

RESPONSE TO THE PREMIER'S ADDRESS

TUESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2011

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(U C D P)

The Hon premier delivered a well measured, down to earth and unpretentious maiden State of the Province Address for which I wish to thank her profusely. There is no doubt that the province is in good hands and surely her appointment is the best thing to have happened to this province since 1994.

The UCDP joins the Premier in commending good performers like the police and hope she will be able to inform the North Westerners why we have the anomaly of the police headquarters being 200 kilometres from the capital. The good performance by the Grade 12 learners cannot go unsaid. We hope they will be top of the heap next time.

We have noted that unlike her predecessors the Premier is aware that Mmabatho is the seat of government and has to live up to that stature; thumbs up for the upgrade.

It is unfortunate that this province is the only one without any official flights across its entire length and breadth. The Mmabatho airport has been in the plans of all successive provincial governments. Road travelling between Mmabatho and Pretoria or Johannesburg nearly cost the life of the Judge President, thanks God she sustained injuries only. It is a matter of time before we lose very senior people in this house on that road. Besides, travelling for three hours by car on a journey that can take 45 minutes by plane is not cost effective in man hours.

We welcome the call to fill all posts in government with properly qualified people, but call on the government to lead from the front by appointing a Public Service Commission representative to a post that has been vacant since 2009. This gives the impression that the post is waiting for some crony.

With the recent reconfiguration of government departments the province finds itself in an unenviable position of making Hollywood look like a Sunday school picnic when one takes into account the number of HOD's acting in their posts. This practice does not bode well for the morale of the officials.

The government should really take advantage of the forthcoming tax rebates for industrialists who create jobs. It will be easier as infrastructure in the form of firms at Mogwase is available. The UCDP agitates for the beneficiation of minerals mined in the province to be done in the province and thus create more jobs.

Coming from deprived people, we in the UCDP plead that government should not be overly concerned about emerging big time farmers to the exclusion of the traditional subsistence farmers. As we speak areas in the Bojanala area are hard hit by the outbreak of lumpy skin among cattle. There are no extension officers. They are always office bound with nothing to do. Baboons are a constant nuisance in the Tshidilamolomo area as they are a head ache to the subsistence groundnut farmers. Our people need help not only those who occupy huge farms as largesse from some white commercial farmers.

While bicycles are welcome for some students, particularly those in farm schools, others in deprived tribal areas walk long distances for their schooling. Tshidilamolomo is again a clear example.

The UCDP calls on the hon. premier to find out why Traditional Councils endowed with minerals on their land have public servants serving as administrators while the traditional councilors are reduced to spectators in the land of their birth.

The mention of the Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (AARTO) is Greek to people in the North West province. It cannot be good that they will also be subjected to this law when they were never educated on what its implications are. Drivers' licenses will most invariably be withdrawn with the demerit system. With it the ranks of the unemployed will rise. People need to be educated first on what each law means to them.

It is appreciated that the EPW Programme will be raised higher but the filling of potholes should be tied to debushing the road reserves as they are overgrown with grass and bushes after the copious rains.