



MEDIA STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attention: News Editors/ Assignment Editors

KHOLWANE KEEPS HIS PROMISE BY ENGAGING STREET VENDORS IN PILGRIM'S REST

Pilgrim's Rest – Mpumalanga MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Mr Sikhumbuzo Eric Kholwane, has kept his promise of engaging with street vendors in the historic and tourist town of Pilgrim's Rest, just outside Graskop in the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality. This is in response to the concerns they raised during the recent visit to the town by the MEC and the Minister of Tourism, Mr Derek Hanekom. During the visit on 12 June 2015, the vendors raised concerns about the deteriorating condition of the town, which they say have contributed towards the declining number of tourists, thus affecting their livelihood.

During the engagement, Ms Doris Khoza and Ms Lovey Masinga - some of the vendors, thanked the Department (Economic Development and Tourism) for constructing some of the stalls for them, and requested more of them.

"We thank you MEC for keeping your promise that you will come back and listen to our concerns. We request you to intervene and make sure that all the closed shops are re-opened", said Ms Masinga and Mr Mduduzi Mashego.

The vendors raised various issues ranging from the closed shops to the filling station in the town due to the high rent charged, and this has led to the number of tourists visiting the town deteriorating significantly.

Responding to the vendors, MEC Kholwane indicated that there are plans to rejuvenate and restore this historic town of Pilgrim's Rest following the pronouncement by the President.

"We will work with the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport to resolve the issues you raised. We have your interest at heart hence we want the shops to re-open once all the necessary tendering processes are concluded and new tenants offered opportunities to run the shops", said Mr Kholwane.

He further committed that the Department will assist the community to form co-operatives in order for them to benefit from government procurement activities as well.

“Officials from the Department will come and engage you to see how we can assist you in forming co-operatives which are relevant to the area. We need to investigate which economic sectors will be feasible in your area in order to assist you in forming relevant co-operatives which will benefit meaningfully in those economic sectors”, added the MEC.

He further committed that the Department and other departments will come back and report to the community after compiling a comprehensive response plan.

“Our government is caring, hence I kept my promise that I will come back to listen to you. We will thus move all mountains in our way, to ensure that all your concerns are resolved amicably, in order to move Pilgrim’s Rest forward. We thank you for accepting our invitation and raising issues which directly affect your livelihood”, concluded MEC Kholwane.

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***Issued by the Communication Directorate
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