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**economic development
& tourism**

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



POLICY & BUDGET

Speech 2021/2022

Mr PV MKHATSHWA (MPL)
*MEC: Finance, Economic Development
and Tourism*



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VOTE 6: POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH 2021-2022 PRESENTED BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MR PRINCE VUSUMUZI MKHATSHWA, MPL, DURING THE SITTING OF THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, CITY OF MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Tuesday, 08 June 2021

Salutations

Honourable Speaker;

Honourable Premier;

Honourable Deputy Speaker;

Colleagues in the Executive Council;

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Acting Director-General, Mr Peter Nyoni

Acting Head of Department, Ms Gugu Mashiteng and all other HODs;

Chairpersons of the Boards of our Public Entities and CEOs;

Organised Labour; and Private Sector Partners;

The people of our Province, Mpumalanga – *the Place of the Rising Sun*;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and gentlemen.

San'bonani!

Introduction

Madam Speaker;

1. Thank you very much for affording us this opportunity to **present our plans for the 2021-2022 financial year**, which are geared towards steering our Province out of economic doldrums. We present this *Policy and Budget Speech* during a month dedicated to the youth of our country; the people who 45 years ago, bravely took to the streets to protest the draconian apartheid rule – the system which was deliberately designed to limit the capability of the black child.

2. We, therefore, pay homage to the youth of 1976, for their selfless contribution to the struggle which paved the way for the liberation and freedom of the black child.
3. We also table this budget during a difficult economic period, when we are fighting yet another enemy, who this time, is indiscriminate but invisible. I'm talking about the COVID-19 pandemic, which appears to want to wreak havoc on our lives.
4. We have seen economic **growth taking a nose-dive, and the level of unemployment soaring exponentially**, particularly during the hard lockdown.
5. As people, we must therefore continue to act responsibly; we must just follow all health protocols around this ravaging pandemic, so that we can survive and save lives. The impact of this pandemic might be huge, but we must stay positive, and see it as a temporary setback. We must remain hopeful that it shall surely come to pass!

Economic Landscape and Prospects

Honourable Speaker;

6. The ills of the stubborn **triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality** continue to torment our people. Our interventions to stimulate robust economic growth are also falling short, in responding sustainably to these challenges.
7. Although indications are that economic and financial conditions will remain volatile for the foreseeable future, it is not all doom and gloom, as we table our Department's *Policy and Budget* during a slightly better economic environment, than what it was last year.
8. As the Governor of the South African Reserve Bank pointed in the Monetary Policy Statement at the end of March 2021, getting back to pre-pandemic output levels will, however, take some time.
9. Sharply, lower public and private investment last year, and the continued weakness in 2021, will weigh in on growth prospects. As a Province, we regrettably experienced **net job losses of 96 000 in the Province in 2020**.

10. In addition, according to Statistics South Africa's latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Mpumalanga recorded a further 15 000 net job losses in the first quarter of this year.
11. This officially puts the provincial unemployment rate, according to the expanded definition, at **47.6 per cent**, with the majority of the unemployed being young people. Despite these challenges, there is a message of hope to the 4.7 million people of Mpumalanga; that the global, national and provincial economies are busy recovering. This will eventually have a positive impact on our provincial growth.
12. The South African Reserve Bank has now revised both the global and South Africa's growth figures upwards to **6% per cent and 4.2 per cent**, respectively, for 2021. Clearly, this recovery path won't be without challenges, such as fiscal constraints; the roll-out of the vaccine programme; and adjustment to a new economic landscape and the new way of doing things.

Our Commitments and Interventions

Madam Speaker;

13. Kelly Clarkson, in her song entitled *'Stronger'*, says *"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger,"* and I believe it even makes you much wiser. Thus, to mitigate the impact of the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic, we have developed the economy recovery blueprint – dubbed, the **Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (MERRP)**.
14. This Plan consolidates and focuses on impactful economic opportunities to stimulate growth and create the much-needed jobs, especially for the unemployed youth.
15. The MERRP is a Plan that truly brings hope and optimism. In the main, the Plan focuses on **seven (7) priority interventions**; namely:
 - Roll-out massive infrastructure projects across the Province;
 - Growth through industrialisation, localisation and export promotion;
 - Supply of sufficient, secure and reliable energy and green economy initiatives;
 - Employment stimulus;
 - Growth and recovery of tourism;

- Agriculture and food security; and
- Gender and economic inclusion.

