

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MR PAT NGOMANE, MPL, ON BEHALF OF THE PREMIER OF MPUMALANGA DURING THE 2019 YOUTH PARLIAMENT HELD AT THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE CHAMBER, RIVERSIDE PARK, CITY OF MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Saturday, 27 July 2019

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker;
Chief Whip of the Majority Party;
Colleagues in the Executive Council;
Members of the Provincial Legislature;
Heads of Departments present;
The Youth of our Province;
Members of the Media;
Distinguished guests;
Ladies and gentlemen.

Good Morning!

1. I am honoured and indeed humbled, to have been given this opportunity, to address this year's Provincial Youth Sectoral Parliament, under the theme: ***“25 Years of Democracy: A celebration of youth activism”***.
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2. We all agree and acknowledge that the youth represents the majority of our population. Accordingly, they are the future of our Province, and need to be nurtured and prepared for that future.
3. This view is supported by British author, Nelson Henderson, who once said and I quote: ***“The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit”*** – unquote.
4. As the caring ANC-led Mpumalanga Government, we are committed to plant that tree – that tree symbolises the bright future we strive to prepare for generations to come. We will not allow any room for failure, as we cannot disappoint our children and the leaders of tomorrow.

Honourable Speaker;

5. When we addressed our people during the occasion of the *State of the Province Address* earlier this month, we indicated that, and I quote: ***“Top of our agenda is to transform the economy to serve all people, through shared and inclusive economic growth, expanding ownership in the economy to benefit mostly the disadvantaged sections of our society”*** – unquote.

6. This is because as the government led by the mighty and caring African National Congress, we are indeed resolute that we will do everything in our power, to realise **Economic Transformation and Job Creation**, for the sole benefit of our people.
7. We have thus **declared youth unemployment as a national crisis** which needs urgent attention. We believe that this could be also be addressed by ensuring that our youth benefit meaningfully, from economic opportunities being facilitated by our government.
8. As directed by President Cyril Ramaphosa, we thus also commit that we will, amongst others:
 - **Transform our economy and create jobs** for the youth;
 - **Educate and skill** them in preparation of the job market or as entrepreneurs;
 - Provide **decent health services** to all our people;
 - Consolidate the social wage through reliable and quality basic services;
9. This we commit to do, to guarantee the future of our people and of our country; hence we commit yet again today, that our actions will **always be biased towards the youth, women and people with disabilities**.

10. In this regard, to re-iterate some of the commitments we made during the *State of the Province Address* earlier this month, we will amongst others:

- **Strengthen and expand our social enterprise development programme**, to include more SMMEs and co-operatives, with a special focus on those owned by the youth and women;
- Offer the youth **procurement opportunities in all our infrastructure programmes**;
- **Assist the youth with bridging finance** through our partnership with financial institutions;
- **Create a programme dedicated to the development and promotion of women and the youth** in the built environment.

11. In order to provide meaningful support to our youth, we have also decided to launch a **Youth Development Fund** to the tune of R250 million, over a period of five years.

12. The fund will:

- Support small emerging and micro enterprises, in particular, those that are in townships and rural areas and are owned and run by the youth;
- Promote innovations, inventions and creativity among the youth through incubation with special emphasis on young people from disadvantaged areas;
- Provide on the job skilling through learnerships and placements and partner with the private sector as well as SETAs;
- Provide starter packs for learners who have graduated from skills training to give them an opportunity to start their own businesses; and
- Provide start-up capital and bridging finance for those who may need it, and offer support and technical assistance to SMMEs run by the youth and women.

13. We have also planned to **establish Youth Development Centres** in all Municipalities, that will offer one stop business support services focusing on Youth Development Initiatives.

Honourable Speaker;

14. Ours, is a visionary government led by the ANC, which continues to **care about the well-being and empowerment of our youth**. If any other political party would claim that they are caring, you must just know that they are lying to you.
15. Our plans are concrete and with clear deliverables aimed at transforming our economy and create jobs for our people, especially the youth who are in the majority.
16. As I close, may I take this opportunity to wish the House fruitful engagements today, as we celebrate our youth. Be rest assured that we will deliver, on our promises to the youth and our people in general.
17. Happy 2019 Youth Parliament.
18. ***Let's grow Mpumalanga together.***
19. I thank you!