

VOTE 6: POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH (2012-2013) PRESENTED BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR NORMAN MOKOENA, MPL, TO THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE AT RIVERSIDE, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Tuesday, 22 May 2012

Baba Somlomo, Mhlonishwa Mnuz. SW Lubisi;
Phini LikaSomlomo, Mhlonishwa Nkk. V Siwela;
Ndunankulu WesiFundazwe saseMpumalanga, Mhlonishwa Mnuz. DD Mabuza;
Sosiswebhu we Nhlngano ebusayo, Mhlonishwa Nkk. Thandi Shongwe;
Abalingani bami ku-Khabinethi;
Amalungu ahloniphekile esishayamthetho;
USihlalo Wendlu yobukhosi, Ikosi SE Mahlangu;
Umqondisi jikelele wesiFunda saseMpumalanga, Mnuz. Jacob Rabodila;
Inhloko yomnyango wethu, Dokotela Vusanani Dlamini, iNhloko zeminyango ehlukehlukeni;
Ubuholi bezinhloko zikaHulumeni (Public Entities);
Abamele osomabhizinisi;
Ubuholi beziNhlngano zabasebenzi;
Izivakashi eziqavile;
Izintatheli ezikhona phakathi kwethu;
Abangani bethu;
Manene nama Nenekazi

Nelson Mandela one of the greatest moral and Political leaders of our time, an international hero whose lifelong dedication to fight political, social and economic injustices won him the Nobel Peace Prize advised the world through his book the Long Walk to Freedom

"I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of a glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk has not ended."

Having gone past the mid-term point of the current administration, we can pause and look at the glorious vista, and say to ourselves yes much has been achieved since we went to the National polls in 2009, yet much more still needs to be done.

Somlomo ohloniphekile, lapha ngisukuma ukwethula inkulumomgomo yesabelo zimali soMnyango woku Thuthukiswa koMnotho, Ezemvelo nezokuVakasha sangonyaka ka 2012/2013. Inggikithi yenkulumo yami ithi, manje sekuyisikhathi sokuthi sisebenzise amathuba akhona kuMnotho wezemvelo.

“Now is the time to seize opportunities in the Green Economy!”

Uhlelo lwenkulumo yami lume ngalendlela:

Isingeniso sami sizophawula nge-politiki yoMnotho, ngokunikeza isithombe sezomnotho kumhlaba wonke, umnotho kazwelonke kanye nowesifunda. Ngiphawule futhi ngesimo sezomvelo nezokuvakasha.

Ngizolandela ngokuthi nginikeze imiphumela yesabelo zimali wonyaka odlule (2011/2012), esikwazile ukuthi sikwenze njengomnyango kanye nezinkinga esithe sabhekana nazo kanye nezisombululo ezihlongozwayo. Ngizocina ngokwethula esizokwenza kusabelo zimali wonyaka ophezulu 2012-2013.

Somlomo ohloniphekile, nginethemba ukuthi imininingwane engizoyinikeza isishayaMthetho sendlu yaseMpumalanga sizoyipha igunya ukuthi indlu ehloniphekile yamukele lenkulomomgomo yesabelo zimali – 2012/2013.

Somlomo ohloniphekile, ngithanda ukucaphuna uMongameli u Jacob Zuma ngenkathi enikeza inkulumo yakhe yesimo ezweni lonke (09 February 2012) uma ethi:

“IKhabinethi kazwe lonke isithathe isinqumo sokuthi kufanele yenze ngokwedlulele, ukukhulisa umnotho wezwe, ukuze siqede izinkinga zokwesweleka kwemisebenzi, ubumpofu kanye nokungalingani ezweni.”

Lenkulumo mgomo yomnyango wethu, izothula uhlelo lokulwa nalenkinga eyinxantathu (triple challenges). Ngokuthi sigcizelele amathuba akhona kuMnotho wezemvelo nakweminye imikhakha, kodwa ke ngaphambi kokuthi ngiqhubeke ngizothanda ukuthi ngihalalisele iqembu elibusayo ngokugubha iminyaka elikhulu yasungulwa.

Honourable Speaker, we are tabling this budget and policy statement at a historic moment. The organization I am privileged to represent is celebrating its centenary. It has seen a steady advance to victory, traced back to its formation in that modest church in the city of Mangaung, a hundred years ago. This is the unique and impressive claim that we are able to make.

It is significant that the ANC, founded by people of Africa, should now be playing such a key role in ensuring that the African diaspora is brought together in strength, as the African century predictably unfolds. These events form a lodestar which helps us fully to grasp the importance of current achievements, as we draw on the lessons of our past.

The process of our growing nationhood helps us to craft a **shared vision** as a people irrespective of race, colour or creed, as proclaimed in the Freedom Charter. Yet huge challenges lie ahead.

We would best be served if we heed the warning of the late President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, who told the 1987 ANC conference, in Arusha that **“political power** for the people of South Africa is the key to a **non-racial and democratic future** and would be achieved, but its achievement will only be the beginning. It will not by itself transform the social and economic conditions (of the people of South Africa).”

The ruling party is not oblivious to the meaning of this prediction by one of Africa’s greatest sons, and that is precisely why it realized early in its tenure that the second phase of our struggle is a struggle to take our people out of poverty, inequality and unemployment. So the budget that we are tabling today is but one of the many arsenals in the hands of the developmental state that we are using to give effect to the direction that was inspired, among others, by President Nyerere (may his soul rest in peace).

Mpumalanga is well known for its abundant mineral resources, mined over centuries, which unfortunately has had negative consequences for the environment. The democratic government broadly, and our Department in particular, is placed in a unique position of ensuring that, whilst economic development and mining takes place, it is done responsibly with due care to preserve water resources and the environment. This would keep faith with the wise notion that our universe is not our own, but borrowed from our children.

Therefore, we have expressly taken a collective decision to embrace the concept of a **green economy**. **This, to us, is not a matter of gimmicks or formalities, but rather one of life and death. We shall indeed do everything in our power to tap into the vast potential to create the much-needed job opportunities for the benefit of all our people.**

“Now is the time to seize opportunities in the Green Economy!”