16. Although we are in the final stages of consulting social partners on other projects that could be included in the MERRP, we have, working with social partners, already **started implementing some of the projects** proposed in the Plan.

Madam Speaker;

17. In her Inaugural Address, the Honourable Premier, Ms. Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane raised the issue of **enterprise development as a focus area** of her Administration. She indicated that the focus will be on the **development of Industrial Parks** to develop and promote SMMEs and Cooperatives.
18. In response, our Department will, thus, **accelerate coordination and monitor the implementation of the SMMEs' and Cooperatives' strategies**, in line with the growth path. We will further continue to strengthen support to existing and new SMMEs and Cooperatives, so that they can access business opportunities in the various sectors of our economy.
19. Our Department has been successful in working closely with development finance institutions, such as the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), to **assist SMMEs and Cooperatives that were affected by lockdown, to access the SMME Relief Fund**, made available by the National Department of Small Business Development.
20. In this regard, a total of **908 small businesses, including informal businesses, like spaza shops and fruit and vegetables hawkers**, were financially and non-financially assisted.
21. In the 2021-2022 financial year, we want to give particular attention to the **Township and Rural Economy**; we will be developing a **focused strategy**, in this regard, working with youth and women-owned enterprises in particular. We will soon be making a call to our people, to **share innovative ideas** hereon; we believe it is time we hear from them what exactly it is they view as critical areas, wherein we could come in and intervene as Government and private sector partners.

22. Turning to Black Economic Empowerment, according to the B-BBEE Act, a sphere of government, public entity or an organ of state must file the audited annual financial statements and annual report annually, compiled in terms of section 13G (1) of the Act, to the B-BBEE Commission. Thus, our Department aims to ensure that such **reporting on B-BBEE compliance** is adhered to, by embarking in the process of B-BBEE Verification with all the Provincial Departments and its Entities, to track the provincial government progress on B-BBEE compliance.
23. We will also promote the activities of the **Provincial Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Council**, through engagements with social partners, to ensure that businesses owned by black people equally benefit from available economic opportunities, in line with the **Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act**.
24. We further intend to **increase the number of black owned businesses and individuals benefiting from the Black Industrialist Programme** through the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) we have, with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (*the dtic*), and the cooperation forged with the development and funding agencies.
25. We, therefore, call upon potential Black Industrialists to come forward, and **apply for *the dtic's* Industrialist scheme**, which offers a cost sharing grant ranging from 30% to 50%, to a maximum of R50 million. The quantum of the grant depends on the level of black control, and the project's economic benefit and value.
26. The targeted sectors include, amongst others, agro-processing, mineral beneficiation, pulp, paper and furniture, manufacturing-related logistics, clothing, textiles/leather and footwear, industrial infrastructure, as well as most manufacturing sectors in line with the IPAP industrialisation path.
27. Our Department commits to provide the necessary support to the potential industrialists, in terms of the application process, working with the development and funding institutions, to provide support in co-funding and offer business development support.

Growing the economy through re-industrialisation, localisation and export promotion

Honourable Speaker;

28. The roll-out of massive economic infrastructure projects is essential to economic recovery and growth. As a Department, we also share the sentiment that the economy can only achieve sustained growth, if it expands manufacturing.
29. The adoption of the Mpumalanga Industrial Development Plan, and its Implementation Roadmap, as far back as in 2015, was thus informed by this point of view. It is our conviction, therefore, that the **roll-out of the Industrial Development Plan**, will definitely contribute towards the development of an integrated and diversified industrial base in the Province.
30. In this regard, we can inform this august House that construction work at the site of the much-anticipated Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market is progressing well. Overall, the **project is 35 percent complete, with the Agro-processing Building at 42 percent** (roof sheets are installed and finishes are on-going), and the **main Market Building at 22 percent** (concrete surface beds and roofing are in progress).
31. The implementation of the project was delayed by intermittent work stoppages, and the shortage of material, especially steel products, such as structural steel and roof sheets. It should further be noted that if the development continues at the current rate, the Department will require more funds in the current financial year to fastrack the project.
32. Furthermore, when the Department appeared before this august House last year, we indicated that we are **rolling-out the Project Initiation Phase of two (2) Industrial Technology Parks**; namely, the Petro-Chemical Industrial Technology Park in Secunda in the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality and the Forestry Industrial Park in Sabie in the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality, as well as the **Nkomazi Special Economic Zone** in Komatipoort in the Nkomazi Local Municipality.
33. In the case of the industrial Parks, our focus during the previous financial year, was on addressing **all statutory compliance requirements**, so that development activities are not unnecessarily hindered or delayed, during the implementation processes of these catalytic projects.

