BUDGET VOTE SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE PROVINCIAL MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, SECURITY AND LIAISON, MR FK MORULE, AT THE FREE STATE LEGISLATURE

16 March 2006

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker
Premier of the Free State Provincial Government
Colleagues in the Provincial Executive Council
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature
Honourable mayors and councillors
Esteemed guests
Ladies and gentlemen

Honourable Speaker,

We present this budget vote barely 15 days after our people in their thousands exercised their democratic right to elect their leaders at local government level. In doing so the people of the Free State once more showed their unwavering confidence and trust to their movement, to the people's movement, the African National Congress.

Most importantly, we meet on the occasion of the 94th anniversary of the formation of the African National Congress (ANC); thanks to the living and departed visionaries, revolutionaries, theoreticians and amadelakufa in whose honour we held the said second democratic local government elections.

We managed to hold free and fair local government elections under conditions of relative peace and stability created by our security forces. Accordingly, we need to salute and thank them for such stunning performance.

Achievements for 2005/06

Honourable Speaker,

It is precisely because of the evolution of our well cherished democracy that transparency and accountability call upon us today to reflect on what we have achieved as a department and what we, all of us, will ceaselessly do to discourage criminality, ensure change in people's lives for the better, particularly in an economically growing and developing province.

In the 2005/06 financial year, we committed the Department of Public Safety, Security and Liaison to numerous deliverables, precisely in fulfilment of the Contract we have with the people of the Free State province.

Commitment

We said the Department would support crime prevention initiatives of municipalities; strengthen community participation in social crime prevention; and establish, sustain and optimise the functional capacity of Community Police Forums (CPFs) and Community Safety Forums (CSFs) in the province.

Achievement

In seeking to achieve the said commitments, the Department held two Provincial Community Safety Forums (CSFs) seminars in June and September 2005. Primary

stakeholders were invited and the purpose of the seminars was mainly to institutionalise the Community Safety Forum (CSF) concept in the province and to position municipalities at the forefront of CSF programmes in the province.

The seminars were then followed by the training of various municipal officials and CPF members on the formulation of local crime prevention strategies. While we had committed ourselves to pilot the CSF concept in six municipalities, the seventh municipality was added at the insistence by the Mayor of Ngwathe.

The process of capacitating the municipal councillors and officials of all seven identified pilot municipalities of Matjhabeng; Metsimaholo; Mangaung; Moqhaka; Maluti-a-Phofung; Ngwathe and Kopanong will continue during the next financial year.

While this is taking place, six more municipalities will be included in the CSF pilot projects. This will bring the number of CSF pilot areas in the province to 13 during the 2006/07 financial year.

The critical importance of the CSFs is their potential to effectively promote an integrated, co-ordinated and multi-agency approach to crime prevention and community safety in the province.

Honourable Speaker,

An audit was conducted to assess the functionality of the CPFs and sector policing in the province. Although certain minor shortcomings were identified, today we are delighted to report that most CPFs within our province are fully functional.

This is indeed reflected in the decrease in the levels of crime within the province. It is therefore our firm belief that the establishment of the CSFs will surely catalyse the crime prevention approach of both community and police-driven structures.

Furthermore, the Department managed to train all members of CPFs at 19 priority stations on project management. This training resulted in these CPFs identifying and prioritising crime-prevention projects at various police stations in the province.

The CPF projects focused on alcohol and substance induced crimes such as domestic violence; rape; common robbery; common assault; housebreaking and theft/burglary and gangsterism.

An annual conference of the CPF was held in Mangaung between 3 and 5 February 2006 to assess the performance of the CPFs and to strategise on community safety issues. At that conference, delegates resolved, among others, that collaborative and cooperative relations between the CPF structures and various components of the criminal justice system should be developed and strengthened.

Commitment

Honourable Speaker, we made an undertaking that the Department would support crime prevention projects of the Social cluster.

Achievement

In order to create safe and effective teaching and learning environments in the province, the Department maintained consultation with the provincial Department of Education

with the purpose of identifying 19 pilot schools at which school safety programmes and projects would be implemented.