MANDATE OF THE DEPARTMENT

Honourable Members;

Our Department’s mandate is vast and complex given that we perform mandates of four (4) national Departments in one (1), namely, **(1) Economic Development; (2) Trade and Industry; (3) Environmental Affairs; and (4) Tourism**. Thus we are responsible for implementing **Outcome 4** (Employment through Inclusive Growth) and **Outcome 10** (Environmental Assets And Natural Resources That Are Well Protected And Continually Enhanced). But also contribute in achieving the outputs of other outcomes such as outcome 5, 6 and 7.

We are also responsible for three (3) Provincial Public Entities, namely, (1) the Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA); (2) the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA); and (3) the Mpumalanga Gambling Board (MGB). The implication therefore is that we interact with four (4) national Departments at 16 *MinMEC* meetings annually, and given this background, our *Policy and Budget Speech* would take longer than usual, and we plead for your indulgence, Honourable Speaker.

Economic Outlook

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members;

We are part of the borderless global economic tapestry, and it is therefore a **must** that our macro-economic policies and programmes should be influenced by global economic trends. The current global crisis marked by the unfolding global recession imposes an extra obligation on us to redouble our efforts in a bid to ensure that our people are cushioned against new economic threats.

The good news is that South Africa does not have two key weaknesses that one finds in much of the developed world: the impaired banking system and massive government debt. Our credit markets are functioning and we continue to attract foreign capital inflows. Because government debt is relatively low – at around 38% of GDP versus afflicted countries that have debt exceeding 120% of GDP – our government has had the resources to boost the economy in these difficult times and to provide a social safety net for those who are less fortunate. Importantly, our counter-cyclical measures such as infrastructure spending have ensured that we can withstand these adverse economic conditions.

This counter-cyclical drive was evident when President Zuma outlined R3.2 trillion worth of infrastructure projects in his State of the Nation Address. This includes two major projects that speak to our province that is the building of a university and the upgrading of our railway lines. Brick by brick, railway sleeper by railway sleeper, we are laying the groundwork for the delivery of projects which have the potential to thrust our country forward and avoid the worst of the economic slump elsewhere.

Comment [M1]: Suggest we delete this

EFFECT OF GLOBAL ECONOMY ON THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY

Despite the fact that South Africa is exporting more and more to Africa (now our largest destination for manufactured goods) and to China (where exports in US dollar terms have grown by over 600% in the past 5 years and which by far is our largest single-country importer of our minerals), our overall performance has not been what it should be due to the economic circumstances prevalent in our traditional trading partners. Europe is still a key destination taking some 25% of our total exports comprising 28% of manufactured goods and 37% of agricultural goods. Consequently, in terms of volume, exports are still 12% below the peak they reached in the fourth quarter of 2007 just ahead of the global economic crisis.

With the threats to the Eurozone and the likelihood of continued turmoil in the medium term in Europe, it is critical that we pursue the drive to diversify our exports in order to extract maximum value. Over and above this, China is expected to continue to experience growth in the medium term and will continue to be a major recipient of our mining and mining-beneficiated exports.

Accordingly, Africa must and should remain a key focus for our trade and growth. This region is growing in excess of 5% per annum occasioned by the growth of her ties with Asia which is propelled by the burgeoning middle class with rising consumer purchasing power. All this bodes well for our country, but requires the rolling out of infrastructure projects in the SADC region and beyond. These measures should include better cooperation between our respective governments to reduce border delays and costs of trade. I am pleased that our national government is steaming ahead with initiatives aimed precisely to achieve this.

Mpumalanga is and will continue to be a key beneficiary and participant in these efforts of government. Sectors such as retail, tourism and agriculture have already been boosted by the successes in neighbouring Mozambique, but better planning, cooperation and marketing of the region could drive manufacturing activity and other services given the proximity to the ports of Maputo and Richards Bay. All of these initiatives require the participation of the private sector as mutual benefit can only be realised when we work together driven by the shared vision I have spoken about.

Key Economic Indicators

Honourable Speaker;

Our provincial economy has equally demonstrated unprecedented resilience by creating a total 47 000 jobs in 2011. In the main these jobs were created in the following sectors in mining 19 000, in private households 15 000, in transport 5 000, in construction 4000, the balance is split amongst the other sectors. A closer inspection of our employment data reveals that within the last year, employment in all industries increased with the exception of the manufacturing and utilities. In 2011, the industries that accounted for the biggest share of employment in Mpumalanga were trade (at 222 000 jobs) and community services (at 163 000 jobs).

Due to the recession our unemployment rate increased from 23% in 2008 to peak at 30.8% in quarter one of 2011, it has however since improved as of the fourth quarter of 2011, to 27.7%.

The Consumer Price Index for March 2012 shows a national annual inflation of 6.0% and 6.6% for Mpumalanga. In our case, the main drivers of the provincial inflation have been recorded as food, transport as well as housing and utilities.

Honourable Speaker, quite clearly the investor confidence has been boosted by our economic potential to this end, we saw Anglo Coal South Africa investing 4,2 billion rand in the Inyosi Zibulo Colliery which was opened in Ogies earlier in the year of which I had the privilege of launching .

SAPPI invested 3 billion rand in the expansion of Ngodwana mill to include the manufacturing of chemical cellulose for use mainly in the textile industry which will be completed in 2013.

Xstrata is investing 8 billion rand on the expansion of existing operations which has the potential of creating an additional 1 336 permanent jobs as well as 3 400 jobs during the construction phase.

TSB is investing 2 billion rand over the next five (5) years in order to unlock the energy in cane biomass and this is likely to create another 1 222 indirect jobs.

In Lekwa Local Municipality within the Gert Sibande District, Noble Resources will be investing 350 million rand over the next three years in a seed crushing plant. There will be approximately 4000 indirect job opportunities created throughout the whole process in ancillary businesses to the crushing business as well as approximately 150 direct job opportunities. A skills development programme for 150 unemployed youth in the area is planned of which at least 50 will be permanently employed at the plant while the rest will receive certification.

