



## EXCO MEDIA STATEMENT

### For Immediate Release

### All Media Houses

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### **EXECUTIVE COUNCIL APPROVES MEASURES TO ESTABLISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND DISABILITY POLICY AS GAME CHANGERS**

The Mpumalanga Premier, Mr. Mandla Padney Ndlovu and Members of the Executive Council (EXCO) convened a sitting on Tuesday, 29 July 2025, to deliberate on substantial matters that will unlock empowerment opportunities for communities in the province. The sitting comes after the recent tabling of Policy and Budget appropriations by the departments in the Legislature.

Departments outlined plans for the practical achievements of the three strategic priorities of the 7<sup>th</sup> administration, which are: driving an inclusive economic growth and job creation, reducing poverty and the high cost of living, and building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

Premier Ndlovu says the plans presented by the MECs signify practical steps taken by the Provincial Government on economic development, reducing high poverty levels, and infrastructure development.

The Premier further commended all stakeholders who supported the cultural practice of *Ingoma/Koma* (the rite of passage to manhood by young boys and girls). He urged both the Department of Education and the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements, and Traditional Affairs to ensure the seamless return of the young initiates back to classes in the second term of the school calendar.

EXCO was apprised about measures undertaken by the Provincial Government to improve the socio-economic conditions of the citizens and research programs. Among them, the evaluation report on sustainable livelihood and the establishment of the Mpumalanga Research Initiative.

### **1. EVALUATION OF HOUSEHOLD RESEARCH FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS**

Mpumalanga is one of the rurally-based provinces in the country, and poverty levels, according to research studies, are above 50 percent, notwithstanding intervention measures. Scores of impoverished households were profiled for support in Mpumalanga, from a total of 600 000 that were identified in the country, through the Household Initiatives for Sustainable Livelihood Intervention (HISLI).

An evaluation report, compiled by the Office of the Premier (OTP) has determined that several households have been supported by the Department of Social Department, to enhance income, reduce vulnerability, improve food security, and enhance well-being, between 2018 and 2021.

In conducting the study, OTP observed the following, during the period of the study, namely:

- That Social Department conducted training programmes for households,
- That the department created platforms for information sharing between households and stakeholders,
- That the department provided financial and technical assistance to households for livelihood projects.

The study makes a broad range of recommendations, among them, updating the database to accurately reflect recent changes in households' status, and for DSD to work collaboratively with other stakeholders to access recent information to confirm the vulnerability status of households.

EXCO approved the evaluation report as an essential tool to help formulate a comprehensive intervention that addresses the dire conditions of impoverished households. DSD was directed to implement the following resolutions:

- To update the database of households to reflect the current status of households,
- To develop performance indicators that will measure the impact of the intervention,
- To enhance the Socio-economic well-being of priority groups,
- To advocate for the establishment of percentage targets designed for women, youth, and people with disabilities, to promote inclusive and equitable access to resources.

## **2. DISABILITY POLICY**

EXCO recognizes the barriers leading to the exclusion of people with disabilities from economic inclusivity. The 7<sup>th</sup> Administration has realized that Sustainable Development Goals, set as international standards by the United Nations, cannot be achieved without a policy instrument to guide remedial action.

The policy is a game-changer in addressing the practical needs and challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities. It seeks to strengthen a coordinated provincial response and provide a blueprint for all role-players and stakeholders on responsive programs.

The policy is aligned with programs and plans that are entrenched in the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

It also promotes participation of Persons with Disabilities and their representative organizations in planning and decision making, applies universal design principles in infrastructure and digital platforms, inclusive communication, through braille and sign language, among the supportive measures.

EXCO approved the Disability Policy to cement the commitment of the 7<sup>th</sup> Administration towards inclusivity.

## **3. MPUMALANGA RESEARCH AND INNOVATION INSTITUTE**

Extensive research provides evidence of undesirable outcomes for decisions not grounded on research in this data-driven era. In Mpumalanga, research incapacity is flagged as a going concern.



Efforts are underway to establish the Mpumalanga Research and Innovation Institute (MRII). Among the functions of the institute will be, namely:

- To promote, advance and support the development of research capacity within the Province,
- To obtain funds for research, both locally and abroad,
- To promote multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration in respect of innovation and research,
- To provide financial support for the acquisition or establishment of Provincial research infrastructure at Provincial research entities,
- To promote the transfer of technology and the implementation of research results and findings,
- To facilitate and promote Provincial, National and International scientific exchange of knowledge and collaboration between Provincial researchers and research entities.

It is envisaged that the institute will support the Provincial and Local Government structures to produce credible research information for evidence-based decision-making.

A report to EXCO outlines the governance structure, which is a Board, to be appointed between January and June in 2026, and will consist of 11 or more members. The Chief Executive Officer will be appointed as the head of the administration.

EXCO approved the report.

#### **4. APPROVED OUTBOUND MISSIONS**

EXCO further approved outbound missions to be undertaken by representatives of the Provincial Government to Algeria and Spain. Three officials from the Nkomazi Special Economic Zone (NSEZ), led by the Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Nontobeko Mahlalela, will attend the Intra-African Trade Fair in Algeria.

EXCO noted that the visit in September 2025, to the capital Algiers, is an opportunity for the NSEZ to collaborate for cross border trade and investment, and that it will enhance its role as a gateway for regional economic integration in Southern Africa.

MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation, Ms. Leah Mabuza, will lead an entourage in August 2025, which include two officials to Spain, to attend the annual World Gold Panning Championship. The event contributes significantly towards nation building and social cohesion. It is hosted by members on a rotational basis. Mpumalanga derived the benefits of playing host to the event in 2023, by showcasing tourism scenic beauty, when participants attended the event in Pilgrim's Rest.

#### **5. APPOINTMENTS**

EXCO approved two appointments in the Department of Social Development. The decision is consistent with the apex priorities of the 7<sup>th</sup> priorities, mainly of building a capable, ethical and developmental state. The appointments are as follows:

##### **5.1 Mr Menias Thobela: Chief Financial Officer.**



**5.2 Ms Sharon Nyakene:** Director - Strategic Planning, Policy Coordination and Monitoring.

Ends.

**Issued by the Mpumalanga Provincial Government**

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