Gauteng plan for the future

Province's premier gives details of expansion and jobs

 Gauteng is taking a lead in implementing the Economic Reconstruction & Recovery

Premier David Makhura said: "We are focusing on our high-growth priority sectors and infrastructure investment projects that will unlock the transformation, modernisation and re-industrialisation of the different corridors and districts of our city region."

The government is improving special economic zones and the township economies to help the province regain lost ground following the negative economic effects of the lockdowns.

"As the industrial hub of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Gauteng city region has adopted a strategic posture of leading the way in the industrialisation and re-industrialisation agenda of our country and continent.

"The development of the single multi-tier special economic zones is the primary anchor of our industrialisation agenda. It is our goal to have at least one zone in each district or metro, specialising in distinct sectors and industries in each corridor," said Makhura.

The government has put about R3bn into bulk infrastructure for the Tshwane automotive special economic zone and has committed to create strategic economic infrastructure that will lead to investment by the private sector. The zones are expected to create thousands of jobs.

"The progress at the Tshwane automotive special economic zone is inspiring," said Makhura. He said the government was investing R3.3bn in infrastructure that has unlocked R4.3bn in investment from suppliers and R15.8bn from Ford Motor Company.

"This is the biggest foreign direct investment since the 2010 World Cup. Tshwane automotive zone will produce 200,000 vehicles by 2022.

"Working with the Mamelodi community, entrepreneurs and SMMEs, the Tshwane automotive zone is providing non-financial and financial support to 262 SMMEs, grades 1-7. Over R1.7bn [47% of infrastructure spend] worth of SMMEs is already allocated and another R531m of work will be allocated to township SMMEs for the build programme to construct the first set of factories.

"In addition, 8,600 construction-related jobs have been created during phase one."

Makhura said the Tshwane automotive zone was a model for a social compact between different sectors. "It is an example of how government can cut red tape and make quick decisions that are able to attract and safeguard investment," he said.

The provincial government has stepped up work with several municipalities, government departments, state-owned entities and private companies to grow the economy and create long-term jobs, he said.

Makhura said that within a year, 3,288



President Cyril Ramaphosa unveils the automotive special economic zone in Tshwane that is expected to bring in investment.



Gauteng premier David Makhura speaks at the development of Tshwane's automotive special economic zone.



Gauteng's special economic zones are expected to bring in investment and create jobs.

new permanent jobs would be created at this zone, 1,200 by Ford and 2,088 by suppliers. Makhura said Ekurhuleni was the manufacturing and aviation hub in the Sadc.

"We opened the OR Tambo International Airport industrial development zone in March 2019, which focuses on jewellery manufacturing and agro-processing.

"The implementation of four precincts of the zone attracted R1.5bn in investments. This zone is a key component of the multilocated Ekurhuleni zone which will attract more value-adding industrial and electronic manufacturers and agro-processors."

The province and the city are working with the Airports Company SA and the aviation industry to improve the airport.

"The construction of the midfield cargo terminal and the development of the western commercial precinct are under way. This will enable the airport to be a regional hub for long-haul passenger and cargo airlines."

President Cyril Ramaphosa announced this month that the Lanseria smart city plan has been signed off. This includes the private sector, four municipalities and the DBSA, which is funding the bulk infrastructure.

"The Gauteng provincial government and

Procurement

government to

anti-corruption

measures, the

premier said.

review all its

forced the

irregularities had

municipalities are tackling all issues that will improve the ease of doing business and enhance the attractiveness of our city region as the preferred destination for domestic and foreign direct investment," said Makhura.

"One critical area of infrastructure investment is about building and ensuring access to high-speed internet. This is crucial for harnessing the opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution.

"We are implementing the Gauteng fourth industrial revolution [4IR] growth and digitalisation strategy, which has four pillars: digital infrastructure, enabling environment,

enabling technologies and human capital development.

"This will enable our city region to build a dynamic digital economy that offers employment to the youth and opportunities to entrepreneurs."

Guided by the Gauteng 4IR and digital transformation panel, the government will roll out initiatives to achieve reliable connectivity that provides access, supports new business, creates new players and markets, and improves government services.

"The infrastructure will also improve Gauteng's competitive positioning through 4IR and other technologies, improve research, development and innovation, and develop skills for the future of work.

