

**REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, Ms. MC MASILELA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE RECEPTION DINNER FOR VISITING MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS HELD AT ANEW HOTEL, HAZYVIEW, CITY OF MBOMBELA**

***Saturday, 23 November 2024***

Programme Director, Cllr. W. Nkatha, who is the Speaker of the City of Mbombela Local Municipality;

Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr. Ronald Lamola, the son of our Province, Mpumalanga – *The Place of the Rising Sun*;

Executive Mayor of the Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Cllr. Terrence Shabangu;

Executive Mayor of the City of Mbombela Local Municipality, Cllr. Sibongile Makushe-Mazibuko;

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, the members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Kgoshi SE Malele of the Malele Traditional Council, representing the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoisan leaders;

Distinguished guests;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

***San'bonani!***

1. Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, in my language, siSwati, which is one of the 12 official languages of South Africa, **'san'bonani'** simply means please accept my greetings!

2. Secondly, **Mpumalanga is English for ‘The Place where the sun rises’**; hence you have already been warmly welcomed by the Executive Mayor of the host of Municipality, to the Province of **Mpumalanga – *The Place of the Rising Sun!***
3. We pride ourselves that the sun rises first in our Province; meaning that **we are the genesis of life in South Africa.**
4. As the sun also provides energy, this also makes us South Africa’s **powerhouse of energy generation**, given that we host the majority of Eskom’s power stations. Accordingly, **Mpumalanga contributes as much as 80% of South Africa’s electricity capacity.**
5. So, the rising of the sun, every morning, brings hope for yet another day of endless possibilities. No one can, therefore, say we are lying, when **we assert that we are God’s chosen Province!**
6. Afterall, there are undisputed signs to confirm that after creating the Heavens and the Earth over six days, **God rested in our Province, on the seventh day.**
7. Such evidence can be found in the Graskop area, **where God even created a Window through which He watches over His people.**
8. I’m talking about the **picturesque God’s Window**, through which God is watching us, from a distance!

9. I am even reminded of the words from Bette Midler's song, entitled '*From A Distance*', through which she asserts that, and I quote:

***"From a distance, the world looks blue and green;  
And the snow-capped mountains white ...  
From a distance, there is harmony;  
And it echoes through the land;  
It's the voice of hope;  
It's the voice of peace..."***

- unquote.

10. Through that song, Bette Midler was describing our Province; and also asserting that **you are safe here, because God is watching you from a distance!**
11. Programme Director; it, therefore, gives me great pleasure and honour, to pass my remarks at this auspicious occasion, **when we welcome your Excellencies, the Ambassadors to our picturesque and serene Province.**
12. You will appreciate that **I am the chief Ambassador of tourism in our Province**, in my role as the MEC responsible for tourism matters, and I will, thus, not be doing my job if I fail to market *Destination Mpumalanga*.
13. I am quite sure that our visitors have, indeed, experienced what I just explained, through my analogy, when they toured our tourism attractions during the day.

14. And given that they are Ambassadors in their official capacities, I just hope they will extend this responsibility to also include becoming **Ambassadors of our tourism industry.**
15. Programme Director; I really do not want to steal the limelight from our Keynote Speaker, as my actual **role for tonight is to introduce the person who will fulfil that role.**
16. It, therefore, gives me great pleasure, to introduce our Keynote Speaker for tonight. He is a seasoned politician in his own right, having cut his political teeth in the Youth League of the governing African National Congress (ANC).
17. **He was born in this Province in Bushbuckridge,** and he is a prominent lawyer and a politician, under the banner of the ANC.
18. His **unwavering dedication to public service and active involvement in politics from a young age,** underscore his commitment towards contributing to his country's progress and governance.
19. He **obtained a law degree from the University of Venda;** completed practical legal training at the University of South Africa, and earned two master's degrees from the University of Pretoria, specialising in corporate law and extractive law.

20. He initiated his career at TMN Kgomo and Associates in 2006, and has since held various significant positions, including establishing his own law firm, showcasing a well-rounded professional journey.
21. He has served as a member of the National Assembly since 22 May 2019.
22. He cut his teeth in the Executive of the country by occupying the portfolio of **Minister of Justice and Correctional Services** from May 2019 until June 2024.
23. Programme Director; your Excellencies Ambassadors, it gives me great pleasure to present to you, the son of Mpumalanga, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, **Mr. Ronald Ozzy Lamola!**
24. Over to you Minister!

***Ngiyabonga!***