

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, Ms. MC MASILELA, MPL, DURING THE OCCASION OF THE CROWNING OF MISS MPUMALANGA 2025 HELD AT COMMUNIO CHURCH, MBOMBELA, CITY OF MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Saturday, 15 March 2025

Programme Director;

Head of Department, Ms. Immy Serakalala;

Chairperson of the Board of MER, Ms. Nomthandazo Shirinda;

Other MER board members present;

Chairpersons of the Boards of our other two (2) Public Entities; namely, MEGA and MTPA;

CEO of MER, Mr. Vusi Mtsweni;

CEOs of MEGA and MTPA;

CEO of Mzimari Productions, who are the organisers of this prestigious beauty pageant, Ms. Gugu Nyarenda;

The Judges of this beauty pageant;

Officials from our Department and MER;

Our Top 10 finalists for the coveted crown of Miss Mpumalanga, who brought us here tonight, and their proud parents;

Members of the media;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good evening!

1. Programme Director; It is an honour and privilege to address this prestigious occasion tonight, as we celebrate a truly special milestone — **fifteen (15) years of the Crowning Miss Mpumalanga.**
2. This is more than just a beauty pageant; it is a legacy of empowerment, leadership, and transformation. Over the past 15 years, this platform has provided young women from across our Province with an **opportunity to grow, to lead, and to inspire.**
3. This evening, as we prepare to crown Miss Mpumalanga 2025, we reflect on what this journey has meant for our Province. Each year, this initiative brings out the very best of Mpumalanga—**talent, ambition, and a commitment to making a difference.**
4. This catwalk is not merely to present the outer beauty of our contestants, but to **expose intelligence, character, and the ability to be a true ambassador** for our Province.
5. Miss Mpumalanga has evolved into a prestigious and influential brand, reaching beyond the borders of our Province, and making an impact on both national and international platforms. It stands as a **beacon of excellence and opportunity, empowering young women to step into roles of leadership and community development.**
6. This platform not only celebrates beauty but also cultivates intelligence, resilience, and social responsibility, ensuring that our young women emerge as role models and change-makers who

contribute meaningfully to society. Through Miss Mpumalanga, **we are nurturing future leaders and showcasing the immense potential of our Province** to our country and the world.

7. Our past winners have gone on to achieve remarkably, proving that this crown is more than just an honour; **it is a responsibility and a platform for greater things**. Our past winners have carried the name of Mpumalanga with dignity, intelligence, and passion, and we have no doubt that our new queen will do the same.
8. On behalf of our Department, represented by our Public Entity, MER, who are the main sponsor of this Pageant, I would also like to express our profound gratitude to the outgoing Miss Mpumalanga 2024, Bajabulise Thela, for the sterling role she played as the ***Ambassador of our Responsible Gambling and Drinking Campaigns*** during her tenure on the crown.
9. Accordingly, the one lady who will be crowned Miss Mpumalanga 2024 tonight, has the mammoth task of becoming an **Ambassador for our Responsible Gambling and Drinking Campaigns**.
10. Programme Director; as a caring and responsible government, we would like to warn our people about the social-ills brought by irresponsible gambling. Our people must understand that **gambling is just a game**, and should be treated as such.

11. Ardent gamblers should, therefore, not utilise all their hard-earned money on a game, and ultimately cause suffering for their innocent families. **Winners actually know when to stop!**
12. Likewise, the **consumption of alcohol should only be for recreationally purposes.** Accordingly, we look forward to working closely with our new Miss Mpumalanga, as she champions these critical causes, **using her voice and influence to educate, inspire, and uplift.**
13. Our message to the soon-to-be-crowned Miss Mpumalanga 2025, is that she must **wear the crown with pride, dignity, and a sense of duty.** Please represent us well, and know that you have the support of this Province behind you.
14. Programme Director; in the tourism space, events like Miss Mpumalanga Beauty Pageants are **crucial in marketing, promoting and creating exposure** for our Province. They have the power to attract potential visitors and tourists alike, from inside and outside our Province. Through such events, we can grow our tourism industry, thereby contributing to job creation and economic growth.
15. Over the years, we have **witnessed the transformative power of the Miss Mpumalanga Beauty Pageant,** in empowering our young women and showcasing the richness of our cultural heritage.

16. Allow me, therefore, to **congratulate and pay homage to the organiser of this prestigious event, Ms. Gugu Nyarenda**, through her company Mzimari Productions, for the sterling job she continues to do in sharpening the talent of our young women.
17. As a woman herself, she has for **fifteen years, managed to nurture and expose the talent** of our young women. Through this pageant, she has **produced confident young, fine ladies**, some of whom even went as far as representing our Province at national and international level.
18. We are proud of her, and **wish her well** for the future. We hope you will **continue to empower our young women**, through this life-changing initiative, which has taken many of them off the streets, where they could have been easily tempted to do awful things.
19. Programme Director; tonight is not about long speeches, but it is about celebrating beauty and brains. It is about celebrating our young women who have reached the **Top 10 stage of this prestigious beauty pageant**.
20. We express our appreciation to the outgoing Miss Mpumalanga, for the sterling job she has done during her reign; we will wish well for the future, and we hope that the Miss Mpumalanga title has opened many doors for her.

21. As I close, allow me to extend my gratitude to the organisers, sponsors, and partners; thank you for investing in the future of our young women. Your commitment is shaping the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, and change makers.
22. And to all our Finalists, **you are all winners for having walked the road** to this level. Unfortunately, there can only be one winner; your chance is coming as well!
23. I wish you all best of luck for tonight. **May the best lady win!**
24. We are ***‘A Province that Works for All’***; hence we will ***‘Leave No One Behind’*** in this journey!

Ngiyabonga!