"The infrastructure will also result in new approaches in developing policies, frameworks and standards, which include interoperability, privacy, and security, in the context of a rapidly changing world," said Makhura.

"As Gauteng was losing 660,000 jobs during Covid-19, we had substantial activities through our social development, youth development and infrastructure initiatives to create both short-term and permanent

Makhura said the government social development and environmental programmes, infrastructure projects, youth development initiatives and women-empowerment interventions had created about 130,000 jobs and

business opportunities.

"The government can make a direct contribution to job creation and business development while simultaneously creating an enabling environment for the private sectorled massive growth in employment."

Makhura said the provincial governmen had completed public consultations on the Township Economic Development Bill.

"We will table the bill in April for consideration by the Gauteng legislature.

"This year should see the passing of a historic piece of provincial legislation that will remove the institutional and regulatory obstacles that hinder the development and growth of township businesses," he said.

The new Township Economic Development Bill seeks to create new regulations and by-laws that will make it easier and cheaper to formalise more than 90% of informal businesses, enabling these businesses to access financial and non-financial support.

It will also set up an institutional and legal mandate for the Township Economy Partnership Fund that will pull public and private sector resources to pay for townshipbased businesses, especially small business and start-ups that find it difficult to access funding from financial institutions.

"The seed funding is already available. Details will be announced by the MEC for finance and the MEC for economic develop-

ment," said Makhura. He said the bill also seeks to create a legal framework for the provincial government and municipalities to support the develop-

ment of township real estate.

Gauteng introduced more than 4,000 new hospital beds to cope with the pandemic.

'We all worked togetherto fight Covid'

 Though coronavirus has brought destruction and anguish to many lives and livelihoods, the deadly pandemic has proved that the Gauteng government functioned at its "This has mitigated the negative impact of best through collaborations with local municipalities, civil society and business com-

> Gauteng Premier David Makhura highlighted this in his recent State of the Province Address, saying Covid-19 has seen his government work together with other stakeholders "in a way that has never been seen before" to improve service delivery to save lives and livelihoods.

"The province has established innovative, agile, and adaptive governance structures which ensured that there is a coordinated response to Covid-19 from national, provincial to local government level.

"Provincial and local government are now working together in a way never seen before, bringing us closer to the ideal governance model of a City Region," he said.

Makhura said his government's response to the coronavirus pandemic was informed by scientific advice, with an emphasis on data-driven and evidence-based decisionmaking.

"As policy makers, we understood the specific trajectory of the pandemic in our province and further enhanced our Covid-19 response in dealing with hot spots and in communicating key messages to the public.

"Close interactions and collective interventions with trade unions, business, the faith-based sector, civil society and the ward-based war rooms also helped to raise awareness in hotspots and ensure compliance; and address teething problems of PPE supply."

The provincial government used the response to the pandemic to create additional capacity in the public health system.

Instead of creating field hospitals, Gauteng added new wards in existing hospitals which will be used post Covid-19.

"We have expanded the capacity of the public healthcare system with 4265 new functional beds and 4992 posts created and filled between April 2020 and January 2021. Another 1425 beds are in the final stages of being made functional and operational with additional staffing from the start of the new financial year. This is a significant long term investment that will outlive the COVID-19 pandemic. What is important is to improve patient care, clinical outcomes, meet the ideal clinic standards and prepare the health care system for the NHI," he said.

His words came as the province last week started a vaccination programme in the battle against coronavirus.

"We must also say that without equivocation that vaccines constitute the decisive weapon against pandemics. The vaccination plan has to be rolled out urgently and massively to save lives and enable the economy to recover fully," he said.

"We intend to vaccinate 67% (10.4 million people) of Gauteng's population. We call on the people of our province to get ready to vaccinate in large numbers. Vaccines save lives," he said.

He, however, warned that though there was Covid-19 vaccination programme currently underway and infection rate numbers were steadily declining, there was a big possibility of a deadlier third wave.

"In other words, we need to stop thinking that we will return to the old ways of doing things. We have to build pandemic-proof and disaster-ready institutions and systems as we embrace 'the new normal'," he said. The premier paid tribute to essential ser-

vices workers who have been tirelessly working around the clock risking their lives to save lives. "We commend thousands of essential

workers such as the police, security officers, public servants, the military, agricultural workers, energy workers and workers in retail shops who kept the country going under difficult conditions of lockdown," he said.