The focus of the said programmes and projects is on the causes of youth violence, such as bullying, gangs, alcohol and drug abuse, guns, weapons and the sexual abuse of learners.

We have already installed billboards at 19 schools in the Province as part of government's crime prevention drive while at the same time popularising the department's toll-free number.

Furthermore, the Department in collaboration with the CPF and the South African Police Service (SAPS) intervened and assisted in normalising the situation in Meloding where schooling was disrupted by gangsterism.

Commitment

Honourable Speaker,

We said the Department would, as an integral part of its oversight responsibility, work closely with the South African Police management to ensure the effective transformation of the police service.

Achievement

We managed to conduct four inspection visits to each of the 19 high crime police stations in the province.

The main purpose of these police station visits was to monitor the implementation of sound employment policies; responsive and equitable police service delivery; transparent police decision making; efficient utilisation and distribution of police resources; and public complaints against and compliments for the police.

Where necessary, police personnel was increased, additional resources provided and senior officers from Area Management allocated to these stations as care-takers to assist Station Commissioners. Such intervention measures have yielded positive results where statistics indicate a decrease in levels of crime.

Commitment

Honourable Speaker, we stressed that the Department would promote factual communication and dialoguing with communities and individuals on matters of crime prevention and community safety in the province.

Achievement

The Department disseminated information to communities through the electronic and print media. A total of 48 radio slots (10 to 15 minute spots each) were used to communicate government strategies on crime prevention to a very wide listenership.

The Department received free radio airtime through the generosity of both Lesedi FM and Vodacom whom we would like to thank quite profusely.

Additionally, daily newspapers carried our safety and security messages to a variety of target audiences and theme related pamphlets were designed to communicate messages to our communities.

Furthermore, we held 10 public education meetings to raise public awareness and mobilise communities against crime.

Honourable Speaker,

As a component of government that ceaselessly consults and communicates with communities on the ground, the Department of Public Safety, Security and Liaison participated in various national and provincial events during the 2005/06 financial year.

These included 16 Days of Activism Against Violence and Abuse of Women and Children which was celebrated in Bethlehem from 24 to 26 October 2005; at JB Mafora in Mangaung on 3 December 2005 and, lastly, at Edenburg on 8 December 2005.

These events were preceded by the Provincial Anti Rape Summit on 18 and 19 August 2005. The purpose of the Summit was to gather information by which to develop an effective anti-rape strategy that would focus on improving the reporting of rape cases to the police.

The World AIDS Day was honoured on 6 December 2005 through a visit to the "We Care Day Centre" at Allanridge in the Matjhabeng municipality, to offer support to the HIV and AIDS infected children.

The celebrations of the Safety and Security Month from 13 to 28 February 2006 to mobilise communities against crime in the province were staged at Dewetsdorp in the Motheo District; Smithfield, in the Xhariep District; Meloding in the Lejweleputswa District and Warden in the Thabo Mofutsanyane District.

All 109 Community Police Forums (CPFs) located at different police stations interacted meaningfully with communities and sectoral organisations in February, which is our Safety and Security Month.

The interaction stressed the need for people to accept personal responsibility for tackling crime; mobilise communities to report all criminal or suspicious activities to the police; and strengthen relations between the police and the public.

Honourable Speaker,

We managed to establish a specialised unit in our department which will primarily focus, among others, on:

- Conducting research on the policing needs and priorities of the Free State communities with specific reference to community-based police structures;
- Participating and contributing on policy development issues at national, provincial, local government level; and
- Conducting research on the effectiveness and impact of the national, provincial and local policies on the safety and security of communities in the Free State province.

Impact of interventions on criminality in the Province

Honourable Speaker,

Resultant of the effective fulfilment of our commitments as mentioned above, especially in partnership with communities, the South African Police Service, the National Intelligence Agency, the Department of Correctional Services and other primary stakeholders; we are in a position to proudly report to the House today that the levels of crime in the Free State decreased quite significantly during the 2005/06 financial year as compared to the 2004/05 financial year.

