Services to the Free State Legislature and the Public

Deputy Speaker, for us to realise a better quality of life for all South Africans, through quality access to public information about government and enhance service delivery we have to strengthen our ability to communicate with our masses.

We are proud to say that in strengthening and enhancing access to public information, we directed our fund-raising proceeds from the Annual Charity Golf Day to the community radio stations and each received R10. 000.

In strengthening our capacity, we held a media networking session with print and electronic media to introduce the Legislature, aims and objectives, through presenting our strategic plan, but also ensure that we appreciate our different mandates as we both play oversight.

We have agreed to establish a parliamentary press gallery as a platform for journalists to improve the quality of reporting in line with our comprehensive communication marketing strategy. We will use our key priority areas to increase the profile of the Institution domestically and internationally.

We agreed to have a programme to educate the people about what the Legislature is, what Government is, how to utilize each, when and how

Hon Deputy Speaker, the importance of educating our people, about the Legislature, stems from realizing that people are not adequately informed about the Legislature's Petitions System and therefore use the Office of the Public Protector as the first point of recourse whereas as the Legislature we are the first point of public recourse; and the Public Protector is the last resort when all has failed. This was also reflected during deliberations with the recent visit by the Public Protector.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, the cost of communication is constantly skyrocketing while communication resources are forever dwindling. This has led to us focusing on our internal capacity to achieve our communication objectives. Hence we are introducing to the House our First Edition of our Newsletter which we are proud that is internally done. We are also expanding our digital platforms. Our Facebook Page remains active and is reaching an average of 3,300 people regularly and still needs improvement. But we still need to improve on responding to our face book friends. We need a dedicated staff to manage our social pages.

HANSARD DIRECTORATE

The Hansard Directorate has for years managed to provide the Hansard services despite the financial constraints which severely impacted on staff recruitment in critical positions and as a result had to rely mainly on outsourcing some of the services such as spoken and sign language interpreting services. Consequently, financial constraints have seen the Directorate falling behind with publications of Hansard booklets for distribution to strategic institutions such as libraries and Legal Deposit. We are happy to report that we are addressing the challenge and highly appreciative of the assistance

we are receiving from our Hon. Premier and Hon. MEC Treasury with the Internship Programme.

This pilot project between the Legislature and the Executive Council is bearing fruit because it does not only address challenges of backlogs in the Hansard Directorate but also providing skills to the interns themselves. Given these successes on internship, I would therefore urge and persuade this House to further consider the programme of internship in other Directorates of the Legislature.

It is noteworthy for all Members to appreciate that the Hansard Directorate successfully facilitated the rendering of interpreting services during the Association of Public Accounts Committees' Conference (APAC) that was held in the Free State. The languages that were interpreted into included amongst others, French and Portuguese.

The Hansard Directorate intends to embark on strengthening relations with the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) during 2017.

The Department of Sport; Arts; Culture and Recreation will continue to be our strategic partner, including the University of the Free State and the Central University of Technology.

LEGAL SERVICES

Hon Deputy Speaker: The Office of the Legal Advisor continues to provide procedural and corporate legal services to the Legislature. We are currently faced with a challenge of providing effective legal services owing to the untimely passing of Advocate Phineas Malaka in January 2017. May his soul rest in peace.

HUMAN RESOURCE

Hon Deputy Speaker, The Free State Legislature staff component is 186 posts as per Organogram of which 70% is currently filled. Gender representation is 47% female and 53% male employed. Our disabled officials represent 2% of our workforce, which is in compliance with Employment Equity Act requirements. We have now embarked on a process to fill 20 vacant positions. We are happy that the capacity constraints we have in various directorates will be addressed. The Legislature will review its organizational structure to accommodate new challenges and mandates.

I am also pleased to announce that a number of our Members have completed their certificates in governance and public leadership. As far as staff is concerned; our officials obtained 10 degrees in different academic fields such as commerce, labour, business, administration as well as 2 PhD's in language practice and political transformation and governance.

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Hon Deputy Speaker, we are members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The Association is mainly aimed at sharing common and best practices and to encourage bilateral relations. During 2016, we attended the regional and international conferences in Kenya, Mauritius and London. We are encouraged to build relations with our SADC region and the continent, in order for us to make significant contribution to the aspirations of Africa Agenda 2063. The Legislature will soon be adopting a constitution for the Free State CPA branch.

Chapter 9 and 10 institutions

As part of the Speaker`s Office injunctions, we have established good working relations with Chapter 9 and 10 institutions. We recently had visits from the National Commissioner for Human Rights, Professor Bongani Majola and the Public Protector, Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane. We continue to work well with the Independent Electoral Commission, and I wish to thank our Honourable Deputy Speaker for the sterling work he is performing in this regard.