Climate Change and the Green Economy Revolution

Honourable Speaker; Honourable Members;

One of the greatest challenges of our time is Climate Change, which if unmitigated, has the potential to undo and undermine many of the positive advances made in meeting South Africa's own development goals and the Millennium Development Goals. You will recall that our country played host to the 17th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, commonly known as *COP-17*, in Durban late last year. The talks were aimed at ensuring a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol. At the end of the conference, parties reached an agreement to launch a new negotiating process that will develop a new protocol, legal instrument or agreed outcomes by 2015 with implementation by 2020, and covering all countries.

They further agreed on the establishment of the *Green Climate Fund*, as a mechanism to transfer funds from the developed to the developing world, to assist the developing countries with adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change. The fund is expected to distribute at least 100 billion US Dollars per year.

The Green Economy for the MEGDP

In our quest to seize the opportunities in the *Green Economy*, we have prioritised this sector in the **Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path (the MEGDP)**. The MEGDP is thus foregrounded by the four (4) Accords of the National New Growth Path Framework, which includes, amongst others, the Green Economy Accord that was signed by the Minister of Economic Development, Ebrahim Patel, late last year.

Through this Accord, our Province and our country are positioned to take advantage of the possibilities offered by the green economy revolution. As a Province, we will do everything in our power to ensure that we meet all the goals that we have set for ourselves on this issue.

This we will achieve by meeting the promise contained in the theme of this budget policy statement, the theme of which is ***“Now is the time to seize opportunities in the Green Economy!”*** This emerging economy has got benefits in both ways – it has a huge potential to create the much needed job opportunities in abundance, whilst assisting us to *‘Save Tomorrow, Today!’* by preventing the loss of our bio-diversity and ecosystem.

According to the *‘Green Jobs’ Report* produced jointly by the Industrial Development Corporation and the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the green economy presents us with an opportunity to create 98 000 new direct jobs in the short term, and around 462 000 employment opportunities in the formal economy by 2025. Accordingly, the National Treasury has also made available R800 million for the ‘Green Fund’ over the coming two years, as a catalyst to support projects designed to help South Africa’s transition to a low-carbon, resource efficient and job-creating economy.

Given its traditional role as the energy power-house for the SADC region, Mpumalanga must continue to be at the forefront of research and development initiatives on Renewable Energy Technology applications.

In order to adequately address the information gaps and to allow the Provincial Government to meet its integrated energy needs, research initiatives should focus on investigating the economic feasibility of a number of key Renewable Energy Technology options.

It should be noted that the transition from a carbon intensive industrial development towards a low carbon economy, is one of the key aspects for the successful roll-out of *the MEGDP*. Our province is thus sitting on a high potential of utilising renewable energy resources and reclaimed waste to stimulate economic growth. To this end, the immediate areas for the Province, inter alia, include:

- The compilation of an Integrated Renewable Energy Potential Map for the Province – focusing on solar energy; biomass and bio-degradable waste; wind and hydro-power;
- An appraisal exercise of the economic feasibility of the most favourable renewable energy options as a critical component of the energy production sector; and
- The formalisation of the waste management sector, and in particular, providing a framework and appropriate infrastructure and mechanism for trade in reclaimable waste commodities.

Equally important, is the participation of potential investors and entrepreneurs in these initiatives.

“Now is the time to seize opportunities in the Green Economy!”

ICT (Information Communication Technology) Connectivity

Honourable Members;

Another important emerging economic sector is the Information Communication Technology sector which provides a platform for efficiency and faster service delivery. According to international economist, Augusto Lopez-Claros, and I quote:

“The information and communication technologies presently represent one of the most important drivers in boosting efficiency and productivity in today’s fast changing global economy.”

According to the Global Information report released in April 2012, South Africa is placed at position 72 for its overall ICT readiness out of 104 countries. The indicators for the ICT readiness index include political and regulatory environment, business and innovation environment, infrastructure and digital content, affordability, skills, usage (by individuals, government, business) as well as economic and social impacts. This then reveals that the country is not yet leveraging the potential benefits associated with ICT.

In relation to our province, the situation is not encouraging, with apparent low penetration levels of 4% on internet and 9% on telephones. Our ICT consumer penetration level in terms of radio is 78%; cell-phones at 77% and television at 64%. More work needs to be done to improve this situation as it reveals there are people in parts of the province who still do not have access to ICT infrastructure. The benefits of a well-functioning ICT sector in the province cannot be ignored, as among others, they can act as a catalyst for economic growth, job creation and rural development.

REVIEW OF THE PAST FINANCIAL YEAR (2011-2012): PROGRESS MADE

The Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path (MEGDP)

Honourable Speaker; Honourable Members;

Eighteen (18) months ago National Cabinet adopted the New Growth Path as the framework for our economic policies towards 2020. The National Planning Commission has also set out a National Development Plan as a basis of crafting 2030 vision for the country.

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government followed from the National lead and set about customising the New Growth Path for the Province. This resulted in the crafting of the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path (MEGDP), which was adopted six (6) months ago by the Executive Council after extensive consultations. This framework will guide the province in terms of job creation, economic growth and development over a period of ten years.

It has been widely consulted, particularly with big business and labour. We are currently involved in a process of finalising the Programme of Action for the implementation of *the MEGDP* with relevant stakeholders. This will assist us to set aside adequate resources for implementation. We will make a proper announcement in this regard sometime this year.

Human Capital Maximisation

Honourable Members;

For the Province to sustain the drive of MEGDP into the 2030 Vision we need to invest in our Human Capital. *The MEGDP* stresses the need for skills required for economic growth.

Our Department, in collaboration with the Department of Education, has thus been instrumental in the development of the *Provincial Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy* which has since been launched.