For example, statistics indicate that, as compared to the last financial year:

- Attempted murder decreased by 18.02% (1038 to 851);
- Common robbery decreased by 14.61% (3793 to 3239);
- Indecent assault decreased by 10.21% (519 to 466);
- Common assault decreased by 9.93% (18882 to 17007);
- Robbery with aggravating circumstances decreased by 8.70% (3506 to 3201);
- Murder decreased by 4.53% (685 to 654); and
- Rape decreased by 4.37% (2976 to 2846).

We take pride in reporting that between 1 April 2005 and 28 February 2006, the police managed to collect and destroy quite a number of firearms in the province. In fact:

- 12 329 firearms were confiscated;
- 31 624 firearms were voluntarily handed over to the police;
- 70 firearm parts were voluntarily handed over to the police;
- 6 248 firearms were destroyed; and
- 56 333 rounds of ammunition were confiscated;

The confiscation and destruction of such a huge quantity of firearms and ammunition will most certainly go a long way in the prevention of firearm-related crimes.

Although we allude to the commendable decrease of acts of criminality in the province, non-reporting of crimes and the withdrawal of cases remain areas of grave concern to us. The majority of crimes, such as domestic violence and sexual assault, take place behind closed doors. They therefore become difficult to police.

Victims of such crimes must report incidents of such nature to the police. Furthermore, they must distance themselves from the temptation of withdrawing criminal charges against the perpetrators.

Both the under-reporting of crimes and the withdrawal of reported cases pose a serious threat to the efforts of government to develop effective preventive strategies against those who disrespect and violate the constitutional rights of others.

Honourable Speaker,

The reduction in the levels of crime undoubtedly contributes to accelerated economic growth and development of the province. A safe and secure Free State will be able to attract, retain and expand economic and business opportunities.

Most importantly, it is through economic growth that we can realise economic development which will inevitably lead to poverty alleviation, skills development and job creation.

It is precisely for that reason that we, during the next financial year, intend partnering with the Department of Tourism, Environmental and Economic Affairs to develop a

Provincial Tourism Safety Strategy because today's tourist is likely to be tomorrow's investor.

2006/07 financial year commitments

Honourable Speaker,

Let us sketch out some of our plans as well as those of the SAPS for the 2006/07 financial year. The forthcoming year will be grounded on community participation, respect for human rights; police transformation; police service delivery; efficient utilisation and distribution of police resources; social crime prevention and public education.

The key operational thrust of the Department during the 2006/07 will be:

Firstly, to strengthen the ideal of the Freedom Charter that "The People Shall Govern" through various community platforms such as:

- The ceaseless mobilisation of communities in diverse community based safety and security structures such as Community Police Forums (CPFs), Community Safety Forums (CSFs), Victim Empowerment Committees, etc.
- The structured interface between the department and communities which is intended to facilitate community input into policing policies and plans.
- The establishment of Safer School Committees to ensure security at school through the participation of youth in crime prevention in full partnership with the Department of Education and the SAPS.

Secondly, we intend to strengthen institutional structures and intergovernmental relations on matters relating to crime prevention and community safety at local government level.

This will be implemented with the continuation of the rollout of Community Safety Forums (CSFs) in the province. The establishment of the CSFs will even foster greater spherical interaction between and among national, provincial and local units of government in terms of developing and coordinating integrated safety and security plans.

Thirdly, we shall empower the Provincial Secretariat for Safety and Security:

- by continuing to build a culture of human rights through an effective investigative unit within the Call Centre for alleged policing transgressions and formalised relationship with the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD);
- By continuing to deepen democratic accountability and police oversight;

Fourthly, we must promote communication between the department and communities in the province through the use of electronic and print media, public meetings, newsletters, theme-related pamphlets and posters.

The practical argument in favour of an effective government community interaction is that there cannot be any measure of meaningful accountability and responsiveness without an informed community.

Equally, a passive and complaisant community is a threat not only to democracy, but to accountability, responsive public governance and effective public administration.

Fifthly, the department will continue to monitor and evaluate the transformation of the SAPS.