Financial Management

From a governance and operational position, Hon Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to report that the Legislature is making good progress in the implementation of the Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, also referred to as FMPPLA. Governance structures have been aligned with the requirements of FMPPLA and the annual financial statements of the Legislature were prepared in accordance with

general recognised accounting standards, also referred to as GRAP standards. Members of the Legislature also participated in a workshop to familiarise themselves with the content of the Act. A process has commenced to prepare regulations required by this Act and officials of the Legislature are participating in the development of these regulations. Institutional policies are also being amended to ensure alignment with the Act.

Hon. Members should note that the Office of the Auditor-General is currently auditing the Legislative Sector based on the provisions of this Act and therefore if we are to maintain our clean audit status, we will have to comply fully with the Act and that compliance needs financial injection.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I also want to advise that our governance structures, internal audit and the audit committee are functional. Hon. Members we need to pride ourselves and thank all the workers of the Legislature through their joint effort of dedication and hard work. I am profoundly proud of the fact that the Legislature has achieved a clean audit for four consecutive years.

BUDGET

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Legislature requires a credible budget to implement its strategic objectives. The budget for Vote Two to be appropriated amounts to **R208. 394** million with a further statutory amount of **R25. 650** million. The total budget allocation therefore amounts to **R234. 044** million. It should be noted that the Legislature still projects a shortfall, but can report that retained revenue will be used to minimize the

projected shortfall. Considering the period beyond 2018, amendment of our baseline allocation **must be considered**.

There have been no changes in the structure of the Legislature's Vote. It comprises of 3 programmes and the allocated funding per programme is as follows:

i) **Programme One - Administration: R114. 524 million**

- The programme includes the Office of the Speaker (including the budget allocations to Portfolio Committees),
- the Office of the Secretary to the Legislature (which includes the
- Public and Education Participation Directorate, the Communication and Marketing unit).
- Finance and Corporate Services Directorates
- Communication and Marketing Unit

ii) **Programme Two – Facilities and Benefits to Members and Political Parties**

The total amount of R55. 663 million is allocated to this programme.

Programme 2 of the Legislature's Budget Vote is allocated in its entirety to the support of elected representatives and political parties represented in the Free State Legislature. It provides for (i) transfer payments and (ii) the provision and payment of facilities to Members of the Legislature addressing their travel management, communication and tools of trade.

Hon Deputy Speaker, represented political parties will receive allocations from the Legislature's political party fund. The estimate of all support grants to political parties is confirmed at R52. 251 million.

The constituency allowance increases from R33, 416 to R35, 490 per Member per month. It is expected that parties will be more responsive in linking the Legislature and Executive with the needs of our communities which will inspire and promote political education, to ensure continuous and vital links between the people, organs of state and, in particular, between the people and the Free State Legislature.

iii) **Programme Three - Parliamentary Services – R38. 207 million**

The programme includes the core procedural services to the Legislature: which are 1. Hansard, 2. Legislation and Oversight and 3. Office of the Legal Advisor.

iv) Members Remuneration is budgeted at R25. 650 million and is aligned with the recommendations by the Commission on Remuneration, who advise on salary structures of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures.

CONCLUSION

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity, to thank the Honorable Premier with the amount of support that he has dedicated to the Legislature, we have been cooperating with one another in mutual trust and good faith. We have been able to consult and support one another on matters of common interest, as the Constitution dictates and hope we will continue to do so, with your undivided support, we are optimistic that you will also extend your support again this year on a number of events we intend to host. Working together on budget presentations has enabled the province to effect cost containment measures whilst maintaining being part of communities.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we appreciate the consultations we continuously have with MEC for Treasury in support for the Legislature.

We appreciate the work done by our Public Accounts and Finance Committee and the good working relations that we enjoy with all the departments on oversight and special programmes.

On behalf of Members of the Legislature, I wish to thank all our families, I must also record my appreciation for the continued support of Members of the Legislature, leaders of political parties, you Hon. Deputy Speaker, the Chair of Chairs, Chief Whip and respective party Whips.

As we are bidding farewell to our Secretary, we equally like to express our heartfelt thanks for the contribution that he has made, in this short period. The Presiding Officers and Members of the Free State Legislature have also asked me to pass my sincere appreciation for your unwavering support and enthusiasm. The Members and Free

State Legislatures Staff further requested that I should request that you to remain in touch with us.

Hon Deputy Speaker, let me also take this opportunity to thank our staff of the Legislature in all directorates for their support and diligently ensuring that our institution functions optimally.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I accordingly present the Legislature's Budget Vote 2 for the 2017/18 financial year to the House.

I thank you.

