MEDIA STATEMENT
Executive Council Lekgotla

To all media

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EC Premier Kiviet calls for collective efforts to turn the tide

and accelerate service delivery

Eastern Cape Premier Noxolo Kiviet has called on provincial political and administration leadership to join hands to help turn the tide in service delivery challenges facing some departments and municipalities in the province.

Addressing an Executive Council Lekgotla held at the East London International Convention Centre today – 31 January 2012, Premier Kiviet said good progress was made in a number of areas that include reduced numbers of Departments receiving disclaimers and qualified audits opinions over the past five years. She directed all departments to work collectively in assisting the Departments of Education and Health that take more than 75% of the provincial budget to overcome challenges of increased amount of wasteful, fruitless and irregular expenditure; under-spending on the infrastructure budget; as well as over-spending on compensation of employees.

She said the turn-around strategies adopted to address institutional challenges facing these two Departments including the implementation of Section 100 (1) (b)) in the Department of Education must be implemented with vigour so that things can return to normality sooner rather than later.

She said government has passed the mid-term period in the current electoral cycle and urged all to use the third year as a cardinal point in paving the way to reach the targets set to deliver on the 2009 electoral mandate. Premier Kiviet also acknowledged a series of great strides made by the province to improve the lives of the people of the Eastern Cape. She cited the creation of over 64 000 jobs through the Extended Public Works Programme, agreements reached with State Owned Enterprises to speed up the implementation of multi-billion-rand strategic projects that are expected to create tens of thousands of jobs. Other achievements of note include the successful provision of scholar transport to more than 56 000 students and reliable feeding of over 1.6 million needy children in more than 5000 schools. The decision to shift non-core scholar transport to the Department of Transport and to decentralize the administration of the nutrition programme to schools has begun to work well.

She said a lot was done, but a lot still more needs to be done to accelerate both economic growth and development, social transformation and rural development with a number of strategic and anchor projects to enhance a “real turn around towards building an Eastern Cape of our dreams”. 
Various government clusters presented their reports and plans for the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) covering Governance and Administration, Social Transformation, Economic Development and the State of Local Government. The Executive Council Legkotla appreciated progress made in moving strategic projects forward during 2011 through rigorous lobbying of national departments and State Owned Enterprises, but said more tangible execution must be the focus in 2012 and during the remaining period of the fourth democratic government. The strategic programmes and projects expected to jack up the development of the Eastern Cape include:

- Improvement of quality education through implementation of the Learner Attainment and Improvement Strategy (LAIS) which helped achieve significant improvements in 2010 academic year;
- Major infrastructure projects that include the, Umzimvubu Water Catchment Project, Transshipment Hub in Coega, Mthatha revitalisation, the N2 Wild Coast Toll road, Biofuel Hub, as well as Agro-processing and forestry development projects. Details on achievements, targets and resource allocations will be outlined by the Premier in her State of the Province Address.

The Executive Council Legkotla also noted with appreciation progress made in strengthening governance in municipalities that includes:

- Deployment of specialists to address supply chain management, contract management, financial management, infrastructure development, internal audit and environmental services; and
- Adoption of anti-corruption strategies and building of institutional capacity for implementing a zero tolerance campaign against fraud and corruption in most departments and municipalities.

The Extended Executive Council Legkotla was attended by the MECs, Mayors, Director General, Heads of Departments, Municipal Managers, as well as representatives of National Departments and State Owned Enterprises.

**Issued by Office of the Premier**

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