

WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, Ms JESTA SIDELL, MPL, ON THE OCCASION OF THE INVESTMENT AND MINING CONFERENCE HELD IN MIDDELBURG, IN THE STEVE TSHWETE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Thursday, 02 October 2025

Programme Director,

The Honourable Premier of Mpumalanga, Mr. Mandla Ndlovu,
Honourable Members of the Executive Council,
Kgoshi Mokoena, and Ngonyama Yesizwe samaNdebele,
King Makhosonke wesibili,
Kgoshi Pilane and others,
Executive Mayors and Councillors,
Captains of the Mining and Tourism industries,
Esteemed Investors,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to you all, to the beautiful Province of the Rising Sun, Mpumalanga

1. It is with great humility that I stand before you today at the inaugural Mpumalanga Investment and Mining Conference. This is a momentous occasion for our province, and I want to extend a special word of gratitude and appreciation to our investors, both local and international, who have travelled from far and wide to be with us amid protests, deepened political divides and eroded trust in political and economic institutions across the globe. Your presence is an investment of hope in the lives, aspirations and the desires of the people of this province and a testament to the immense potential you see in our province, and for that, we are truly grateful.
2. When opening Parliament in July 2024, President Ramaphosa said: ‘in the next five years, working together, drawing on our collective capabilities, we will forge a new inclusive growth path for South Africa by pursuing a massive investment in infrastructure’

3. The Honourable Premier through his leadership and foresight has taken the steps to breathe life to the vision echoed by the President by announcing that the province, this current financial year will convene a mining and investment summit. And this gathering; it is a declaration of our collective commitment to a future of sustainable, inclusive, and accelerated economic growth. We are here to reassert our position not only as a mining powerhouse but as a globally competitive investment hub across various sectors.
4. Together with you, we are going to use our capabilities to create conducive conditions for our people, especially the youth, women and people with disabilities to achieve their fullest potential. 'Helping People Rise' is at the centre of this investment summit. The realisation and the achievement of the strategic priority of inclusive growth and job creation in the Medium Term Development Plan is the responsibility of everybody.
5. Mpumalanga has long been the engine room of our national economy, and mining remains a bedrock of our provincial GDP. However, we are a province of diverse and abundant opportunities. We are blessed with a unique blend of natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and untapped potential in areas such as renewable energy, agro-processing, and tourism.
6. The conference is designed to forge new partnerships, unlock new frontiers of economic growth, and create an environment where investments can thrive and create lasting prosperity for all our people. We will be engaging in critical dialogues about how we can leverage our mineral wealth to drive diversification and build an economy that is resilient to global shifts.
7. We want to work with you to ensure that the wealth extracted from our soil translates directly into a better life for our communities. This means promoting local content, creating decent jobs, and building sustainable infrastructure that benefits both business and society.

8. Whilst the province has a diversified economic structure in terms of sectors, which are largely manufacturing, tourism, agriculture, and forestry and mining, the coal mining industry has been the bedrock of the provincial economy. Mpumalanga's extensive coal endowment and mining has resulted in Mpumalanga hosting 11 of the country's coal power plants with the generation capacity of about 80 per cent of the country's electricity output.
9. The province will present its investment book with investment and funding opportunities in the local and district municipalities catalytic, private and provincial government packaged projects as well as the provincial sectoral investment and trade opportunities.
10. The impact of coal feedstock in our power plants and industry and the need to reduce carbon emissions and greening our economy significantly pose challenges to the coal industries, and the communities depending on this sector. Mpumalanga is seeking technological mechanisms that reduce or will eliminate the polluting sulphur content of coal and other feedstock and alternative environmentally friendly energy renewables.
11. This milestone conference is part of the initiatives of the province to aggressively promote a new development path aimed at greening our economy by promoting investment in renewables and seeking expansions.
12. Programme director, I invite everyone to witness our resolve to deal a massive blow on unemployment, poverty and inequality. Our investment in infrastructure, promotion of investment plus trade opportunities, bankable investment projects and a consensus development path provide us a concrete platform to job creation and a growing economy.
13. Over the next two days, I encourage you to network, to ask questions, and to explore the many opportunities that our province offers. Let us use this platform to share ideas, forge partnerships, and chart a collective future where our wealth truly translates into the prosperity of our people.

14. I invite everyone to positively engage with the investment book to be launched by the Honourable Premier and take advantage of the business opportunities offered by the province and the government support.

15. Thank you, and may you have a productive and successful conference.

Thank you.