

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY ACTING PREMIER, HON SPEED KATISHI MASHILO,
AT THE PROVINCIAL YOUTH DAY COMMEMORATION, NKOMAZI LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY (MANGWENI STADIUM): 16TH OF JUNE 2025**

Programme Director,

Honourable Members of the Executive Council;

Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, **Hon Lindi Masina**

Honourable Members of the Mpumalanga Legislature;

Executive Mayors, in particular our Host Her Worship Councillor, **PP Magagula** and

Executive Mayor of Ehlanzeni District Municipality His Worship Councillor **Terror Shabangu**

Leaders of all Political Parties;

Leaders of Youth Formations,

Traditional Leaders under the leadership of **Kgoshi Mokoena** who is also the President of Contralesa Ondabezitha Bayede

The Acting Director General of the Province **Mr Peter Nyoni** and all Senior government officials from all three spheres of government.

Chairpersons and CEOs of our parastatals;

Representatives of labour, business, religious and other community-based organisations;

Beautiful people of Nkomazi Local Municipality Council and those coming from other municipalities of Ehlanzeni District Council and all over Mpumalanga

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Sanibonani, Dumelang, Lotjhani, Avuxeni, Molweni, Ndi Matsheloni

Thank you Programme Director

1. May we take a moment of silence or meditation to honour the 88 lives that were lost during the recent Mthatha floods, in the Eastern Cape.
2. May their souls rest in peace.
3. Let me first take this opportunity and pass my sincere greetings to everyone present today for this important commemoration. On behalf of the Premier, Hon Mandla Ndlovu, who is currently leading a delegation in China and the entire executive committee, it is an honour to be afforded such an opportunity.
4. Mpumalanga Province, The Place of the Rising Sun, we highly appreciate all efforts and contribution from all involved to make it possible to have such a day.
5. This is a significant event in our calendar because it allows us to pay tribute to the young men and women whose lives were cut short at the hands of the inhuman apartheid regime.
6. On June 16 each year, South Africans celebrate **Youth Day**. Youth Day commemorates the **Soweto Uprising**, which took

place on 16 June 1976, where thousands of students were ambushed by the apartheid regime.

7. On Youth Day, South Africans pay tribute to the lives of these students and recognises the role of the youth in the liberation of South Africa from the apartheid regime.
8. In South Africa, we can celebrate Youth Day by commemorating and honouring those who spoke out and took action against the oppressive Apartheid system. We also honour the lives lost in the face of brutalist political systems and all forms of oppression – then and now. Youth Day is used by schools, colleges, and university students in South Africa to hold discussions on educational issues.
9. It is important for us to understand that the impact of that day is very significant in the struggle of South Africa to liberate the people of South Africa.
10. Today we are gathered here because the generation of 1976 changed the struggle of our beloved country. Some of the students, not only in Soweto, but also beyond, decided to swell the ranks of the liberation movements, to fight the brutal system.

11. The very same famous picture of Mbuyisa Makhubo carrying the youngest victim of that day, Hector Peterson with Hector's sister Antoinette beside them, was taken by Mr Sam Nzima who is now late. Mr Nzima is from our Province in Lillydale, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.
12. It is the commitment of the generation of 1976 that, together with other generations, led to the negotiation that brought the 1994 democratic breakthrough.
13. Today we are meeting forty-nine (49) years after the Soweto Uprising, thirty-one (31) years after the breakthrough of 1994. Let us also, whilst reflecting, not forget the significant contribution of the 1976 generation.
14. What will future generations remember all of us for, especially the current leadership of different youth structures, given the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.
15. As government of Mpumalanga, we are aware of the challenges facing the youth of our province. We had a successful youth parliament last week in Nkangala and the valuable contribution of all the participants made us intensify

our effort to provide different strategies to address some of the challenges,

16. We fully agree with the Premier that it cannot be business as usual when our youth are still roaming our streets unemployed. It has to be business unusual.

17. The level of participation of all MECs and all our entities is a sign that we are committed to have all hands on the deck for the sake of the future of the young people of Mpumalanga. It is that understanding of the wise words of O R Tambo that:

“A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children doesn’t deserve its future”.

18. The national elections of 2024 have brought us to the current government of National Unity.

19. The National Government was able to adopt the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) as a blue print for building a society that works. This plan signifies a decisive move towards a governance approach that prioritizes impact, building on the ANC’s manifesto commitments.

20. At the heart of this agenda of the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) lies;

- ***The drive for inclusive growth and job creation,***
- ***Reduce poverty and tackle high unemployment and***
- ***To build a capable, ethical and developmental state.***

21. The MTDP 2024–2029 focuses on **six outcomes** to achieve the goals and objectives of Strategic Priority 2 in reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living:

- Reduced poverty and improved livelihoods;
- Improved coverage of social protection;
- Improved access to affordable and quality healthcare;
- Improved education outcomes and skills;
- Skills for the economy; and
- Social cohesion and nation-building

22. The success of the MTDP will be just a pipedream if it is not going to address the plight of the youth of our beautiful province. We dare not fail in this very important sector of our province.

