

***ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, Ms. MC MASILELA, ON THE OCCASION OF WELCOMING AND INTRODUCING THE NEW HEAD OF DEPARTMENT, Ms. IMMY SERAKALALA, HELD AT MGWENYA BUILDING, RIVERSIDE GOVERNMENT COMPLEX, RIVERSIDE PARK, CITY OF MBOMBELA***

***Friday, 01 November 2024***

Thank you!

Outgoing Acting Head of Department, Mr. Lemmy Mdluli;

Incoming Head of Department, Ms. Immy Serakalala;

The Senior Management Team of the Department;

Ladies and gentlemen;

***San'bonani!***

1. Thank you very much for availing yourself this morning, as we come to **welcome the new Head of Department**. We have finally jumped this hurdle, as the Department now has a person to run it not on an acting capacity.
2. I am aware that the Department has not had an HOD for five (5) or so, **since the departure of Mr. Sarel Mtsweni**. During that period, a number of senior managers has held the fort on an acting capacity.
3. These senior managers include **Messrs Thulane Mdakane, Mighty Mgidi, Peter Nyoni, Nathaniel Sebitso, Ms. Gugu Mashiteng, Mr. Cain Chunda**, and the latest one being **Mr. Lemmy Mdluli**. I just hope I did not miss anyone.

4. At this point, let me kick off by **expressing my utmost gratitude to Mr. Mdluli, for the sterling work he has done**, while holding the fort as acting HOD. He took over from Mr. Chunda, just a few days after I joined *the dedt* family, and has practically walked this journey with me since then.
5. He has made **sure that my Office is supported throughout**, and continued to support me until this last moment. I believe he is not lost to us, as he will still be in the Department.
6. What also makes me proud of him, is that even after the announcement of the new HOD by the Executive Council, **he continued to perform his work with the same vigor and zeal; and that is a sign of maturity**, considering that he was also a prospective candidate for the post.
7. Prior to the announcement, I had a meeting with him to personally break the news. He accepted the outcome, and **immediately committed his unwavering support to the appointed HOD**.
8. Mr. Mdluli, I am **truly grateful for your support and the work you have carried-out during my first 100 Days in office**, until now, as you hand over the baton. May I **invite you to applaud him**, as he leaves the stage!
9. Ladies and gentlemen; allow me, therefore, to **introduce Ms. Immy Serakalala**, as the new Head of Department effective from today.

10. She is no stranger to you, as she has been with the Department for over 10 years now. We **welcome her, and wish her well in her new responsibility**, as she takes over the reins from the outgoing captain of *the dedt* family.
11. As a Department responsible for steering economic activities in the Province, we have a **daunting task of turning things around**, for the benefit of our people.
12. I, therefore, implore this management team, to **give her undivided and unwavering support**, just like you did to the outgoing acting HOD. **She needs your support more than you can think**, because the actual job is done by yourselves.
13. HOD, **your journey as the leader of this team starts in earnest**. You now automatically become a mother of some kind to the team; you will now be a shoulder to cry one. Some members of the team will even come to you crying; hoping that you will wipe their tears – **be prepared and be committed to do that!**
14. **If you support your team members, they will reciprocate as well**. But if you don't and become aloof, they will distance themselves from you, and that will be the start of your failure in the new job.
15. **A mother must always be objective; a mother does not listen to gossips and rumours; she always strives to get facts** before making any decision.

16. **A mother listens to all her children**, so that she can make an informed decision; office gossips and rumours can destroy teamwork. As you take the reins, let this advice be engraved in your mind.
17. Please **treat each member of this team the same**; you have the **responsibility of uplifting the staff morale**, and ensuring that everyone becomes proud to be a member of *the dedt* family.
18. Be **objective in all your decisions at all times**, and when that happens, you will build a supportive and formidable team around you.
19. I also hope you will consider **building on the firm foundation laid by your predecessor**, and I believe the outgoing acting HOD will always be available to advise and assist you, whenever you need him.
20. So, do not be afraid nor be proud to seek his guidance. ***Kuthiwa, indlela ibutwa kulab'embili!***
21. HOD, be rest assured that you have our full support!
22. As you start this journey, I must, however, indicate that the Premier and the political party that has deployed me to this Department, **the African National Congress, has high expectations from me.**
23. They strongly believe in my capability to lead and direct this team, **towards realising massive economic growth and development** in our Province, which will eventually lead to massive job creation, reduction of poverty and inequality.

24. So, here are **my expectations** from you and your team:

- 24.1. Please **continue to lead and oversee the work of our Public Entities**. Our success depends much on their great performance. If they fail, we will fail too and ultimately, I will fail as well; unfortunately, I will not accept that.
- 24.2. Continue on the foundation laid by the outgoing acting HOD, and **ensure that the Entities achieve all the set targets**.
- 24.3. Top of your priority should be the **implementation of new tourism products, such as the Cable Car at Mariepskop and valley of waves**, as I was mandated by the Premier.
- 24.4. This means you must guide **the Tourism Unit in the Department and the MTPA** towards realising these strategic tourism products.
- 24.5. The **new organogram of the Department must be finalised** as a matter of urgency.
- 24.6. And **all vacant funded posts must be filled within the next two months**.
- 24.7. Recruitment for new Board members **must be done at least six (6) months prior to the expiry** of the term of office.

- 24.8. We must really professionalise the Department; improve on how we do things.
- 24.9. No funds should ever again be returned to the fiscus. If this happens, there will be consequences.
- 24.10. **All issues raised by the AG must be resolved; we must implement Audit and Risk Committee resolutions.**
- 24.11. Procurement processes must be improved.
- 24.12. We must **improve the turnaround time** in responding to Legislature Questions.
- 24.13. The HOD must **work closely with the CEOs** of our Entities.
25. This list is not conclusive; I will still provide more issues that require urgent attention in my other engagements with you HOD.
26. In closing, I trust that you and your team, will not deviate from the directives I have given.
27. HOD, you have a responsibility to strengthen unity in the Department, and trust you will inspire hope to all staff members – from the lowest level until the top.
28. I wish you well!

29. ***Leave No One Behind***, so that ***We can Grow Mpumalanga*** together!

***Ngiyabonga!***