

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MR PAT NGOMANE, MPL, DURING A MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF THE MPUMALANGA TOURISM AND PARKS AGENCY (MTPA) HELD AT PROTEA HOTEL NELSPRUIT, CITY OF MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

**Friday, 26 July 2019**

1. Good afternoon and thank you for honouring this invitation.
2. This meeting is just meant to officially meet all of you, and to further express **my overall expectations from you, as the Accounting Authority** of the *MTPA*.
3. I am in fact, on a roadshow, to **meet and engage with all the Boards of our three (3) Public Entities**. On Friday last week, I met the Interim Board of your sister Entity, *MEGA*, and this past Tuesday, I met the Board of *MER*.
4. I can further assure you that this is not the last of our engagement, but the beginning of many others to come, during my five-year mandate period, as the **MEC responsible for tourism matters** in the Province. I will make sure that **we meet regularly**, to update each other on developments within your mandate areas.
5. Your mandate on **growing our tourism industry**, is crucial, particularly towards creating the much-needed job opportunities, which will eventually lead to economic growth.
6. I have been mandated by the governing African National Congress, and the Premier, to **lead and to realise 'Economic Transformation and Job Creation'** in the Province, over my five-year mandate-period. I therefore rely on you, to assist me to achieve what I have been mandated to do.
7. Notwithstanding the financial and non-financial challenges you are facing as an organisation, I am particularly **satisfied with your work** as the Board of the Entity. There is, however, **still room for improvement**, as I believe you can still do more to turn our tourism industry for the better.
8. Chairperson; I am actually excited that after a very long time of seeing a number of MTPA Boards being dissolved – owing to various reasons – it appears that this **Board will finish its term in office**. The prevailing situation has, in essence, brought stability to the organisation.
9. I can only hope that, nothing will get on the way, and result in you not finishing your term in office. What this means, is that, we must work together and avoid anything that can potentially split the Board.
10. I am particularly concerned that, the **issue of the dismissal of the Board Secretary, has the potential split the Board**, although I am informed it was a collective decision. We cannot thus allow such a situation to brew within the

Board. When we take a decision as a collective, **we must stick by it** – meaning that, even when the Board is taken to court on such a matter – we must all stand by it.

11. This is because the principle of **‘Majority Rules’** dictates that the **minority should respect, abide and accept that a decision made by the majority is theirs too**, even if they do not agree with it. That is how democracy works.
12. We cannot therefore, when decisions are taken democratically by the Board, **go outside and distance** ourselves from such decisions. When you do that, you will be brewing a recipe towards splitting the Board, and this may lead to the Board not finishing its term in office.
13. I therefore, **urge all those Board Members, who have dissenting views** after a collective and democratic decision was taken, regarding the dismissal of the Board Secretary – based on the facts at your disposal – **to refrain from nurturing a split** in the Board. I hope that after this engagement, the matter in question will be behind all of us.
14. I need you to **be united as the Board**, for you to see through your term in office. I require a united Board which will take the MTPA forward, thereby assisting me to fulfil **my mandate on growing our tourism industry**.
15. You will all agree with me that **tourism is our gold** in the Province. It can be **likened to a precious metal which needs to be mined, processed and sold** to all those outside the Province – domestic and international alike – if we want to create more jobs for our people.
16. We **cannot thus sit on this precious metal; we need to nurture and grow it** for the benefit of all our people. I therefore require your utmost undivided assistance to realise this mandate. If you are divided, you will not be able to assist me, in this regard.
17. As part of **My First 100 Days in Office** – which by the way, ends on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September – I would like you to **attend and resolve all major challenges hampering the performance** of the Entity.
18. Key amongst others, is the **appointment of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO)**. This is because this post is very critical in the life of any organisation; hence it needs to be filled as a matter of urgency.
19. You will not have stable financial reporting when you do not have stability in your finance department. This ‘Hollywood’ thing must now come to an end, as I believe the post is currently funded. **Why is it difficult then, to fill the post?**
20. I further require you to move with speed, on the issue of the **Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains World Heritage Site**. We have an obligation – which is an inscription condition by UNESCO – **to establish the Management Authority** for the Site.

21. As you are all aware, if we fail to establish the Management Authority, **we risk the World Heritage Site losing its inscription status**. I would therefore be a happy man, if **substantial progress is recorded** in this regard, by the time I present My First 100 Days in Office Report.
22. Notwithstanding your satisfactory performance, our biggest concern continue to be the **slow transformation** of the tourism industry. The **industry continues to be mostly run by white people**, and something drastic needs to be done to change the situation.
23. You need to work hard to realise the **transformation of the tourism industry by making sure that more black people enter the industry**. I can only say you have done it all, once this is realised.
24. I have also raised a similar concern with the Board of your sister Entity – MER – this past Tuesday, and I trust that like them, you will commit to transform your industry.
25. In closing, I implore you to continue to work together as a united team – for unity results in a successful story.
26. If you put your personal interest before the interests of the Entity, we will lose the plot. You will derail from the right track you are already traversing. Let's hold each other's hand in pursuit of **economic transformation and job creation** through tourism growth.
27. Chairperson, *Let's grow the economy of Mpumalanga together.*
28. I thank you!