This strategy will guide both government and the private sector with respect to areas where investment in human capital can be directed. It will enable us to maximise the potential of the people of Mpumalanga through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, working productively and competitively in order to achieve a rising quality of life for all. The focus in this regard will also include SMME's and Co-operatives.

Integrated Economic Development Services

Honourable Members;

The Department has been given the responsibility to assist municipalities to develop their own local economic development plans in line with the Provincial Plan, to support both co-operative and SMMEs at local level. During the year under review, our regional offices and social partners were busy at work with the registration of co-operatives. We managed to register a total of 1433 co-operatives, which is an increase of 133% over the previous financial year. While the interest shown by our people indicates that the awareness workshops are paying dividends, our challenge is that in most cases, these co-operatives are only able to register and make no further progress.

The implementation of the *CRDP* is giving opportunities to women and the youth in our depressed rural areas. In total, our Department's *CRDP* database has a total of 191 co-operatives, with 129 newly registered and 62 being those already existing. The breakdown of beneficiaries shows that 63% are women and 37% are youth. The percentage for people with disabilities is less than one.

In terms of funding co-operatives, our entity, *MEGA*, managed to fund a total of 17 *CRDP* projects to the value of R7, 4 million, which collectively created 238 new jobs. The projects included bakeries, paint and detergent manufacturing and welding works in the Chief Albert Luthuli, Bushbuckridge, Dr J.S Moroka, Mkhondo, Nkomazi and Thembisile Hani municipalities.

What is also encouraging, is that the Honourable MEC Candith Mashego-Dlamini reported in her Policy and Budget Speech last week that 13 000 jobs were created in *CRDP* sites alone. The economic impact is highly significant, since women and the youth are the major beneficiaries.

In the 2011/12 financial year 669 million 777 thousand 336 rand was spent in *CRDP* sites. In the 2012/13 financial year 1 billion 306 million 506 thousand 669 rand excluding expenditure by Municipalities which will be added in June as their financial year starts in July.

Integrated Institutional Framework for Small Business Public Funding

The Department and its agencies have a close working relationship with National agencies such as Small Enterprise Development Agency (*SEDA*), National Empowerment Fund (*NEF*), Industrial Development Corporation (*IDC*), Small Enterprise Finance Agency (*SEFA*), and National Youth Development Agency (*NYDA*). The *NDA* has already funded projects worth R45 million in the Province; the newly formed Small Enterprise Finance Agency (*SEFA*) which is a 100% *IDC*-owned subsidiary, is well capitalised and resourced to develop *SMMEs* through various financial products such as revolving finance, bridging loans, asset finance, working capital, guarantees and so forth.

As a Department we will ensure that *SMMEs* and Cooperatives in Mpumalanga get a fair share of the cake from such opportunities. We have already assisted a number of *SMMEs* to apply for the R9 billion job fund administered by the *DBSA*. We are awaiting confirmation from the *DBSA* on a number of successful applications from Mpumalanga Province. We also note the active participation of *SEDA* in our *CRDP* by providing business development support to cooperatives. To this end, we also welcome the total of 14 information kiosks to those areas where there are no *SEDA* branches. *SEDA* has supported co-operatives and managed to leverage R3.3 million funding from the private sector to support co-operatives in agriculture, manufacturing and services sector, and as a result 120 permanent jobs were created.

At the same time, in order to increase the bargaining power of rural enterprises and to restrain the powerful from exploiting the weak, we are currently developing a **Co-operatives Preferential Procurement Policy**. It is our firm belief that if co-operatives secure direct contracts, their bargaining power will increase both in terms of accessing loans and establishing entrepreneurs as partners.

I am also proud to report that our investment promotion agency, *MEGA*, was able to facilitate export trade to the value of R6, 5 million and new direct investment to the value of R195 million. Fifty-eight (58) businesses were funded to the value of R39, 5 million – of which 38 were agricultural loans. *MEGA* also managed to fund a total of 18 home loans to the value of R 7.2 million.

In relation to economic empowerment, we managed to mobilise local businesses to participate in opportunities presented by the Eskom *Kusile* project, which resulted in a number of local businesses benefitting from opportunities presented by *Kusile*.

We also embarked on a process to verify companies doing business with the provincial government to check their *BBBEE* compliance.

As at December 2011, the Eskom *Kusile* project had already employed 6 718 people and by 2019 the number would have increased to 22 150. If you go a step further and factor in the multiplier effect of four (4) then 88 600 people would directly be impacted as a result. The Eskom (*Kusile* Project) is doing very well on their skills development programme. They have committed to training 2017 employees and already 798 have completed their training, for 341 training is still in progress and it has planned for the 1465 as the new intake for training in various fields such as artisans, engineers, technicians and so forth. Their work in this regard is commendable.

Trade and Sector Development

In our quest to create sustainable jobs our plan is to focus on sectors with high labour absorbency like the agro-processing sector, mining beneficiation and cultural industries sector. To this end, we have identified the Bushbuckridge Agro-processing Hub as one of the key agricultural sectors where mass employment could be stimulated. A total of 75 people were employed on short term contracts in positions such as construction labourers, drivers, cleaners, skilled workers and project supervisors.

The Employment Creation Fund (ECF) of the Department of Trade and Industry (*the dti*) has through the Department, funded the resuscitation of the Agro-processing hub with a total amount of 23 million 751 thousand 850 rand.

The Cultural Industries Sector plays a very strong supporting role to the Tourism Sector in the Province, both in terms of revenue gained from tourists buying the artefacts, and also the booking of our accommodation facilities while the tourists, musicians and other artists are visiting the Province. It is therefore not surprising that Mbombela Local Municipality in Mpumalanga will be one of the hosting cities of the 2013 African Cup of Nations and we put our hands together for this achievement. As a result, we are working closely with the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation which is a lead department in this area of work.

Honourable Speaker;

“Now is the time to seize opportunities in the Green Economy,” given that South Africa’s future depends on switching to green or renewable energy. In this regard, we have thus completed the pre-feasibility study for the Hydro Electric power plant in Nkomazi, and an expression of interest from Independent Power Producers (IPP) partners has been secured. This is a sign of our commitment to move towards green or renewal energy.

