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## MEDIA STATEMENT

**Date: 18 February 2014**

**Attention: Assignment Editors / Tourism Reporters**

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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### **PHOSA ENCOURAGES STRICTER SECURITY MEASURES AT TOURISM ESTABLISHMENTS**

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Nelspruit- Mpumalanga MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Mrs. 'Pinky' Phosa has urged private tourism product owners to prioritise the safety of tourists visiting their establishments by beefing up security. This follows isolated incidents of attacks and robbery at some privately-owned tourism establishments in the Province, the latest being the murder of Mr Johannes Cornelissen at a guest establishment in Hazyview last Friday.

“My condolence goes to the family of the late Mr Johannes Cornelissen. I appeal to our people around the area of Hazyview to come forward and assist the law enforcement agencies in arresting the perpetrators of this barbaric crime against innocent people who visit our province,” said Mrs Phosa.

“We strongly denounce any attack on tourists because this barbaric act may negatively impact on our efforts to grow tourism in our Province. If our own people continue to attack visitors to their Province, it is like they are attacking their own visitors, and the message they are implicitly sending is that visitors are not welcome in our Province. I do not think you can treat any person who is visiting your household in that manner. Let us collectively embrace the spirit of Ubuntu, and extend a welcoming hand to our visitors,” added the MEC.

She further emphasized the importance of the tourism industry given that it is one of the pillars of the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path (MEGDP), and has a huge potential to create the much needed jobs for the people of Mpumalanga.





“We have identified tourism as one of the pillars of the MEGDP and the economic driver of the province, with economic spinoff of job creation, poverty reduction and a bridge of inequality. I am therefore appealing to tourism product owners to beef up security at their premises, and to also work together with South African Police Service to ensure that the safety of tourists is not compromised,” said Mrs Phosa.

“As government, we will continue to work very closely with the South African Police Service in partnership with private sector to safe-guard tourists and our people at large. The Province is in the process of developing the Tourism Safety Plan which we believe will strengthen our work in this regard, said Phosa.

The plan will be rolled out all over the Province with a certain level of bias towards the Lowveld area, where most of these tourist attacks are reported. It will involve strengthening the Tourism Safety Monitors Programme in the Province, Tourism Awareness Campaigns to sensitise communities about the importance of the tourism sector, in terms of job creation and its contribution to the provincial economy.

During the Peak Season, Safety Campaigns will conscientize tourists about their safety, and further offer them safety tips. Crime victims will also be offered After-Care support which aims to assist tourists with temporary accommodation, arranging of travelling documents (if lost), amongst others.

MEC Phosa has also committed to work together with all stakeholders in the tourism industry in an effort to ensure an increase in a number of tourist arrivals and their safety in the Province.

“I remain confident about the growth of tourist arrivals from all over the world into our Province, and I believe that working together with all role players in the tourism sector we will be able to make sure that the safety of our tourists becomes government’s number one priority,” concluded MEC Phosa.

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***Issued by the Communication Directorate***

***Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism***

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