34. We are pleased to announce that the statutory compliance requirements, relating to the Petro-Chemical Industrial Park are almost complete. The **general plan to establish the Industrial Park has been approved** by the Surveyor General. This paves the way for the registration of a township, which we hope will be registered by the end of September this year.
35. As far as the Forestry Industrial Park is concerned, we have **experienced some delays due to objections, and the sluggish process of resolving the surface rights issues of the designated site**. However, we are working very hard to address all these challenges, and we are convinced that we will find an amicable solution with all the affected parties.
36. With regard to the Nkomazi SEZ, we can report that the **roll-out of the Interim Phase is moving towards completion**. There are few issues that we are finalising, so that the Development Phase could commence. This includes, inter alia, the operationalisation of the SEZ Entity; preparations of the SEZ site for development; finalisation of the statutory compliance requirements and securing concrete agreements with investors.
37. We expect to conclude most of these issues by the end of the fourth quarter of this financial year. The good news is that SEZ is now registered as a state-owned entity, under the name, **Mpumalanga Nkomazi SEZ SOC Limited (Registration No. 2019/449561/30)**. We have already capacitated the **Programme Management Unit (PMU)** of the SEZ by staffing it with five (5) professionals, who run daily activities of the Entity, the interim board was also appointed in April 2021, We have further started the process of having the Entity listed by the National Treasury.
38. As an indication that we are on the right track, we can report that the SEZ already has an **investment pipeline worth over 10 billion Rand** in the agro-processing, green energy and logistics sectors, which collectively have the potential to create just over **18 000 jobs**, within the Nkomazi and surrounding region.
39. We can also report that significant progress has been made towards implementing the God's Window Skywalk Project at the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, **after Treasury III was**

received by the MTPA. The private party to the project has also accepted and even signed the appointment letter.

40. The MTPA is now in the process of **facilitating the signing of the PPP agreement**, with the relevant stakeholders, including the four (4) Communal Property Associations within the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, and this will pave the way for the commencement of the project. We envisage that the MTPA will hand-over the site to the private party during the second quarter ending 30 September 2021.

Exploiting the green economy for faster economic recovery and growth

Madam Speaker;

41. The emerging green economy is a lucrative sector which we must exploit to realise even faster economic recovery and growth. In this regard, THE Department has **secured technical assistance to the tune of 10 million Rands** from German's Development Agency, GIZ. The technical assistance will, thus, be provided to the Province by *GreenCape*, which has a contractual agreement with GIZ in the area of green economy.
42. Our Department has already signed a Service Level Agreement with *GreenCape* to assist in the **implementation of the Mpumalanga Green Economy Cluster** by providing support to businesses and investors in the green economy space so as to remove barriers to establishment and growth.
43. The Province has already **established the Green Economy Advisory Committee**, which has drawn members from government, the academia, and business. The Committee will advise the Province on global trends and practices that will assist in advancing and growing the sector.
44. We will soon engage the embassies that have expressed interest in working with the Province, such as the embassies of **France, Britain, Denmark, Germany and European Union**, which like South Africa, are the signatories to the **Paris Agreement of 2015**. These countries also happen be global leaders in funding the Climate Economy which the Province through its Green Cluster, is hoping to benefit from.

