

Mokonyane promises more jobs

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GAUTENG premier Nomvula Mokonyane, in her state of the province address in Johannesburg yesterday, promised to create 196 000 job opportunities through the expanded public works programme.

She also promised another 51 000 part-time and permanent jobs in the coming year.

"Youth unemployment remains one of our most critical challenges. One of the ways in which we are addressing this is through effective skills development coupled with workplace experience, placement in sustainable jobs and the promotion of youth entrepreneurship.

"In the year ahead, working in collaboration with business ... we will ensure that a further 6 500 young people are placed in learnerships, internships and workplace to gain experiential learning," she said.

Mokonyane anchored her speech on the re-industrialisation of the economy and promoting entrepreneurs to create jobs, and said the province had received billions of rand from President Jacob Zuma's Jobs Fund.

Some of the projects earmarked to drive job creation include a R1.6-billion industrial park for small, micro and medium enterprises in Diepsloot, north of Johannesburg, where construction is expected to start in a few months, and a continued multi-billion-rand investment into Ford and Nissan that, she said, would support 15 000 direct jobs.

Gauteng DA caucus leader Jack Bloom said Mokonyane had a bad record "particularly in the area of job creation".

Last year, Mokonyane promised that six "township enterprise hubs" would be built to drive entrepreneurship and job creation.

"Not a single one of the six hubs promised last year has been built, and we are now told that the



STANDING TO ATTENTION: Gauteng premier Nomvula Mokonyane at the Gauteng legislature in Johannesburg yesterday Picture: LAUREN MULLIGAN

strategy has been 'revised'.

"The proposed industrial development zone in Diepsloot is promising, but it needs to happen rather than remain pie in the sky."

While Mokonyane dished out a platter of promises, including the purchase of 100 new ambulances to boost emergency response times, road upgrades, and to rid her administration of corruption, she has been recently judged by the state of her health department.

In December, and after an intervention by National Treasury, Mokonyane placed the health department under the administration of the provincial treasury.

Yesterday, Mokonyane admitted that the department still has a major backlog over paying companies within 30 days, saying they had only paid 43% of all service providers on their database.

ON CRIME

Mokonyane said serious crimes had decreased by 8.1% overall.

The number of murders went down by 11%, attempted murder by 16.3% and trio crimes (car hijacking, house robberies and business robberies) by 12.9%.

Mokonyane expressed concern over an increase in

violence against women and children.

ON EDUCATION

Mokonyane said she would continue to provide "dignity packs" to girls to reduce absenteeism from school because of menstruation.

ON HEALTH

In addition to working to reduce teen pregnancies, the province had refurbished facilities at several hospitals.

About R24-million had been spent to install generators at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital to avoid disruptions during surgery.

ted that the department still has a major backlog over paying companies within 30 days, saying they had only paid 43% of all service providers on their database.

She refused to give further details of when the department

would recover. The Times reported that the department's finances have run dry, and treasury will on March 5 ask the legislature to approve a further R2.6-billion to bolster the department's goods and services budget.

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