On the tourism sector, our Province continues to remain a destination of choice for international arrivals, as confirmed by the most recent statistics on international arrivals released by South African Tourism at end of 2011.

Statistics place Mpumalanga at third position after Gauteng and the Western Cape, whereby we received 15.8% of the international tourists. We are confident that *Destination Mpumalanga* will continue to remain a captivating and warm destination for discerning international tourists. Mpumalanga is one of only three Provinces that saw increases in the numbers of International tourists in 2011.

The popularity of our Province is also growing among domestic tourists, and this is as a result of a proliferation of vibrant sporting, musical and cultural events. The local organising committee of the Orange African Cup of Nations could not have decided otherwise. We are indeed committed in our endeavour to ensure that more and more South Africans travel to our destination.

We continue to earnestly market Destination Mpumalanga at the annual *Tourism Indaba* in Durban, which is unanimously regarded as the world class annual trade show where provinces showcase their products. This platform provides SMMEs an opportunity to showcase their tourism offerings and to interact with international markets.

In our quest to support and grow small businesses in the tourism sector, we managed to assist 56 SMMEs who participated in the annual *Emerging Tourism Entrepreneur of the Year Awards (ETEYA)*; provided aftercare for the purpose of grading establishments; facilitated the processing of tourism brown road signage applications (in order to comply with municipal by-laws on tourism signage), amongst others.

Through our tourism agency, *the MTPA*, we also facilitated training for 75 unemployed youth between the ages of 18 and 35 years, through the Tourism Ambassadors Programme in collaboration with the National Department of Tourism.

The youth received training in the fields of Event Assistant, Customer Care, and House Keeping. They were recruited from various local municipalities and placed at hospitality facilities in Mbombela, Msukaligwa and Steve Tshwete.

We can also report to the House that the Zithabiseni Resort Land Claim issues have been resolved. The financial status of the Resort has improved tremendously, and policies are now in place. There are positive signs that the resort is heading towards self-sustainability in the next few years, if the situation continues to improve. The resort is beginning to generate revenue which will ease its full dependence on government funding. The general appearance of the Resort has also recently been improved due to the renovations that it has undergone.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members;

In relation to our quest to grow tourism in the SADC Region, I am proud to announce that we've collaborated 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 (for technical co-operation) signed between the three Agencies on the 24th of October 2009 in Swaziland.

The MoU is intended 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.

And for us to claim a stake in regional and international economies, we will focus on improving our relationship with Mozambique and Swaziland in order to enhance regional economic cooperation. To this end, we will develop an implementation plan with bankable projects for this *Tri-land* cooperation agreement.

The MTPA has also concluded and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to conduct feasibility studies for projects concerning the Blyde River Canyon Cable Car, God's Window Skywalk and Bourke's Luck Hotel and Restaurant. It is envisaged that this MoU will accelerate private sector investment in the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve in particular, and the tourism sector overall. These infrastructure investment opportunities are pursued within the scope of integrated management plans of relevant reserves in order to fulfil both biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism mandates of MTPA.

Furthermore, the MTPA is successfully leading a multi-institutional project on the development of a regional action plan to be funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding towards creation of economic development opportunities in biodiversity conservation for rural communities in the Bushbuckridge area. This important project links the Kruger National Park, neighbouring Provincial reserves (Blyde River Canyon, Manyeleti, Andover and Bushbuckridge Nature Reserves), and private land owners around Bushbuckridge.

The project enjoys the support of National Department of Environmental Affairs, and implementing institutions are MTPA, SANParks and SANBI. The primary objective of the project is to expand and enhance benefits of Protected Areas System, restore ecological processes and enable opportunities derived from better managed natural resources within the larger landscape of the Blyde, Sand and Sabi catchments, including Bushbuckridge. The main concept informing this project is sharing benefits of biodiversity: a regional action to nurture and sustain the contribution of Biodiversity and Ecosystem services to livelihoods and resilient economic development.

Still under biodiversity conservation, I am pleased to report that the MTPA's participation in a multi-stakeholder anti-poaching tactical team of experts that also involves SAPS and SANParks, has yielded successes which include a case in point on the arrest of suspects on Manyeleti Nature Reserve where MTPA, SANParks, SANDF and private partners collaborated together in a concerted effort to arrest a group operating in the area on different properties.

These suspects are currently before court. The importance of involving the local communities and the Traditional Leadership as part of the commitment to win the war against poachers has been identified as key.

In addition to our efforts on wildlife protection, we also implemented strategies such as de-horning and DNA profiling our rhino population in Provincial Reserves. I would like to indicate that while de-horning is not a permanent solution because the Rhino horn grows back after some time, it has however become a useful deterrent. DNA profiling on the other hand improves statistical probabilities of conviction during prosecution of poaching cases. Our Wildlife Protection Services have gone beyond the call of duty, and with very limited resources under the current circumstances, I would like to use this opportunity to commend them for their commitment to the task. This area of our work requires more support going forward.

Business Regulation and Governance

We can also report that we have during the period under review, conducted 332 inspections on liquor premises. The Liquor Board was able to approve 341 liquor licences, out of the 781 applications made. Given the social ills associated with liquor, we further conducted 31 education and awareness workshops in partnership with the National Liquor Authority, the SA Police Service, the South African Breweries (SAB), the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison, the Department of Health and the Department of Social Development.

With regard to collecting gambling levies and taxes due to the provincial fiscus, our Public Entity, the *Mpumalanga Gambling Board (the MGB)* has collected approximately R60 million during the year under review. Although this milestone is appreciated, *the MGB* continued to place a high premium on balancing the social costs and benefits of the gambling industry through public awareness campaigns on responsible gambling.

Furthermore, responsible gambling messages are from time to time placed in the media to conscientise the people of our province about the ills associated with irresponsible gambling. Together with the MGB we supported "Miss Mpumalanga" again this year.