45. The private sector has announced huge investments in the Province, targeting projects on solar energy, wind energy, biomass, battery storage, gas, wood bonding material, hybrid fuel rod, waste gas from ferrochrome, land rehabilitation, reclamation of mine water and sustainable agriculture.
46. International institutions such as **Monsoon, from Romania**, have expressed an interest in working with us on the reskilling programme of the mining and fossil energy sector, as they lose employment due to decommissioning at unprecedented levels.
47. The **EURADA Entrance Programme**, focusing on energy transitions from Coal and Carbon, which is an international research programme, supported by the **European Union**, has even extended an invitation to our Department to participate in this prestigious policy research work which, over and above studying coal regions in Europe, will also seek opportunities for Mpumalanga “Just Transition” prospects, which in the end will benefit the Province in many ways.
48. The Province will also participate in another research project funded by the **German government**, called the **Co-Benefits Programme**, which comprises a large consortium consisting of experts from **CSIR, Prime Africa, Navitas, GreenCape, Enertrag** and many others, and will base its study on quantifying jobs, skilling and industry opportunities based on renewable energy deployment in Mpumalanga.
49. In addition, there are other public sector organisations that have committed to work with the Province in the sector, such as the Council for Geoscience. This will be on a project which mainly focuses on carbon capture, utilisation and storage aimed at enabling the **Just-Transition**, with a huge investment in facilities to be constructed at Volkrust and Secunda.
50. This relates to the coal-ash beneficiation products which will focus on production of a wide variety of products using coal-ash from Eskom Power plants. This will entail identification and optimisation of technologies for ash beneficiation.

Re-igniting tourism – our gold mine

Madam Speaker;

51. In our quest to re-ignite our tourism industry which continues to be negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic induced-lockdown, our Department, working with the interested parties and the private sector, has developed the **Mpumalanga Tourism Recovery Plan**.
52. Through the MTPA, our Department has so far, **disbursed 10 million Rands as relief funding to 353 qualifying tourism businesses** affected by the lockdown. This was in addition to the **11,9 million Rands disbursed to 238 provincial tourism businesses** from the national tourism relief fund in 2020.
53. The MTPA also continued to **implement various marketing campaigns**, including domestic activations. To mention but a few, in collaboration with the National Department of Tourism and South African Tourism, the MTPA activated a domestic campaign dubbed, ***Summer Differently***, which was meant to encourage South Africans to travel domestically. Joint marketing campaigns with the three (3) Regional Tourism Organisations in the Province were also conducted.
54. During the current financial year, the MTPA will continue to **market and promote Mpumalanga as a tourist destination of choice**. We really want to increase the number of tourists to the Province. Thus, for the 2021-2022 financial year, the MTPA has prioritised to conduct virtual leisure and business events marketing activities related to **World Travel Market Africa**; host celebrations of the **Gert Sibande Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route**, and implement the winter and festive season campaigns.

Honourable Speaker;

55. Tourism Safety also remains our priority because our visitors need to feel safe, so that they can come back to visit us. To this end, we pledge to continue to work closely with other government agencies, such Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison (*the dcs*) and the South African Police Service, in this regard. The *DCSL* employs Tourism Safety Monitors and deploys them at all the strategic tourism sites.
56. As our country's Constitution also enjoins us to protect and preserve our fauna and flora for posterity, our Department, through the MTPA, continues to **utilise technology to protect our endangered species**, like the rhino, the leopard, cycad, amongst others.

57. The MTPA, amongst others, utilises satellite and VHF tracking collars on individual animals; utilises microchips on the animals; has acquired the shared-remote surveillance monitoring cameras (which is capable of monitoring neighbouring private nature reserves); has acquired digital radio network (which is compatible to broader stakeholder systems).
58. We have also **upgraded and rehabilitated infrastructure** at our tourism attractions and provincial nature reserves, so as to improve visitor and tourist experience. This was done through funding provided by the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.
59. For example, at the **Loskop Dam Nature Reserve**, the MTPA has upgraded staff accommodation and water supply system; and erected a fence. During implementation of this project, **57 temporary jobs (on a fixed-term contract of 14 months)** were created for the people of Thembisile Hani Local Municipality.
60. Various rehabilitation and construction work was also done at **Mahushe-Shongwe (allocated a total budget of R18 million)**, which include the upgrading of the entrance gate, storeroom, bulk water supply and swimming pools, and this work is scheduled to be completed in September this year. This project has seen a total of **142 temporary jobs** created on a **fixed-term contract of 18 months**, within the Nkomazi Local Municipality.
61. The Mthethomusha project was allocated an amount of **R16 million** for, amongst others, the erection of a 5 km fence (which has been completed); upgrading of the environmental centre, office complex and staff accommodations. This project has created a total of **135 temporary jobs over a period of 16 months** for local communities of Mpakeni, Luphisi, Daantjie, Zwelisha and Matsulu.
62. In the current financial year, the MTPA has prioritised upgrades of tourist attractions in the Panorama route, which include walkways, ablution facilities and interpretation eco-centers to be accessed by people living with disabilities, thereby complying with the tourism universal access principles.
63. Following the proclamation of the Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains as a World Heritage Site (WHS), the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment has now **appointed our Department, as the Management Authority of the WHS**, in terms of the World Heritage

