

**RESPONSE TO THE PREMIER'S STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS**

**WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2009**

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The premier went to great lengths to illustrate the state of the province and like a typical health practitioner sketched in some cases how she hoped her government would circumvent some of the hurdles strewn along the way.

The North West province has the knack of making media headlines but for wrong reasons most of the time. If it is not failing municipalities it is striking municipal workers; if it is not wild animals that have devoured youngsters it is farmers who ill treat their employees. If it is not some bungling in health about the identification of a corpse it could as well be the failure of education authorities to attend to some rundown school. The list is endless.

In the same week (June 9, 2009) as the address was delivered, the Sowetan carried a letter decrying the extent to which Dinokana village is being neglected in so far as the provision of water is concerned. It has to be noted that the shortage of water in villages in the Ramotshere Moiloa Municipality has stood out as a sore finger since post 1994.

The question is if there was water before what happened later? In our book while Rural Development is a noble government programme which we

support, we have reservations if the existing programmes are hard to maintain. We in the UCDP hold the view that Rural Development under the stewardship of the ANC will keep receding like a mirage without being realised as has been the case with other projects. We shall watch the Mokgalwaneng pilot project with great interest and hope it will be cascaded to other areas in time.

The least said about the collapsed municipal services the better; but we cannot stand by while Municipalities such as Tswaing at Sannieshof, Ventersdorp and even here in Mafikeng where there are piles of rubbish are on the precipice and can collapse at any time. We look forward to the report that the Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs will release soon. It is common knowledge that municipalities in the North West province fared badly in that report. What is greatly surprising is that way back in 1995 the provincial municipalities were subjected to a similar scrutiny and have never shown any improvement.

There are issues which the Premier gave a wide berth; among them are the following;

- i. For the province to compete favourably with other provinces

communication has to improve. There is no good reason why the North West Government allowed that equipment should be removed from the SABC buildings here in Mmabatho and that it be taken to Auckland Park or wherever. This results in even government communication being stunted as the Premier and MEC's have to go to Johannesburg at great cost temporally and financially only to be in the studio for some 10 or 15 minutes while their counter parts in Kwa Zulu Natal and the Western Cape have the luxury of being interviewed in their backyards. This lopsided arrangement has to be rectified if this province has to be on the same footing as others. Gauteng has even the pleasure of studios in Pretoria

- ii. The police Headquarters are far away from the provincial capital. This anomaly is only found in the North West. It should not be allowed to continue without being regularised. Provincial Police Headquarters are as a norm in the same town or city as the head of government
- iii. The other anomaly is that found in the Department of Education. The North West is the only province that has the so-called Area Project Offices commonly known as APO's. They

serve no specific purpose except to bloat bureaucracy and delay service delivery; alternatively they are there to provide posts for comrades of some class. Why should this province be the exception to the rule yet the Grade 12 results are not worth writing home about?

We welcome the coming into being of the National Youth Development Agency that was launched yesterday. The UCDP has been vindicated because for years on end we said that the Youth Commissions provincially and nationally as well as Umsobomvu were straws used by those in power to siphon the funds for their friends. We hope the agency will be put to proper use to assist the disadvantaged youths across the length and breadth of the country and provinces in good time.

We in the UCDP are the first to agree with the premier that Agriculture has to be nurtured. The subsistence farmers in the villages need to be cushioned from unscrupulous stock thieves and white commercial farmers who exploit them and take their livestock for almost nothing. In the same breathe we agree with the Premier that farm attacks and killings should be halted forthwith. The police should protect lives and property.

While we expect these men and women in blue to protect us and the FIFA

confederation games as a whole, they should be treated humanely. The reported insecure and filthy conditions under which they are kept while they have to secure the games, should be looked into. If they should do professional work they should be treated professionally.

The scourge of corruption that permeates the public service should be fought with all might. It is a shame that the North West harbours greedy government employees who even masquerade as owners of companies. Even with that they are among those who adjudicate on the allocation of tenders for their own companies.

Projects left incomplete are an eyesore and evidence of poor planning. The sole sow house that stands at Unit 12 in Ikageng, Potchefstroom, the 50 or so RDP houses without roofs at Voordonker, Moses Kotane Municipality and the gravel road that has not been completed between Kayakulu and Elandskuil, Moses Kotane Municipality are clear evidence that in some case there is no supervision or control. This should not be allowed to take place. There is no room for half measures or mediocrity when development is the goal.

We would like to commend the Premier for showing leadership. Except for pleading for unity and peace among the ranks of the ANC she has stood up

to assume the Chairmanship of the provincial Aids Council. She knows fully well that delegation often degenerates into abdication. She knows as No 1 in government she has to take responsibility for all that occurs. We wish her well and pledge our support.

I thank you