At this stage Honourable Speaker, allow me to request **Miss Mpumalanga Lungile Libambo**, who is from Nkangala Region to take a bow. I am pleased to announce that we are appointing Miss Libambo as the official Ambassador for the promotion of responsible gambling campaign ensuring that our communities understand the impact of irresponsible gambling.

Honourable Speaker;

We continue to be committed to protect consumers from unscrupulous business practices. To this end, we managed to resolve 1974 reported consumer case out of 2085 received, and in the process recovered over R6, 3 million on behalf of consumers.

We applaud the positive results which are attributed to the effectiveness and momentum of the Mpumalanga Consumer Affairs Court. The Court adjudicated over 56 complex cases which could not be resolved at the level of mediation and negotiations with the respondents.

Environmental Services

Honourable Speaker; Honourable Members;

Climate Change remains high on the international and national agenda. To this end, our Department will roll out an extensive Climate Change Literacy programme focusing on both schools and communities. A total of 54 community groups and 180 schools registered for the programme – exceeding the target of 90 schools, that is, five (5) per municipality. In support of the Climate Change Literacy Programme, we have developed a Climate Change Literacy Manual and Climate Change Literacy Board Game – the only one of its kind in South Africa, which we exhibited at the Climate Change Conference last year. As promised, we hosted the Provincial Climate Change Summit in October last year, as a build up to the 17th Congress of Parties (COP-17) of the United Nations held in Durban. 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 also facilitated the hosting of the Provincial Greenest Municipality Competition which saw the Steve Tshwete municipality scooping the first position in the province, and second position nationally and I am sure we can put our hands together for the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality. I am pleased to announce that we exceeded the tree-planting target by planting 9187 trees compared to the set target of 5000 trees.

We also 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)*. Of the 287 applications reviewed, 252 were finalised. Of these finalised applications, 153 environmental authorisations were issued which reflects a 7% decrease from the previous year.

In terms of mine prospecting and licensing, we were able to comment on thirteen (13) applications in terms of the applicable Act.

Despite budget constraints, we continued to make steady progress in the execution of our pollution and waste management mandate. During the period under review, we managed to process 14 applications for Atmospheric Emission Licenses and issued 6 Waste Management Licenses.

We have also compiled a discussion document on *Climate Change Response* in Mpumalanga. This 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, I'm pleased to announce that the Air Quality Management for the Highveld Air Pollution Priority Area (which includes 3 municipalities in Nkangala and 5 in Gert Sibande districts) has been compiled and is ready for implementation.

Honourable Members;

We must recall that legislation mandates us to manage waste; constantly monitor air quality, and to institute protocols towards the management of the Province's aspects and operations that contribute to climate change. Budgetary constraints continue to hinder us from performing our environmental mandate fully. This area of our work has unfortunately been operating with less than 30% of its actual resource requirements, including acute staff shortages and lack of appropriate equipment for effective regulation. As a result, it is regrettable that we were unable to complete the feasibility study for Centralised Waste Management Facilities for Gert Sibande and Nkangala districts, as was planned in the financial year under review.

PLANS/PROGRAMME OF ACTION: 2012-2013

Honourable Speaker;

The guidance by the Executive Council is that going forward Dedet should focus on Strategy Formulation and management, Research and Policy Development, Co-ordination of Policies, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Provincial Economic Trajectory, while departmental agencies in collaboration with Development Finance Institutions (DFI's) focus on implementation of programmes and projects.

Honourable Speaker;

The Department is committed to ensuring that a clean audit is achieved by 2014 in line with outcome 12 which is aimed at enhancing governance. At this point, I would like to commend MGB for their sterling performance in this area of their work having achieved clean audits for the last three consecutive financial years and this is commendable. We are committing ourselves to ensure that our employment equity targets are progressively realised at all occupational levels.

Honourable Members;

Governance structures at our public entities continue to improve. We have now finalised the merger at *MEGA* in terms of the *MEGA* Act of 2010. The entity now has the Board of Directors, as approved by the Executive Council. It has an approved organisational structure, and we are busy finalising the process for the appointment of the CEO. The Premier's notice on the transfer on personnel, assets and liabilities has been published in the Provincial Gazette. The assets, liabilities and personnel of the Mpumalanga Housing Finance Company (*MHFCo*) have now been duly transferred to *MEGA*. We have also at the same time, submitted an application for the listing of *MEGA* to the National Treasury.

In relation to *the MTPA*, we have since stabilised the entity and appointed the Board of Directors. We are also in the process of appointing the CEO.

In relation to the MGB, we have also appointed the Board of Directors. We are now convinced that our public entities will deliver on their mandates.

Honourable Speaker,

Given the challenges that the Honourable Premier outlined during his 2012 State of the Province Address when he said:

“The development of small businesses and co-operatives will be high on the agenda of government. We will revisit our current support approaches with a view of developing comprehensive support packages which can assist in creating viable and successful small businesses and co-operatives.”

We are therefore acting as directed by the Honourable Premier, with the focus on developing the 21 co-operatives that were funded in the 2011-12. Together with our partners, *SEDA*, *NYDA* and *ProductivitySA*, we plan to train all operating co-operatives in the all *CRDP* sites. We do not plan to register new co-operatives for *CRDP* unless the existing non-functional ones will not be able to take up opportunities as become available from time to time.

In partnership with all the *SMMEs* and Co-operatives support institutions in the Province; we will focus specifically on the following areas in changing the approach for the support provided to the sector:

- (a) Upscale the provision of direct mentorship and advanced business skills training in the area of business management, financial management as well as human resources management with special focus on all the co-operatives on the *CRDP* sites. The department in this regard hereby invites partners and service providers with required competencies, National Development institutions operating in the province as well as Provincial Institution to assist.
- (b) Improve the quality of all the products which are produced by co-operatives and *SMMEs* so that they can match the market standards of similar products. This will assist in making their products to be competitive with the products produced by well established business in the same field. Our partners in this regard will be the South African Bureau of Standards (*SABS*) and the National Productivity Institute, amongst others.