New systems to aid creation of 'Gauteng of our dreams'

 The Gauteng government will this year roll out open tender and integrity management systems in all municipalities to curb corruption. The systems will also assist municipalities that have for years been receiving poor audit outcomes from the office of the auditor-general.

"We will roll out the open tender and integrity management systems in all municipalities in order to improve the ethical environment. Most municipalities have been receiving poor audit outcomes from the auditor-general and there is no implementation of the remedial action," said Gauteng premier David Makhura.

"We have constantly asserted that a capable, ethical and developmental state is an indispensable weapon in our struggle to create

the Gauteng of our dreams." Makhura said the government remained committed to integrity and ethics in the Gauteng city region. "The procurement irregularities and corruption allegations during the pandemic have forced us to go back and review the efficacy of all the anti-corruption measures. We will strengthen our prevention, detection, investigation and resolution procedures and push ahead with the institutionalisation of clean governance.

"The implementation of the open tender system, the introduction of integrity management measures, the significant advances on clean audits and the four-year-old partnership with the Special Investigating Unit stand as testimony to our commitment to fighting corruption as well as promoting

clean governance," he said. "We are going to shine a spotlight on ev-

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olution systems and crack the whip on departments and agencies that are bringing the name of our province into disrepute by defrauding the public purse."

"During the fifth administration, we improved clean audit outcomes from 54% to 65% and the balance of the departments and entities obtained unqualified audit reports. We eliminated disclaimers and adverse findings completely from the audit outcomes of the province because we cracked the whip. We will hold accounting officers answerable where there are poor audit outcomes."

But Makhura bemoaned that there was some regression in the 2019/2020 financial year across all departments and entities.

"We are not going to retreat from our goal of seeking to achieve 100% clean audit out-

comes," he said.

"We are equally conscious of the fact that in the eyes of the people, clean governance means an ethical state geared to meet the social needs as well as the economic and political empowerment of citizens to shape their own destinies.

He was, however, greatly concerned that the financial position of many municipalities had deteriorated during the pandemic due to the loss of more than R8.75bn in revenue between April and July 2020. The loss had negative implications for service delivery and affected the resilience of municipalities.

"We are working with all our municipalities in the province to improve their financial viability, which was impacted by the national lockdown. We have a multidisciplinary team of revenue experts as part of the debtmanagement committee to help struggling municipalities to develop an integrated revenue enhancement and debtors management plan and to ensure accurate billing."

RECALIBRATING SOCIAL POLICY

• One of the key priorities of Gauteng themselves so that no-one goes to bed premier David Makhura is to recalibrate hungry." social policy to improve educational and health outcomes, fight crime and protect the most vulnerable sections of the population against urban poverty and hunger.

"As the provincial government, we have always insisted that education is the number one priority in our social policy and human development endeavour," said Gauteng premier David Makhura. "The throughput rate has improved

from 77% in 2019 to 79% in 2020, accounting for almost eight out of 10 learners who started school 12 years ago having completed grade 12 in 2020. This is a mark of progress. Our goal is to increase the throughput rate to 95% by 2030."

Makhura said that during the year under review the Gauteng government "continued to invest in the modernisation of our education system. Over 10,000 classrooms were ICT-enabled, 10,000 LED boards have been installed in classrooms, 20,000 laptops were distributed to educators and 200,000 tablets were distributed to learners."

He said the Covid-19 pandemic "has brought home the stark reality that 19% (3-million) of Gauteng residents are unable to meet their daily nutritional needs".

Makhura said the provincial government will intensify work on combating urban poverty, hunger and homelessness. "We are supporting the creation of community and household food gardens,

The provincial government is also

working hard with law enforcement agencies to make Gauteng a safer place for all its people, in line with its commitment to fight crime, he said.

The government has also provided additional resources to law enforcement agencies, including 50 cars. Gauteng will also provide four mobile police stations, which are currently being manufactured.

"The mobile police stations will help the police to provide services in highdensity areas," Makhura said.

The provincial government has also committed to tackle gender-based violence and femicide decisively by providing five community service centres and 11 sedans prioritised for victim empowerment centres," he said.



We have always insisted that education is the number one priority

David Makhura

to ensure that the 3-million food-insecure Gauteng premier people participate in growing food for