

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MR SIKHUMBUZO ERIC BONGINKOSI KHOLWANE, MPL, DURING THE CROWNING OF MISS MPUMALANGA 2016 AT CHURCH ON THE HILL, KAMAGUGU, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

**Saturday, 09 April 2016**

Programme Director;

Chairperson of the Board of MGB, *Make Norah Nkuna-Fakude*;

Other Board Members;

Acting Head of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, *Ntate Jacob Mgidi*;

CEO of the MGB, *Babe Bheki Mlambo*;

CEO of Mzimari Productions - the organisers of this beauty pageant, *Ms Gugu Nyarenda*;

The newly crowned Miss South Africa 2016 – daughter of the soil of Mpumalanga, and former Miss Mpumalanga 2013, *Ntandoyenkosi Kunene*;

Outgoing Miss Mpumalanga 2015, *Zamanene Nene*;

The Top 12 Finalists and their parents;

Other partnering sponsors;

Distinguished Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

***San'bonani!***

Programme Director;

1. Chinese philosopher, Confucius, once said and I quote: ***“Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it”*** [unquote].
2. Thanks God, I am one amongst many of you who see beauty tonight.

3. It gives me a great pleasure to address you during this occasion of the crowning of the 2016 Miss Mpumalanga.
4. Programme Director, over the past five years, we have observed young women emerging from humble beginnings, taking the centre stage **as agents for social change within our communities**, promoting healthy lifestyles and social well-being.
5. These young leaders have, despite the glitter and glamour of the competition, opted to roll up their sleeves, to help the Provincial Government to tackle various challenges facing our communities – through **campaigns such as Zazi, Back to school, Responsible gambling**, to name but a few.
6. These trailblazers continue on the selfless journey espoused in the vision of the African National Congress and its Women League to cascade the role of women to all layers and levels of societal development, as confirmed in the Women Charter that was adopted in 1954.
7. The journey of crowning Miss Mpumalanga started back in 2011, when **our Public Entity – the MGB** seized the opportunity presented by one of our progressive local events organisers, **Mzimari Productions**, to maximise the promotion of responsible gambling awareness amongst the young people in the Province.
8. The beauty queens and princesses produced since the first crowning in 2011 have become a source of inspiration for many of our young people.
9. To this end, **Miss Mpumalanga Queen** continues to be our **Ambassador** for our **Responsible Gambling Awareness Campaigns**.
10. As government, we are proud to be associated with such initiatives, as the **Miss Mpumalanga Beauty Pageant**, which **promotes social cohesion** and

catapult the Mpumalanga brand to the highest levels in the national and international platforms.

11. The Provincial Government, through the MGB, **commits to continue to support this initiative, as part of the effort to** discover new leaders and to let women promote good causes and inspire positive change within the society.
12. The recent sporting and cultural activities in which we came out victorious signify the extent our people want to promote and protect Mpumalanga Brand.
13. As the sun rises, many patriotic citizens of this Province rise above their challenges to promote our province in national and international competitions.
14. Indeed Mpumalanga has got talent.
15. We are home to the **winner of Idols South Africa Season 9, Musa Kunene,** and **Bongi Silinda, who was the runner-up in Season 10 of Idols South Africa.**
16. The winner of **Idols South Africa Season 11, Karabo Mogane** hails from this province which is endowed with natural beauty.
17. We have produced Miss South Africa 2016 who was nurtured through the **Miss Mpumalanga Brand.**
18. Last week, **Team Mpumalanga,** under the mentorship of JR, scooped the 2016 ***Clash of the Choirs*** competition.
19. Whether it is music or beauty, we continue to come first.
20. As the **Premier of Mpumalanga,** Mr DD Mabuza, when congratulating the 2016 ***Clash of the Choirs Champions,*** said and I quote: ***“People used to refer to us as a Mampara Province, but now we can safely say that we are indeed a Winning Province”*** [unquote].

21. Such events are also essential to and contribute in growing our tourism sector, given that they attract people from out neighbouring provinces.

Ladies and gentlemen;

22. All the contestants of the **2016 Coveted Crown of Miss Mpumalanga** are bright and beautiful, but all of us recognise their beauty in varying degrees.
23. What makes me happy is that I am not a judge tonight, because in my eyes, I **see equal beauty**, and that would have made it difficult for me to choose one.
24. To this end, all I can say to tonight's judges is '**good luck**' in your attempt to **search for a needle in a haystack**.
25. I know that you have been selected to judge this pageant because of your **impartiality and your ability to sift the best from the best**.

Ladies and gentlemen;

26. It is my honour to ask the newly-crowned **Miss South Africa, Ntandoyenkosi Kunene**, to take a bow!
27. Congratulations!

Ladies and gentlemen;

28. As I close, allow me to convey our gratitude to the former Miss World, Rolene Strauss, also from Mpumalanga, who recently completed a successful term as the ambassador of our country and our Province.
29. I wish to extend our congratulatory message to **Felicia Muwayi, the first princess in the Miss Mpumalanga 2013 Pageant**, for reaching the final 12 of the Miss South Africa 2016 Pageant.

30. Our gratitude goes to the **outgoing Miss Mpumalanga 2015, Zamanene Nene** who carry-out her role as an Ambassador of Responsible Gambling Campaigns exceptionally well. Siyabonga Zamanene!

Ladies and gentlemen;

31. To **all the 12 contestants**, I wish to congratulate each one of you for making it thus far. Having qualified for the final stage is a great milestone and makes you a winner, even if you do not come out victorious tonight.

32. I wish you all, the very best of luck.

**33. *Together we move social cohesion in Mpumalanga forward!***

***I thank you!***