



**economic development
& tourism**

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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Attention: Assignment Editors/ Reporters/ Journalists

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MPUMALANGA CONSUMER COURT RECOVERS CLOSE TO R8 MILLION ON BEHALF OF CONSUMERS

Mbombela – Mpumalanga’s MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Sikhumbuzo Eric Kholwane says the protection of consumer rights remains a key priority of government, as evidenced by the recovery of more than R7,6 million on behalf of consumers. This was after the Mpumalanga Consumer Court resolved a total of 1,615 reported cases of unscrupulous business practices between April 2014 and March 2015.

“We cannot allow business people to continue to disregard our laws and take our people for granted. We will therefore continue to use the muscle of our consumer courts to protect consumers from unfair and unjustified business practices”, explained MEC Kholwane.

The Department will continue to strengthen its consumer education and awareness programmes and campaigns to conscientise consumers about their rights and responsibilities in order empower them to be vigilant when making everyday business transactions.

Meanwhile MEC Kholwane says the residents of Mpumalanga should make saving an integral part of their lives, indicating that no amount is small to be saved. This follows the *Saving Campaign* which was rolled out by the Department during this month to inculcate the culture of saving within communities.

“I often hear people saying I don’t have enough money to save because I am too poor. No amount of money is too small – you can start with any amount and build on it. When you get an increment or bonus, try to increase your initial saving initiative because it is the money you were not used to living on. I must assure you that you would be making a huge favour for yourself. Trust me on this one”, added Mr Kholwane.

Kholwane is also urging parents to encourage their children to make saving part of their daily lives, indicating that this will reduce the financial burden of government on funding social grants in future, thereby releasing substantial funds to increase funding for critical areas like education and health.

“It is easier to convince a young mind about the benefits of saving today for a better tomorrow. As parents, let us inculcate this culture in our children. The future belongs to those who save for it today”, concluded the MEC.

The Office of the Consumer Protector offers the following advices to improve savings:

- Live economically: don’t buy things you don’t need to keep up with friends and neighbours. Everybody’s needs are different. Live according to your needs!
- Saving is a mind set: save water, electricity and money. Don’t waste anything of value - recycle and pass on old clothes. Swop toys with other parents instead of buying new ones and convert things you don’t use any longer into money by selling them;
- Teach your children to save from early age. They need to know about the household budget. Set them to work for their pocket money;
- Don’t make excuse about why you don’t save saying “I’m too young or I’ll save next month, or only rich people can save, “won’t get you anywhere;
- Start early for retirement. Start saving consistently and seriously for your retirement years, from the first day of your new job. Learn the magic of compound interest. Put aside at least 15 % of your income each month in a safe investment;
- Use credit sparingly and carefully: It is cheaper and more rewarding to wait until you have saved the funds for yourself. It is better to spend money you have earned than to spend money you still have to make;
- If you are in debt, pay it as fast as you can: Handle your credit card very carefully. Remember, a reduction in interest rates should be used to settle debts and not to make more debt;

- Shop around before you buy: compare the prices and benefits. Question the value of each purchase as you make it - Will it build my assets; is it just to show off; is it cheaper elsewhere?
- Learn to resist those tempting media messages.

#ENDS#

Issued by the Communication Directorate

Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development and Tourism

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