Through the Community Works Programme, we intend to use mostly learners to renovate our environmental centres in non-*CRDP* areas.

Honourable Speaker; Honourable Members;

In order to ensure that our people benefit from economic activities within the province, we plan to develop and maintain the Provincial *BBBEE* Database to support implementation of *BBBEE* and the advancement of the amended *PPP* Act which is aligned to *BBBEE*. We will also foster the implementation and monitor the Local Procurement Accord (*LPA*) in both public and private sectors, for the purpose of advancing local procurement thereby strengthening the sustainability of local businesses.

Trade and Sector Development

In relation to *trade and investment promotion*, we will:

- (a) Finalise the *Provincial Investment Strategy*;
- (b) Facilitate export trade to the value of R200 million and new direct investment to the value of R400 million. The marketing efforts will focus on emerging markets – the South-South countries and *BRICS* countries.
- (c) Support and facilitate the implementation of the Lebombo Dry Port project in Komatipoort;
- (d) Facilitate the commercialization of a community based water bottling plant in Donkerhoek in the Mkhondo Local Municipality;
- (e) Fund 72 businesses to the value of R38 million and 10 home loans to the value of R 4 million;
- (f) Operationalise a total of 21 *CRDP* projects such as bakeries, piggery projects, detergent manufacturing projects, to name but a few.

Pertaining to *strategic initiatives*, we plan to solicit funding for the establishment of the food technology centre.

Furthermore, Honourable Members will recall that during the State of the Province Address this year, the Honourable Premier also announced the mandate of providing bulk water and sanitation infrastructure has been given to *MEGA*. To this end, seed funding has been provided to enable the agency to acquire the requisite skills and expertise in order to fast track the implementation of this crucial mandate. We believe that *MEGA*'s plan of action for the financial year will contribute towards creating 1 440 new jobs.

Business Regulation and Governance

The implementation of the Mpumalanga Liquor Licensing Act remains our firm focus. We plan to continue working closely with the *SAPS* in terms of inspecting liquor premises. To this end, we envisage to conduct 400 liquor inspections around the Province. It is of uttermost importance for us to continue to reach out to communities in terms of alcohol abuse awareness campaigns.

In order to highlight the social ills and the negative impact of substance abuse and under-age alcohol consumption, we intend to conduct 20 awareness campaigns in this regard.

The *MGB* will continue to execute its legislative mandate by ensuring that gambling levies and taxes due to the provincial fiscus are collected. The entity will further continue to tackle with more vigour, the need to strengthen the public awareness and education drives to reach a much wider audience within the Province.

Other key priorities for *the MGB* for the 2012-2013 financial-year are:

- (1) Evaluation of applications for 40-machine sites, totalisator and bookmaker operations, for which, more job opportunities, capital investment and maximisation of the revenue base is anticipated; and
- (2) To also sustain the effective regulation of the gambling industry in the Province.

In order to tighten screws to any possible loopholes in our consumer protection laws, we intend to effect legislative amendments to the Mpumalanga Consumer Affairs Act No. 06 of 1998, in order to align it with the National Consumer Protection Act. By so doing, the internationally recognized Consumer Rights will be enshrined into our own Provincial Law. This will provide consumers an accessible; transparent and efficient redress against unfair and exploitative business practices.

Our target for the current financial year is to resolve 1 600 reported consumer cases. We will also continue to intensify our consumer awareness and education programmes.

Economic Planning

In relation to economic planning, we are currently involved in a process of finalising the Programme of Action for the implementation of *the MEGDP* with relevant stakeholders. This process demands thorough investigations in order to determine clear support plans for *the MEGDP*, with interventions that include detailed project plans. This will assist us to set aside adequate resources for implementation. We will make a proper announcement in this regard sometime this year.

We are currently exploring the feasibility of setting up two (2) Special Economic Zones in Govan Mbeki and Nkomazi municipalities in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry (*the dti*).

We are mindful of the economic benefits that can be derived from these initiatives, and will therefore complete the feasibility study during this financial year. We further anticipate that the **Mpumalanga Infrastructure Development Master Plan** will be completed around September/October this year. These projects will be driven by a Provincial Infrastructure Task Team under the leadership of the Honourable Premier.

The Presidential Infrastructure Coordination Commission has released a set of seventeen Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SIP) for the country. These are strategic projects that have been developed and approved to support economic development and address service delivery in the poorest provinces.

We need to gear ourselves towards building our capacity to fully participate and maximize on opportunities that these projects offer.

To mention but a few, the first SIP is the “Unlocking of the Northern Mineral Belt”, with the Waterberg region as the catalyst. This development of the first post-apartheid new urban centre will require rail capacity to be extended to Mpumalanga power station and also for export principally via Richard’s Bay and in future, Maputo via the proposed link through Swaziland from Lothair to Manzini. The additional rail capacity will shift coal from road to rail in Mpumalanga with positive environmental and social benefits. Supportive logistics corridors will help strengthen economic development within the province.

Trade links with our neighbouring countries will be further enhanced by these developments. According to SARS, last year the Lebombo border post, which is the second busiest in South Africa, handled trade volume to the value of R25.1 billion between South Africa and Mozambique. Also, the value of imports and exports between South Africa and Swaziland increased by 27% between 2009 and today where it totals some R20 billion per annum. This underlines the need to enhance our infrastructure in order to set us firmly on the path towards growth and development not only as a province, but as a country and a region within the SADC.

There will be requirements for appropriately skilled workforce to undertake this multi-dimensional project. Over and above that, it will stimulate an increase in the number of trains to fully utilise the infrastructure, thus leading to increased demand for inputs such as steel, wood and cement as well as maintenance operations.

The focus is on improving investment in agricultural and rural infrastructure that supports expansion of production and employment, small scale farming including facilities for fresh produce, packing houses and silos. Support mechanisms needed will include transport links to main networks in the form of rural roads and branch lines as well as irrigation schemes to poor areas.

