

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MS MAKHOSAZANE MASILELA, MPL, DURING A MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF MPUMALANGA ECONOMIC REGULATOR (MER) HELD AT MER OFFICES, WHITE RIVER

Friday, 02 August 2024

Chairperson and Members of the MER Board.

1. Good morning and thank you for inviting me to this meeting.
2. Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the Board for the excellent work, you continue to do in guiding the work of MER.
3. From the onset, let me hasten to indicate that this Entity is very strategic and critical for government in the pursuit of the three main priorities of the 7th Administration; which are:
 - Drive inclusive growth and job creation;
 - Reduce poverty and tackle high cost of living; and
 - Build a capable, ethical and developmental state
4. Chairperson, it must be through this Entity that as government we are able to dismantle the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Therefore, we are not going to allow the institution to fail.
5. In the same breath, I must also indicate that I expect Board Members to be always available for meetings when invited. As much as the Entity has its own Board and Executives, it belongs and report to the Department.
6. I further expect the Board to update me on progress in implementing your plans on a quarterly basis.
7. I expect you to share the response to legislature on the finalization of the 4th Casino License with the Department before you submit to the Legislature.
8. Ours is a caring government – even if we derive revenue from these two (2) industries, which some may label as sin industries, we remain concerned about their impact in society. Please continue with your awareness campaigns, as they are essential within our societies.

9. In this regard, Miss Mpumalanga should serve as a critical vehicle to aggressively create awareness and educate the youth in particular about the dangers of alcohol and gambling.
10. The promotion of responsible trading practices within the liquor retail sector remains a cornerstone of our policy agenda. Through the MER, we should be able to intensify efforts to enforce compliance with liquor license conditions, reflecting our unwavering commitment to consumer safety and public health.
11. This Board must fast tract preparations for the hosting of the historic **Liquor Indaba**, given the outcry about taverns in our communities.
12. Accordingly, this Indaba must serve as a critical forum for dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders in the liquor industry, including policymakers, business owners, and community leaders.
13. Furthermore, the indaba must provide an invaluable platform for discussing and addressing a range of social and economic issues that impact the liquor industry and our communities.
14. As in the previous financial years, I urge you to continue to collect the much needed revenue and submit to Treasury for the Province to accelerate service delivery.
15. I implore you to continue to maintain a clean audit and ensure that there is stability in the organization. You can't regress on this one – you have set the trend, so continue on the same path.
16. It makes me very happy that MER is one stable organisation, and this has led to the Entity being regarded as one of the best run institution. I implore you to continue to work together as a united team.
17. Chairperson, *Let's grow the economy of Mpumalanga together.*
18. I thank you!