



EXCO MEDIA STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

All Media Houses

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (EXCO) APPROVES PLANS TO BOOST THE PROVINCIAL ECONOMY AND FILLING OF STRATEGIC POSITIONS

Growing the provincial economy for the expansion of job opportunities and reduction of the poverty rate, remain among top priorities in the province. This assertion was affirmed by the Executive Council (EXCO) in a meeting on Wednesday in Mbombela.

The 7th administration is striving to grow the provincial economy in line with the apex priorities. These efforts are supporting pillars for the realization of an inclusive growth and job creation priority adopted by the current administration.

The Premier, Mr Mandla Ndlovu and EXCO members discussed extensively various plans to maximize opportunities of economic growth and job creation. These include collaborations with countries in the African continent.

1. Trade and Outbound opportunities

A presentation about the Mpumalanga's trade relations with the Maputo Province in Mozambique and Kenya's Taita-Taveta Province was presented to EXCO. The report outlines the opportunities of trading with both provinces, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

EXCO noted that trade relations with the Mozambican Province will position Mpumalanga to derive benefits of growing the economy through agriculture, forestry, jet and green economy, manufacturing, mining and energy as well as tourism. It was further confirmed that the Mpumalanga province utilizes the platforms of the Mozambican trade to market tourism products and destinations.

It is envisaged that as a trading partner, the benefits will include the operationalization of the Spatial Economic Zone (SEZ) in Nkomazi, the agricultural sector and the gas projects.

EXCO says the trade links will also benefit farmers in Mozambique to export their farm produce to international markets through the Mpumalanga International Food Market. Although an MoU was once signed in 2018 between the Mpumalanga and Maputo Provinces, however it expired in May 2023. EXCO is on a quest to sign a new pact of cooperation.

Kenya is a key economic player in East Africa, and through the trade relations with Taita Taveta Province, EXCO says this will carve Mpumalanga's opportunity of accessing the

markets of the five countries in that region which include Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan.

EXCO approved the establishment of strategic partnerships with both provinces.

2. Report on Outbound Missions

As Mpumalanga intensifies measures to grow the economy, every step undertaken is assessed to derive value for decisions taken. An assessment was made on a report which outlines the preparatory work covered by a technical team from the Provincial Government in the People's Republic of China.

The team engaged key strategic players in the food and logistics industries, for the operationalization of the Mpumalanga International Food Market (MIFM). They visited the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), for trade investment opportunities, the Longnan City, renowned as the capital of traditional medicine, mining, and olive oil production with the European Union and the Tianshui Inland Port, a model area for modern agricultural development.

A separate visit to the Sultanate of Oman was undertaken to reinforce Mpumalanga's commitment to foster a strategic partnership for the operationalisation of the MIF.

EXCO is satisfied that the preparatory work will pave a way for a formal cooperation to be signed with the strategic partners in the People's Republic of China and the Sultanate of Oman. EXCO further approved a trip by a delegation to be led by the Premier to the People's Republic of China in June 2025.

3. Implementation of investigation reports

EXCO expressed commitment to implement the resolutions of investigations conducted in two departments. For the Department of Education, the investigation relates to the procurement of laptops. For the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation, the investigation was conducted by the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) relating to COVID-19 procurements.

It was announced that the Head of Education as well as the Head of Culture, Sport and Recreation, have been placed on precautionary suspensions in line with the recommendations of both reports separately, until their cases are finalized.

In the meantime, acting Heads of Department have been appointed.

4. Appointments

EXCO is determined to improve the capacity of the state to deliver services. The following appointments were approved to give effect to the 7th administration's priority of building a capable, ethical and developmental state, namely:

4.1 Department of Health

- Ms Kate Masuku: Director Infrastructure.

4.2 Department of Economic Development & Tourism

- Mr Fana Ngomane: Director Sector Development.



Ends.

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