We will continue to monitor and evaluate such transformation because of our firm belief that for our police to break with the apartheid past which, in its exploitation of the police as a political instrument, created a militaristic, secretive, unaccountable, racist, and violent institution; a new police component can only be effective if established on the basis of the following principles:

- It must be an impartial, well-trained and competent professional service;
- It must be non-racial and non-sexist in practice and in structure;
- It must respect human dignity and uphold and protect human rights;
- It must be established on the ethics of public service and not view itself as the 'masters' of the public
- Policing resources must be fairly distributed to all communities particularly those which have been neglected under apartheid;
- The police must be subjected to an independent complaints and investigation body to ensure that there is no corruption or bias;
- The police must be representative of the community drawing on those talented individuals who have not enrolled in the police service because of its stigma and historical role;
- Above all, the police must be accountable to the people whom they serve.

Unless the police are rooted in and are accountable to the communities in whose name they police, they will not enjoy the support of these communities. The police must establish its policing priorities in consultation with local communities and be subject to the evaluation and control of such communities.

Sixthly, uncompromising on the promotion of quality police service delivery, the department will facilitate the signing of a Free State Provincial Police Service Charter between the South African Police Service and the broader community.

The signing of the Free State Provincial Police Service Charter will be a significant milestone in the process of building and maintaining cooperative and interactive relations between the communities and the police service in the province. It will encourage and enhance a responsive, accountable, open, respectful and high-quality police service in the province.

In essence, the Charter will tell communities the standards of service each police station in the province will provide to them.

Honourable Speaker,

We need to mention that during the 2006/07, the police in the Free State province will focus, among others, on the following operational priorities:

Priority one: To address Organised Crime by focusing on:

- Criminal organisations involved in crime relating to drugs, firearms, vehicles, human trafficking, human organ trafficking, prostitution, endangered species, precious metals and stones;
- Corruption; and
- Commercial crime.

Priority two: To address Serious and Violent Crime by focusing on:

- The proliferation of firearm and its impact on the incidents of murder, armed robbery, and farm attacks, heists and vehicle hijacking;
- Crime combating strategies identified for high and contact crime areas;

Priority three: To address crimes against women and children by focusing on:

- Rape;
- Domestic violence;
- Assault; and
- Child abuse.

Priority four: To improve basic service delivery to all communities by focusing on:

- The implementation of the South African Police Service (SAPS), Service Delivery Improvement Programme at all levels in the SAPS; including:
- The development of the Service Delivery Charters; and setting service standards.

Conclusion

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members,

I would like to conclude by sincerely thanking members of the portfolio committee for Agriculture, Safety and Security for their political oversight over provincial policing.

We also need to mention that the Provincial Commissioner and other members of the police service deserve accolades for their cooperation and collaboration.

The Head and staff of the Department of Public Safety, Security and Liaison were equally selfless in their dedication to good public administration and effective service delivery.

Our special words of gratitude are extended to members of the political and technical clusters; various government departments; municipalities, communities, CPF members and all the volunteers who supported the efforts of our Department to address questions of safety and security in the province.

Again, we remain appreciative of the role played by Lesedi FM and Vodacom for their unselfish contribution to crime prevention in the province.

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members,

I wish to mention that the Premier, through her State of the Province Address, continues to set our government to task on delivering to the people of the Free State.

As African National Congress led government, particularly the Department of Public Safety, Security and Liaison, we are resolved to build on the foundation laid by the living and departed visionaries, revolutionaries, theoreticians and amadelakufa that I mentioned earlier.

Our Contract with the people of the Free State is based on actual service delivery and the betterment of their quality of life. Progress is indeed being made in that regard.

Addressing the opening of Parliament in February 1998, President Rolihlahla Mandela observed as follows:

"We are at the beginning of an arduous and protracted struggle for a better quality of life. In the course of this struggle, we shall have immediate successes; we shall have setbacks; but we shall certainly progress, inch by inch, towards our goal."

Honourable Speaker

Let me therefore present the budget of R31.8 million for the Department of Public Safety, Security and Liaison for the 2006/07 financial year to the House. While acknowledging that the amount is not enough, it will however make a meaningful contribution in the creation of safe environments in which all communities and individuals can be able to live, work and play fearlessly.

I thank you.

Issued by: Department of Public Safety, Security and Liaison, Free State Provincial government