23. Ladies and Gentlemen, one thing for sure that we all agree on, irrespective of political affiliation, is the Unity to fight the scourge of Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF).
24. We cannot continue to see the GBVF continuing in our society. We all know that the people behind it are our neighbours, brothers, in short are part of our families. Enough is Enough, we cannot be bystanders whilst our people are suffering. Let us work with the police to root out the violence experienced by our mothers, sisters and children.
25. Forty-nine years after the Soweto uprising and thirty-one years into democracy, young people are still navigating the fault lines of inequality, joblessness and social exclusion. Let us join hands and fight the challenges facing the youth guided by the spirit of the Generation of 1976.
26. Let this day be a reminder of the courage shown by young South Africans in 1976. The Generation that stood up against injustice with nothing but their voices and their will. Today is almost five decades later, the struggle continues, but of course its face has changed.
27. As Government of Mpumalanga we are committed to fight unemployment, inequality and poverty. We are making

provision for the youth to be stepping into new frontiers such as digital innovation, science, engineering and entrepreneurship.

28. Today we do have some stalls here of almost everything our Government can offer even in terms of opportunities. Let us maximise the benefit of such opportunities as they can be part of the solution given current challenges facing the youth in our province.

29. The theme for this year is

“Skills for changing world- Empowering youth for meaningful economic participation”

30. The theme emphasizes the importance of equipping young people with necessary skills to thrive in a dynamic global economy, and it aligns with the National Youth Day today.

31. Last month; in one of the EXCO outreach Imbizo, Premier, Hon Mandla Ndlovu, assured the people of Mpumalanga that the process of handing over Elijah Mango College to Ehlanzeni TVET is a direct response to skills development as per our theme today.

32. The EXCO is fully behind the decision and hard at work to speed up the process for the youth of Mpumalanga to be skilled to face the challenges of this century.
33. Inclusive growth and job creation is the apex priority for the seventh Administration. Since inception of the Premier Youth Development Fund(PYDF) all 17 local municipalities in the three district have benefited from the project.
34. Economic transformation for a just society and inclusive growth entails leaving no one behind. Key objectives in this regard include improved general living standards, improved incomes and material conditions, especially for the most marginalised and vulnerable within our society.
35. Mpumalanga is the only province in the whole country with fully-fledged National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) offices in every district. The NYDA is currently working closely with all youth units in our local municipalities to ensure access and pre-investment support services to the youth.
36. The NYDA has interfaced its services to be accessible online through the Enterprise Resource Planning(ERP) system. It is through this system that young people can access all NYDA services without visiting physical offices. This

system allows applicants to check progress on their application.

37. The commemoration of Youth Month and Youth Day is indeed a clear recognition of the role young people played in the struggle against apartheid, particularly the 1976 Soweto Uprising that defined the course of history.
38. It started in Soweto but influenced the entire country to fight the crime against humanity called apartheid. Young people were killed by the brutal system on this day and that exposed the brutality of the apartheid regime.
39. Let us always remember that others never even lived to witness the democratic breakthrough of 1994, and we are fortunate to still be part of those that must continue with the struggle for a better life for all.
40. Let this day always be a reminder that, with the right attitude, dedication and commitment, we can make the province of Mpumalanga a better place for its people. Let us reflect on the sacrifices and contributions of the class of 1976 and also commit to empowering today's youth.

41. When you get frustrated and decide not to continue the fight for a better Mpumalanga, you must know that you are failing the youth of 1976 who marched against Education system that was unjust.
42. Their dream for a better Education was to ensure that all are skilled to face the future. Today our provincial unemployment rate is high so we cannot rest nor spare ourselves.
43. The Gender Based Violence is also at an alarming rate; we are the now generation that can just take the bull by its horns. Let us not just be numbers to be counted for the province and the country but be at the forefront for change.
44. My appeal to the youth of the province is to join government and fight all the ills prevailing in our communities. Let us fight societal decay characterised by the horrifying criminality, rapes, femicide, robberies, drug abuse and violent death
45. Ladies and Gentlemen,
46. There are specific objectives of the 2025 Youth Month and Youth Day, being to:

- Identify skills that are in demand, mobilise, sensitise, empower, and inspire the youth to develop their skills as an effective response to social and economic issues
- Share success stories of youth who achieved through skills development
- Facilitate young people's access into educational and skills development institutions
- Facilitate the youth's entry into labour market
- Develop and promote young talent and
- Promote healthy living by reducing risky behaviours.

47. According to a Stats SA report, majority of the population of Mpumalanga are the young people, so it is impossible to get the province right and performing at optimum level if they are excluded in terms of development. For the province to remain relevant, we must engage actively, effectively with more young people as co-creator of development

48. The youth of 1976 laid their lives for a purpose. They were driven by a resolve to bring down apartheid in favour of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and prosperous South Africa. We will forever remain grateful to the youth of 1976 for the contribution to the social and political transformation of our beautiful country.

49. Once again on behalf of the EXCO of Mpumalanga, we wish you all a happy Youth Day and a fruitful youth month.

THANK YOU