

**REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, Ms. MC MASILELA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL JOINT BUSINESS INSPECTIONS IN MBOMBELA, CITY OF MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

**Friday, 15 November 2024**

**San'bonani!**

1. Programme Director, thank you very much for affording me this opportunity, to explain the reasons for our convergence here this morning.
2. To our partners from the fourth estate, the media, thank you so much for agreeing to join us. This clearly shows that you also care about the health and wellbeing of our people. We truly appreciate this partnership.
3. Ladies and gentlemen; the issue of our children perishing from eating unhealthy and expired goods has now reached high proportions. This has now **prompted us to intensify our inspections of all business premises** across the Province.
4. Accordingly, **the Executive Council has established an inter-departmental Committee** which will, amongst others, coordinate and lead inspection of spaza shops to determine compliance to regulations and hygiene protocols of handling food.

5. The Committee is chairperson by the MEC of Health, Ms. Sasekani Manzini, with other members of the Committee being the MEC for Education, Ms. Cathy Dlamini, the MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs, Mr. Speed Mashilo, and myself, as the MEC for Economic Development and Tourism.
6. The Committee will work with various stakeholders, including ward councillors and health inspectors, and is expected to regularly update the Executive Council.
7. Our Department has also **partnered with the Department of Small Business Development, the National Consumer Protection (NCC) and other regulators to conduct joint business inspections**, following a notable increase and concerning rate of deaths, especially of school going children, due to food poisoning emanating from foodstuff, particularly snacks, sold by mostly spaza shops owned by foreign nationals.
8. These unfortunate food poisoning incidents have been reported by the National Joint Operations and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINT) and the Department of Small Business Development, **as a potential threat to the security of the country and its citizens.**
9. As a Province, we have now **established a Foodborne Illness Outbreak Task Team**, to develop and implement a response strategy to address this outbreak.

10. We are working with our municipalities and key stakeholders from national and the Province, in this inspection programme. And any business owner found to be in the wrong side of the law will be dealt with accordingly.
11. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide you, members of the media, with our detailed programme for the planned inspections in advance, because we want to keep the perpetrators in the dark; they must just see us dropping in unannounced.
12. So, please pardon us as we will inform you on the eve of such operations.
13. Ladies and gentlemen; members of the media; let's go out there to expose those who are taking our people for granted.

***Ngiyabonga!***