

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MR PAT NGOMANE, MPL, DURING THE OCCASION OF WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT HELD AT THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, RIVERSIDE PARK EXT. 2, CITY OF MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Saturday, 24 August 2019

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker;
Honourable Premier;
Chief Whip of the Majority Party;
Colleagues in the Executive Council;
Members of the Provincial Legislature;
Acting Director-General;
Heads of Departments present;
The people of our beautiful Province of Mpumalanga;
Members of the Media;
Esteemed guests;
Ladies and gentlemen.

Good Morning! San'bonani!

1. When the heroic women of 1956 marched on the doorstep of JG Strijdom, they did so not only to fight apartheid, but also **paved the way for their future economic benefit.**

2. They had a premonition that, we will one day, have a Constitution advocating for equal benefits for both women and men. It cannot therefore, be right, that they should be treated as secondary to men. **Whatever economic opportunities we are exposed to as men, must accrue to them.**
3. Our meeting here this morning – during this auspicious **Women's Parliament** – is thus to pay homage and to acknowledge the selfless role, women continue to play in our communities.
4. We do this because all of us – me included – **owe our existence and nurturing** from these precious human beings. Women are indeed the genesis of our communities – without them, we would not exist.
5. We are all aware of the **selfless contribution played by the heroic 1956 women**, who marched in protest of the introduction of the apartheid unjust pass laws, against the black nation. They did not stop there, as they continue to sacrifice their lives for the betterment of their families and communities at large.
6. In her 2004 academic study, Olufunmilola Olorunda also asserts that **“women are the bedrock of any society”**. This simply means that the survival of any community depends on women.

7. This assertion is supported by the fact that **this august House, is led by a woman Speaker**. Our Province, including the Provincial Administration, is also **led by a woman Premier**. We salute these women leaders, and many others, for taking the baton, as we continue on a journey to better the lives of our people.
8. We are quite confident, and have trust in their capabilities, to fulfil the **mandate bestowed by our people on the mighty and caring African National Congress**, to continue to better their lives.
9. Indeed, it is true that ***“when you empower a woman, you empower a nation”***.
10. As the Provincial Government of Mpumalanga, particularly the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, we are committed **to ensure that women benefit significantly from available economic opportunities**.
11. This is not just a talkshop, but a serious commitment, which we have included in our Annual Performance Plan for the current financial year. In this regard, we will ensure that **women participate and benefit meaningfully from the Social Enterprise Development Programme**.

12. Our plan is to see an **additional sixteen (16) mostly women-led SMMEs** participating in the Social Enterprise Programme, as suppliers of accredited building materials to government and private sector programmes, during this financial year.
13. We will further ensure that during the construction phase of the **Nkomazi Special Economic Zone** and beyond, women and the youth benefit significantly, as far as job creation is concerned.
14. It is estimated that two-thousand one-hundred and forty-seven (2147) jobs will be created during the construction of the SEZ, and **we commit to ensure that the majority of the beneficiaries are women.**
15. Our Department will also collaborate with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, and the Department of Small Business Development, **to train and fund women and youth cooperatives, to enable them to participate as tenants in the SEZ value chain opportunities.**
16. It is our quest to continue to strive to **assist women to access government business opportunities**, hence we have entered into a financing agreement with Standard Bank, to provide financial assistance to women-led projects and businesses.

17. As government, we will thus **ensure that finance is provided to women to facilitate their participation in programmes like the Government Nutrition; Social Enterprise; and Human Settlement Housing Projects.**
18. When this happens, we would be certain that whatever economic benefit they derive from such Programmes, would accrue to their families, and our communities in general.
19. Truth be told – women are not selfish **but generous beings** in nature – who always keep the fires burning in their homesteads. Even when hunger is starring them in the face, women always have their own ways of making sure that the children, do not go to bed on an empty stomach.
20. As we round-up Women’s Month, let us do so remembering that women too, must equally benefit from economic opportunities in our Province.

Madam Speaker;

21. I am certain that, we now all agree with the assertion by American religious leader and politician, Brigham Young, who once said and I quote, when **“you educate a man; you educate a man ... [but when] you educate a woman; you educate a generation”** – unquote.

22. *Wathint 'abafazi, wathint' imbokodo!* – the question is what will happen to you when you do so?
23. May God continue to protect and prosper the women of our Province, and South Africa at large.
24. Happy Women's Month *boMake*.
25. ***Let's grow the economy of Mpumalanga together, for the benefit of women!***
26. ***I thank you!***