The Provincial Infrastructure Expenditure 2011/12 stands at 3 billion 31 million 758 thousand rand (98% spend), and the amount for the 2012/13 is 3 billion 95 million 934 thousand rand. Clearly infrastructure development is key to economic growth and development.

We can also report that we have started with the crafting of the Mpumalanga Industrial Plan and the Mpumalanga Trade and Investment Strategy, which we anticipate to complete by September this year.

As we implement *the MEGDP*, there will be a need to tighten and build capacity for economic and employment performance of our initiatives and interventions.

The Department will conduct and co-ordinate economic analysis to monitor and evaluate the implementation, and the impact of *the MEGDP* against the set targets in terms of the performance of the provincial economy including the tracking of jobs.

Our Department, in collaboration with the Office of the Premier, has been mandated to coordinate and report on job creation in both public and private sectors in the province. We will in collaboration with Statistics South Africa, embark on a project to track employment creation by the private sector in the province, disaggregated to the level of local municipalities. This will enable the provincial government to locate exactly in which local municipalities and sectors jobs are being created or destroyed, and what appropriate interventions should be taken to remedy the situation in those specific municipalities.

In relation to the *ICT*, it is our intention to review the *ICT Strategy* for the province, in conjunction with the National Department of Communication (*the DoC*), and ensure its aggressive implementation. We will also upscale *ICT* initiatives in the province which are aimed at bridging the digital divide – most importantly, we will prioritise the underserved areas in our province, that is, the rural areas. It is our intention to position the province to benefit from digital migration programme, and to be a content developer of note to take advantage of the increased spectrum. Working with the National Department of Communication, we will further implement programmes that are targeted at ensuring uptake and usage.

Environmental Services

In continuing to advocate for mitigation of climate change, we will continue to push for the adoption of low carbon energy resources and promote the adoption of environmentally sound waste management practices in society, including communities and industry. To this end, we intend to complete the feasibility study aimed at modelling international best practice on waste management.

We intend to plant 5000 trees in our quest to continue to contribute towards mitigating climate change. It is also our plan to conduct an outreach awareness programme on Environmental Regulatory framework in all local municipalities and government departments in the current financial year.

Honourable Members;

Unless the baseline budget is adjusted, the Department will not be able to fully comply with its mandate on environmental impact assessment applications and realisation of opportunities for the green economy.

BUDGET ALLOCATION (PER PROGRAMME): 2012-2013

Honourable Speaker, allow me to present the proposed budget for Vote 6: Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, per programme, for the financial year ending 31 March 2013:

Programme 1: Administration

In order to amongst others, continue to provide political policy directives; administrative, financial and other support functions to the Department, Programme 1 (Administration) is proposed to be allocated a total amount of **R99 million, 416 thousand**.

Programme 2: Integrated Economic Development Services

Programme 2 (Integrated Economic Development Services) is proposed to be allocated an amount of **R228 million, 162 thousand**, to amongst others, continue to promote and develop small enterprises; facilitate local economic development and ensure the implementation of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Policy. Included in this proposed budget, is an amount of **R207 million, 40 thousand**, to fund the requirements of the *Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA)*.

Programme 3: Trade and Sector Development

It is proposed that Programme 3 (Trade and Sector Development) should be allocated an amount of **R300 million, 268 thousand** to amongst others, continue to ensure growth in exports and investment in the province; ensure the development of competitive industries; and enhance sustainable tourism growth. The proposed budget includes an amount of **R257 million, 275 thousand** to fund the legislative mandates of the *Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency*; and a further **R17 million, 500 thousand** to fund the *Zithabiseni Resort*.

Programme 4: Business Regulation and Governance

Business Regulation and Governance, that is Programme 4, is proposed to receive the total amount of **R60 million, 560 thousand** to continue to ensure compliance with applicable liquor laws; gambling, business practices; and to implement consumer protection and awareness strategies. Included in this amount, is **R41 million, 908 thousand** to enable the *Mpumalanga Gambling Board* to continue to fulfil its legislative mandates.

Programme 5: Economic Planning

In order to continue to formulate provincial economic policy priorities; drive provincial integrated economic planning and coordinate the implementation of the *Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path (the MEGDP)* – the Provincial Growth Path, it is proposed that an amount of **R8 million, 840 thousand** be allocated to Programme 5, that is, Economic Planning.

Programme 6: Environmental Services

Programme 6, that is, Environmental Services is proposed to receive a total amount of **R72 million, 945 thousand**, to amongst others, continue to facilitate sustainable development through environmental planning and governance, environmental awareness; integrated pollution, waste management and the promotion of biodiversity management in the province.

PROPOSED TOTAL BUDGET: 2012-2013

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, the total amount proposed to be appropriated to fund the requirements of Vote 6: Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism for the 2012/2013 financial year is **R770 million, 191 thousand**. This amount includes transfers to public entities reporting to the Department, totalling **R523 million, 723 thousand**. These transfer amounts represent 68 percent of the proposed budget allocation to the Department. I therefore request the House to consider and approve the proposed budget of **R770 million, 191 thousand** for Vote 6 for the financial year ending March 2013.

Conclusion

In closing, allow me to pay homage to our movement, the African National Congress, for continuing with its drive to provide *"A Better life for all" For all our people*. Indeed, working together, we can achieve the objectives that are contained in its various policy documents. My gratitude also goes to the Honourable Premier, Mr DD Mabuza, for his leadership, guidance and selfless contribution to our collective effort aimed at delivering quality basic services to the people of Mpumalanga.

The same goes to my colleagues in the Executive Council and the Provincial Legislature, for their support and encouragement as we carry out our mandate. Many thanks to the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development; Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Honourable Member Refiloe Mahlobogoane, and her team for the excellent work and dedication in overseeing the complex work of the department.

I would also like to thank the Head of Department, Dr Vusanani Dlamini, and the entire staff in the department; the Boards and CEOs of our Public Entities; as well as all our partners in economic development.

To my wife and children, thank you for continuing to support the work I have been mandated to perform in the service of our people

I thank you!