Convention Act of 1999. The proclamation was gazetted on the 22nd of March 2021 (Gazette No. 44272). This necessitated us to **start consultations with the affected landowners, local communities and other interested parties**, and we have concluded such consultations.

64. The World Heritage Site also offers an opportunity to expand and create new diversified tourism product offering, such as accommodation, guided hiking trails, interpretation centres and restaurants. For the current financial year, the MTPA has prioritised to **construct geo-sites, gateways, nodal points and erect signage** at the World Heritage Site.

Strengthening governance at our Public Entities

Madam Speaker;

65. We established Public Entities to become our implementing agents. In essence, the three (3) Entities under our Department; namely, **MEGA, the MTPA and MER, are an extension of the Department**. The work they do, they do it on behalf of the Department.
66. In this regard, we will focus on **strengthening governance structures**, and inculcate a culture of regular collective planning and reporting between our Public Entities and the Department, so as to be able to effectively report to other stakeholders and be accountable for our performance. And in strengthening Public Entity oversight, we will implement additional Entity Oversight Procedures and Structures that seeks to contribute positively towards the attainment of clear objectives and targets by all our Entities.
67. We commit to urgently appoint **new Boards for MEGA, the MTPA, as well as for the Board of the newly-established Mpumalanga Nkomazi SEZ**; and fill critical funded vacant positions within the Department and the Entities in the current financial year.
68. As part of enhancing performance, there is an urgent need to implement systems upgrades across our entities and the Department itself. Following budget allocations made by the Provincial Treasury in this regard, that is, **R16 million and R4 million** for strengthening **regulatory and revenue collection systems** respectively, the Department will commence procurement processes centrally, so as to benefit from economies of scale, and ensure that all Entities and the Department itself, benefit from this process.

69. We are committed to Clean Governance. I have charged **DEDT, MEGA** and **MTPA** to work towards achieving Clean Audit outcomes within the first year of the current MTEF, they must urgently clear all negative audit findings and put effective preventative internal controls to avoid recurrence hereof. Both the Management and the Boards of our entities must be held accountable for any financial management failures in this regard, it cannot continue to be business as usual!!

Business Regulation and Governance

Honourable Speaker;

70. When we appeared during the same occasion last year, we committed to **commence with the process of awarding the fourth Casino license** in the Province. We can report that we have since **deferred that intention** until further notice. This is to allow the economy to sufficiently recover from the devastating impact of the hard-lockdown, induced by the COVID-19 pandemic.
71. As legally mandated, through our Public Entity – the *MER* (Mpumalanga Economic Regulator) – we have and will continue to **regulate the gambling and liquor industries; heighten enforcement on compliance to liquor license conditions; and even collect applicable gambling levies and liquor license fees** due to the Provincial fiscus.
72. In terms of gambling and liquor applications, the *MER* received **303 new applications** during the year under review, **and finalised 316, including 13 applications carried over** from the 2019-2020 financial year. Cumulatively, the **total of 6474 licenses were issued** by the Entity as at the end of March 2021, which was made-up of **379 gambling licenses and 6095 liquor licenses** across the Province.
73. As we are a caring government, we will also, through the *MER*, **intensify our education and awareness programmes** to encourage traders to trade responsibly; and members of the public to exercise caution regarding their interests in gambling and liquor consumption.
74. Our Department is also **enjoined to protect consumers from unscrupulous business practices**; hence we will, through the Office of the Consumer Protector and Consumer Court,

continue to provide consumer protection services, including consumer education and awareness programmes. We must, thus, promote fair and ethical business practices.

