

SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM,
MRS YN PHOSA, MPL, ON THE OCASSION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE MPUMALANGA
TRAVEL APP AT *INDABA 2014* IN DURBAN, KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE.

Sunday, 11 May 2014

Programme Director, Mr Jacques Modipane, who is the CEO of the
Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency;

Chairperson of the MTPA Board, Mr Fidel Mlombo;

Board Members present;

Our stakeholders in the tourism and travel sector;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good afternoon

This is indeed the first good story to tell, just four (4) days after the
country's successful general elections. The real story of hope, inspiration
and opportunities Thank you very much South Africans for renewing the
social contract with the ruling party.

Together we will continue to move South Africa forward

Ladies and gentlemen;

Mpumalanga is truly an unparalleled tourism destination. From the
scenic beauty of the Blyde River canyon; awe-inspiring Berlin Falls; the

Sudwala caves; to the God's Window. We are the only Province which offers this rare opportunity to look through this window of God. Indeed no one can challenge us when we say God started his creation somewhere in the country, but ended in Mpumalanga given its scenery treasure. As it is said in the Bible, He worked for six (6) days to create the earth and the universe and on the seventh (7th) day, He rested, and guess where He rested? – In Mpumalanga.

Ladies and gentlemen;

Mpumalanga is revered for its natural beauty and diversity of species it has to offer to tourists. For some, it is the grandeur and power of the Lisbon Falls; whereas for others it is the quiet beauty of the open savannah in Kruger National park. Then there's bird-watching which I love, and Mpumalanga is one of the finest Province in Africa for birdwatchers, not only because of the unusually high number of species found here, but also because it is relatively easy to get several bird-rich habitats. This beautiful environment should be shared and enjoyed by others including the rest of Africa and the world.

Having given you this background and in moving with technological advancement, we have seen it imperative to come up with a one-stop technology store which is available everywhere – the ***Mpumalanga Travel Guide APP*** (short for Application). The APP is an excellent complement to our Tourism and Biodiversity project, and an ideal way to

get on board with the global movement toward mobile-based travel planning. This is a great example of the sort of private sector involvement in the tourism sector that we hope to see more of in the coming years.

It is your **Mobile Guide** to explore and experience Mpumalanga, with guides to:

- Cities
- Routes
- Restaurants and
- Attractions.

We congratulate the MTPA for having just made travelling so much simpler. This Mobile APP caters for both Apple and Android devices. You will be able to view the Panorama Route and have the maps and information of the towns in route, literally at your fingertips. Other routes will soon be added to the Mobile APP, which will make it very exciting for all those who want to find the hidden treasures in Mpumalanga.

Ladies and gentlemen;

The ***Mpumalanga Travel Guide APP*** will be your guide to a hassle-free journey through the picturesque escarpments that Mpumalanga has to offer.

We all agree that technology is today's biggest driver of change. You all know this as well as anyone. And whether you are a techno geek or a techno novice worried that each screen tap on your iPad will cause a catastrophic data loss, we must accept that technology is an integral part of our lives today. It is a powerful tool that can build bridges, revolutionise markets, and help people propel themselves and their communities forward.

With this APP, potential visitors can glimpse the tremendous array of Mpumalanga's Travel natural beauty in an unprecedented way free of all geographic constraints. Now, from a café in London, or Japan, or New York, a person can virtually tour the delights of Mpumalanga as a tourist destination with his or her smart phone while sipping their beverage of choice. Through this technology, we can draw a new universe of potential tourists, whose resources will help Mpumalanga Tourism elevate itself toward economic prosperity.

I believe we all want to see Mpumalanga become one of the pre-eminent tourist destinations in Africa.

To achieve this common goal, we must work together by generating content for the website. To this end, we have revamped the **Destination Marketing Website** which can be visited at www.mpumalanga.com.

This popular website is an online travel planning resource designed to better showcase all that Mpumalanga tourism has to offer and meet evolving consumer expectations.

The Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency has stepped boldly into the arena of social media with integrated feeds to its presence on ***Twitter, Blogs, Facebook, Flickr and You-Tube.*** I implore on you to take advantage of the free online global exposure platform by listing your Tourism products on the website.

Your positive actions will offer tourists and travel sellers an opportunity to decide whether or not to engage with you, depending on the strength of your listing. One major benefit is that once your tourism product has been listed, it will then be automatically uploaded into the Mpumalanga Travel Guide APP.

As I close, I would like to invite you all to experience another dimension of our new technology-shaped world by joining the conversation **Mpumalanga Travel Guide APP** on our Facebook page.

This will highlight this launch and spread the word about the Mpumalanga Travel Guide APP which, by the way, I have already downloaded on all my mobile devices.

So join me. Download the Mpumalanga Travel Guide APP, and let it lead you to an exploration of this amazing Province that has been so greatly blessed with abundant natural beauty.

It is my pleasure and honour to launch the Mpumalanga Travel Guide APP right here at the 2014 Tourism Indaba.

Together we move Mpumalanga Tourism forward.

I thank you