

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, Ms. MC MASILELA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION OF THE MPUMALANGA TOURISM AND PARKS AGENCY (MTPA) HELD AT KHAYALAMI HOTEL MBOMBELA, CITY OF MBOMBELA

Thursday, 05 December 2024

Programme Facilitator;

Chairperson of the MTPA Board, Mr. Victor Mashego;

Other Board Members present;

Acting CEO of MTPA, Mr. Justus Mohlala;

MTPA Senior Management Team and other officials present;

Ladies and gentlemen;

San'bonani!

1. Thank you very much for the opportunity, to address this all-important Strategic Planning Session of one of our Department's implementing agents, the MTPA.
2. The session comes at an opportune time, as we enter the festive season; and **I hope you have optimally fertilised the tourism ground**, so that we can attract more people to our Province, during this season!
3. I, therefore, believe the plans and strategies you will discuss over the next two days, will surely be **geared towards increasing tourism traffic** in our Province.

4. To grow our economy, **we really need more people to visit**, and come to experience our diverse tourism products offerings.
5. I strongly believe that there is much we can offer to tourists; hence the **need to add more tourism products**.
6. Accordingly, here are **my expectations** from the Board:

- 6.1. The Board must **continue to lead and diligently oversee the work of the Entity**. It should always prioritise the stability of the Entity. In this regard, the **Board should fastrack the conclusion of all current investigations** it is besieged with.

These investigations have taken longer than expected, and have a direct impact on the service delivery to the people of Mpumalanga.

- 6.2. The Board must prioritise the conceptualisation **of new tourism products, such as the envisaged Cable Car at Mariepskop and the Valley of waves**.

This is the mandate I was given by the Premier, when he delegated me the responsibility to grow and develop the economy and the tourism industry in the Province. I cannot, therefore, fail to carry-out his directives.

- 6.3. This means the Entity would have to work very close with **the Tourism Unit in the Department**, so that we could realise these envisaged strategic tourism products.
- 6.4. The Board must ensure that **all vacant funded posts are filled within the next three months**. The Entity should prioritise filling all critical vacant funded positions, to allow service delivery to continue uninterrupted.

Accordingly, the Board must not allow vacuum at the Executive Managers' echelon. I therefore direct that **the recruitment to fill the critical vacant post of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) must start in earnest, and be concluded within three months**.

- 6.5. I am also informed that the employment contract of the Executive Manager for Commercial Operations will expire on 31 December 2024.

Commercial Operations are a significant component of the MTPA, as include Business Development and Concessions, Project Management, as well as the Hospitality Services Management.

As a result, the Entity should also **ensure the position of Executive Manager for Commercial Operations is advertised and filled within 6 months**.

I have further **noted your request to extend the contract of the affected Executive Manager, for a maximum period of six months**, whilst the recruitment process is underway. In the interest of uninterrupted service delivery, I align myself to the proposal.

- 6.6. The Board must also **ensure that no funds are returned unspent to the fiscus**. If this happens, there will be consequences.
- 6.7. **All issues raised by the AG must be resolved**; we you must **implement Audit and Risk Committee resolutions**, accordingly.
- 6.8. The Board must also ensure that **all procurement processes are above board**. If not meticulously managed, this would make the Entity to regress in terms of the audit outcomes.
- 6.9. And as I conclude, the Board must also ensure that there is an **improvement in the turnaround time** in responding to Legislature Questions.
7. I wish you well and to have fruitful discussions in this Strategic Planning Session!
8. We ***Leave No One Behind***, as ***We can Grow Mpumalanga*** together through tourism!

Ngiyabonga!