75. During the previous financial year, we received a total of 430 consumer cases, and 426 of them were resolved within the stipulated turnaround time of seven (7) days.
76. Prominent complaints we received mainly fall within the motor vehicle sector, furniture, debt disputes, and financial services. Through our intervention, we have recovered two (2) million, 378 thousand, 955 Rands and 34 cents on behalf of consumers.

Budget Allocation (per Programme)

77. Madam Speaker;

The Plans we have tabled today, require funding to be realised. In this regard, Vote: 6 – Department of Economic Development and Tourism – is proposed to be allocated an amount of **One billion, 354 million, 663 thousand Rands** to fund its Plans, for the 2021-2022 financial year, broken down as follows:

78. **Programme 1: Administration**

In order to, amongst others, continue to provide policy directives; administrative, financial and other support functions to the overall Department, an amount of **108 million, 466 thousand Rands** has been allocated to Programme 1 (Administration).

79. **Programme 2: Integrated Economic Development**

An amount totalling **641 million, 613 thousand Rands** is allocated to Programme 2. Included in this amount, is an amount of **237 million, 320 thousand Rands**, to fund the requirements of MEGA, A further amount of **341 million, 922 thousand Rands** is included to fund the development of the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market.

80. **Programme 3: Trade and Sector Development**

Programme 3 has been allocated a total amount of **32 million, 476 thousand Rands** to amongst others, fund the growth and development of economic sectors, strategic initiatives, including increasing investment into the Province.

81. **Programme 4: Business Regulation and Governance**

The Programme has been allocated an amount of **137 million, 808 thousand Rands**. Included in this amount, is a total amount of **116 million, 801 thousand Rands** to enable the Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER) to continue to implement part of our legislative mandate, relating to regulating the liquor and gambling industries.

82. **Programme 5: Economic Planning**

A total amount of **20 million, 330 thousand Rands** is allocated to Economic Planning to continue to provide economic planning, analysis services to the Province, as well as to fund the green economy initiative.

83. **Programme 6: Tourism**

And lastly, Tourism is allocated an amount of **413 million, 970 thousand Rands** to continue to grow the sector, and to market and promote Mpumalanga as the tourist destination of choice. Included in this amount, is an amount of **408 million, 297 thousand Rands** to fund the requirements of the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency.

Madam Speaker; Honourable Members;

84. The total amount proposed to be transferred to our three (3) Public Entities is **762 million, 418 thousand Rands**; and this represents **56,28 percent** of the total budget allocation to the Department.

85. As the Executive Authority of the Department, I now request the House to consider and approve the total budget allocation of **One billion, 354 million, 663 thousand Rands** to fund the requirements of the Department and its three (3) Public Entities, for the financial year ending March 2022.

Conclusion

Madam Speaker;

86. Surely you also believe in the saying that: *“After rain, there’s a rainbow; After a storm, there’s calm; After the night, there’s calm; and After the end, there’s a new beginning”*.

87. I would, therefore, like to confirm that surely, the raging storm of the COVID-19 pandemic, shall also come to pass. And when that happens, we will all delight on the bright sight of the economic growth rainbow.
88. As I close, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Honourable Premier, and the leadership of the African National Congress in the Province, for believing in me and affording me an opportunity to lead this Department, which is mandated to steer economic development and growth activities of the Province.
89. I further extend my appreciation to my colleagues in the Executive Council; the Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee on Premier's Office; Finance; Economic Development and Tourism, for their continued support and guidance.
90. My gratitude also goes to the entire DEDT Team led by the acting Head of Department; Ms Gugu Mashiteng for steering the ship with such resolve, vigour and determination.
91. All Chairpersons and CEOs of our Public Entities; their dedicated teams, and the support staff in my Office.
92. To my family, thank you very for your undying support and understanding. And to all our social partners, including organised labour, the private sector, and the people of our Province, *Mpumalanga – the Place of the Rising Sun* – thank you for continuing to partner with us. We really value your contribution on this journey.
93. Rest assured; we shall overcome... A new economic beginning awaits us!
94. ***Let's grow the economy of Mpumalanga together!***

Ngiyabonga!



**economic development
& tourism**

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