

**REMARKS TO THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, MR J.L MAHLANGU, MPL, ON THE OCCASION OF DEBATING BUDGET PRINCIPLES**

**Thursday, 26 February 2009**

Madam Speaker;

Honourable Premier;

Honourable Deputy Speaker;

Honourable Members of the Executive Council;

Honourable Members of the Legislature;

Delivering the resolutions of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress during a press conference in Lusaka on 25 June 1985, Comrade Oliver Tambo said and I quote:

*"Those of us who are true liberators should not fight among ourselves. Let us not allow the enemy's dirty tricks department to succeed in getting us to fight one another."*

Indeed as the African National Congress; the party of the people, we continue to the true liberators. We continue to liberate our people from the bondages of poverty and illiteracy. Some of the members in this house, they know themselves, pretend to care for our people, even though they know what their forefathers did to our people. There is an English saying which says **"birds of the same feathers, flock together."**

Honourable Members, despite the economic crisis facing the world and us as a country and province, we strong believe that we are on the right track of providing quality services to our people. Our track-record in government as the caring ANC over the last 15 years, bears testimony to that. We are committed more than ever, to halve poverty by 2014. We are committed as the ANC government, to ensure that ultimately all quintile 1 and 3 schools are no-fee schools.

Our priorities as indicated when the tabled the budget yesterday, will be addressed and realised. As the servant of our people, we will **work together** with social partners and everybody interested; I'm not sure whether others will be interested; to ensure that **we do more** for our people.

I appreciate the constructive inputs by members of the house, who appreciate the work we have done as government. We acknowledge that the work ahead is immense, but in the words of one of our liberation stalwarts, Inkosi Albert Luthuli, "*....nothing has beaten man, if he has striven.*"

Indeed, nothing has beaten the ANC in government because we have always striven, and have thus achieved and fulfilled our commitments.

**Education** remains top of our priority list, with 44.7 per cent (**R10.073 billion**) of the total proposed budget of **R22 Billion, 586 Million, 551 thousand** being allocated to it. Its allocated has been increased from **R8 billion, 934 million, 232 thousand** in 2008, and that's a **whooping 12.7 per cent** increment. Truly Honourable Members, this is a good indication that we are committed to invest in our children, who are the future of this country.

It is followed by **Health** at **R5.429 billion**, which accounts for 24 per cent of the total budget. The increment in the Health budget is **28 per cent**, that is, **R1 billion, 876 million, 679 thousand** more than the current financial year. The budget of Social Development increases to **R792.343 million** from currently **R662.332 million**, which represents an increment of **19.6 per cent** or **R130.011 million**.

Housing receives nearly a billion, that is, **R968.727 million**, up from the current **R736.820 million**, which represent an increase of **31.5 percent**.

Overall, the social services sector including housing will share **R17 billion, 263 million, 721 thousand** of the total budget, which represent **76.57 per cent**. With the budget of roads and transport amounting to **R2.139 billion** or **9.48 per cent** of the total budget, the amount being allocated to the social services sector, housing and roads and transport, represent **86.05 per cent** of our budget.

It is therefore quite evident that our budget proposal is biased towards educating our nation; towards unifying our families; towards keeping our people healthy; towards decently housing our people; and also to contribute to economic development through roads infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, let us **“go forward in faith,”** because as optimists, we know that the storm **shall come to pass**; and when the storm has passed – **there will be sunshine!** And when there’s sunshine, life goes back to normality. *Singa buyela emasimini*, to plough our gardens thereby harnessing food security. In that way, our economy will be rekindled and on the way to recovery.

We appreciate that the house and the opposition has accepted the proposed budget.

As I close, borrowing the words of the 31<sup>st</sup> President of the USA, Herbert Clark Hoover, and I quote:

*“Honest differences of views and honest debate are not disunity. They are the vital process of policy making among free men”.*

Madam Speaker, our movement is much more united than before – with the sole purpose of delivering a promise of a better life for all. **Working together, we can do more – and further protect the Gains of our National Democratic Revolution!**

*Ngiyathokoza!*