



**economic development
& tourism**

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Date: Monday, 18 May 2020

Attention: Journalists, News Editors and Executive Producers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEC NGOMANE ENGAGES ALL TRADITIONAL HEALERS IN MPUMALANGA AS PART OF A DRIVE TO INTERACT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Mbombela – Finance, Economic Development and Tourism MEC, Mr Pat Ngomane says traditional healers, as part of the small business sector, are a critical stakeholder in economic growth activities in Mpumalanga. He said this during a meeting, via video communication, with all traditional healers in Mpumalanga today (Monday, 18 May 2020).

“Traditional healing is also a business; and we truly acknowledge the contribution traditional healers make in the economy of our Province. That is why I decided to convene this meeting after my discussion with their representative, *uGog’* Phephsile Maseko, who raised a concern that their businesses are still closed, although pharmacies are operational. They argue that they are also legally recognised as healers”, explained MEC Ngomane.

Making a presentation on behalf of all traditional healers in the Province, Ms Phephsile Maseko, expressed their frustration that they still cannot operate during level 4 of the lockdown, although their business operations are equivalent to pharmacies which provide Western medicine.

“We are legally recognised as African medicinal practitioners; like pharmacies in towns, we also dispense traditional medicine to our people, and therefore request to be allowed to operate as well. Our financial position has taken a serious knock since the implementation of the lockdown; we need to feed our families, pay creditors and school fees for our children”, explained Ms Maseko.

According to the South African Health Review Report of 2007, the trade in traditional medicines in South Africa was estimated to be worth R29 billion per annum; representing 5.6% of the National Health Budget. More than 27 million people were



said to be consumers of traditional medicine in the country; and indications were that at least 133 000 people were employed in the trade.

“I heard their plea; hence I will raise their concerns within government structures. I have further committed to the meeting, that I will invite the MEC for Health, to join us in our next meeting, next week. This is because I deal with economic issues whereas she (MEC Manzini) deals with health matters, which is the sector the traditional healers are trading in”, added Mr Ngomane.

The meeting was attended by traditional healers from all the three (3) districts of the Province, who were individually afforded an opportunity to raise their concerns which mostly related to them not operating. They pleaded with the MEC to negotiate with government to allow them to re-open.

“Their concerns are genuine; that is why I have committed to respond to them before the end of this month, via Gog’ Maseko, who is their representative”, concluded the MEC.

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***Issued by the Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development and Tourism
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