

FOREWORD BY THE MEC: 2011-2012 ANNUAL REPORT

When the Honourable Premier, Mr D.D Mabuza addressed the Legislature and our nation during the State of the Province Address on 25 February 2011, he said that the province had initiated a process to develop the Provincial Growth Path, in line with the National Growth Path. He indicated that *"central to the proposed Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path, is economic growth that focuses on Job creation and the reduction of poverty and inequalities."*

In line with the Honourable Premier's commitment, we have during the financial year under review, focused on finalising the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path (*the MEGDP*) in consultation with various stakeholders across the province. We met with organised labour and organised business, amongst others, to sell our proposal in terms of the strategy (*the MEGDP*). These stakeholders have bought into the strategy, and made commitments to assist us in our quest to create the much needed jobs in order to alleviate unemployment, poverty and inequality. We are currently finalising the implementation plan for *the MEGDP* which will guide us to realise the targets that we have set.

With regards to providing integrated economic development services to our SMMEs and co-operatives, we continued to provide such services by registering a total of 1433 co-operatives – and increase of 133% from the previous financial year. Through our Public Entity, *MEGA*, we funded 75 businesses including 17 *CRDP* (Comprehensive Rural Development Programme) projects, to the tune of R46, 9 million and further funded 18 home loans to the value of R7, 2 million. *MEGA* has also facilitated export trade to the value of R6, 5 million and new direct investment to the value of R195 million.

We continued to play a critical role with regards to our contribution towards growing tourism in the *SADC* Region, by collaborating with our tourism counterparts in Mozambique and Swaziland, and launched the regional tourism destination brand strategy known as the *TRILAND Brand* on September, 30 last year. This strategy or brand culminates from the joint regional destination marketing commitments as defined in terms of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the three Agencies on the 24th of October 2009 in Swaziland. Through this brand, we intent to (i) develop and position Mpumalanga, Swaziland and Mozambique as a world-class regional tourism destination, (ii) contribute to the integration of the region, (iii) contribute to employment creation, (iv) develop sustainable tourism, (v) participate in the conservation and protection of biodiversity, and (vi) preserve cultural values, heritage and national prides.

In responding to the ongoing onslaught on our endangered rhino species, we have implemented strategies such as de-horning which has become a useful deterrent, and DNA profiling of our rhino population in provincial reserves.

With regard to business regulation and governance, we continued to ensure compliance with the applicable liquor licensing laws; collected gambling levies to the tune of R60 million; and continued to protect consumers from unscrupulous business practices and recovered over R6, 3 million on behalf of consumers.

As a build up to the 17th Congress of Parties (COP-17) of the United Nations held in Durban in November 2011, we hosted the Provincial Climate Change Summit in October last year, where significant views and inputs were raised by civil society, business and government. All these inputs were consolidated into a submission for the Province's contribution to South Africa's position paper at the Climate Change talks. We have also compiled a discussion document on *Climate Change Response*, which includes the mainstreaming of the green economy in the Province through renewable energy and integrated waste management initiatives. In collaboration with the Department of Environmental Affairs, municipalities, industry and community members, we have also compiled the Air Quality Management for the Highveld Air Pollution Priority Area which is now ready for implementation.

In terms of our mandate on environmental sustainability, we continued to review and authorise applications of listed activities in terms of regulations under the *National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 as amended (NEMA)*, and also commented on 13 applications for mine prospecting and licensing. We have also processed 14 applications for Atmospheric Emission Licenses and issued 6 Waste Management Licenses.

In terms of governance structures, we have ensured that our Public Entities operates efficiently by appointing and filling any vacancies in the Boards of Directors of the three (3) entities.

This annual report is therefore intended to give progress to the Honourable Members of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, particularly, to the chairperson and members of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration; Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, on the work performed by our Department (Vote 6) during the financial year under review. This is in terms of the approved Departmental Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan, as mandated by chapter 7(65) of the Public Finance Management Act (*PFMA*), (Act 1 of 1999 as amended).

As the Executing Authority of the Department, it is thus my pleasure to submit the Annual Report on the work of the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism for the financial year ended 31 March 2012, in terms of section 65(1)(a) of the *PFMA* as stated above, to the Speaker of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Honourable Member S.W Lubisi.

M.N MOKOENA, MPL
Executing Authority
Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism