

***ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
TOURISM, Ms. MC MASILELA, ON THE OCCASION OF AN
ENGAGEMENT WITH EXECUTIVES OF PUBLIC ENTITIES, HELD AT
MEGA HEAD OFFICE, RIVERSIDE PARK, CITY OF MBOMBELA***

Wednesday, 23 October 2024

Acting Head of Department, Mr. Lemmy Mdluli;
CEOs of our Public Entities, Messrs. Vusi Mtsweni, Isaac Mahlangu and
Maimane Mohlala, who is currently acting;
And the Executives from our three Entities

San'bonani!

1. Thank you very much for honouring my invitation to this engagement, at a short notice. I appreciate that you dropped everything on your desks and heeded my call.
2. I think you are wondering why did I invite you as the three Entities in one meeting? You are wondering if there is something materially wrong that you have done?
3. Let me quickly allay your fears; I have invited you, as a collective, just to get to know you better. You are a crucial team of Executive from our implementing agents, our Public Entities; hence I have deemed it necessary to interact with you, so that I can also share my expectations with you.

4. Without your commitment to fully support our CEOs, *the dedt* family is likely not to be able to fulfil its Constitutionally-enjoined mandates.
5. Ladies and gentlemen; I believe you are fully aware of the priority areas I have been directed to fulfil by the Premier, when I took office at the beginning of the seventh Administration.
6. Just to refresh your memory, top of the list of those priority areas is **to grow our tourism industry by implementing new tourism products, such as the Cable Car at Mariepskop and valley of waves**, amongst others.
7. This means **the Tourism Unit in the Department and the MTPA** will have to play a meaningful role, in ensuring that these anticipated projects, and many others on the pipeline, are eventually realised.
8. I am not really digressing from the purpose of this meeting; I am intentionally mentioning these highly anticipated projects because I strongly believe we are one big family; hence you must know what is happening within your family.
9. Even if you are an employee of MER or MEGA, these projects touch you as well, as you are a member of *the dedt* family. We must **walk on this journey towards growing the economy of our Province, as a collective**.
10. Going back to why I invited you to this meeting; CEOs and your Executives, my main reason is **to harness the working relations**

between the Department and our Entities. It would make me sleep better at night, if our working relations could improve from where they are currently.

11. My main interest is in seeing a united front within *the dedt* family. If we are united, we would be able **to make a huge impact as a collective**, in carrying-out our delegated mandates.

Issues of improvement

12. In this regard, I implore you to improve on the following non-negotiables:

12.1. **AG Outcomes: All Executives must really commit** to address and resolve all issues raised by the AG in her Report. I want to see all issues resolved as a matter of urgency, so that we all move towards Clean audit outcomes, as *the dedt* family.

12.2. **Filling of funded vacant posts:** I implore our CEOs and their respective Executive Management Teams **to consult the Department before all vacant posts are filled.**

As the Executive Authority of the three Entities, I need to always walk side-by-side with you so that I could be able to defend your decisions, if it happens, they are queried in the political circles.

12.3. **Responses to the Legislature:** I implore Entities to **share their responses to Legislature questions with the Department, and**

in time, so that I can be able to internalise them before our engagements with the Legislature. This will also enable me to defend them with conviction.

I'm also informed there are times when the **Department struggles to receive inputs for Legislature Responses in time**, because some Executives are not contactable after office hours.

May we please work together on this one; **as Executives, you are actually expected to be available whenever you are needed**. In case you are not available, make it a norm to return calls as soon as you are available. I believe it's not too much to ask.

12.4. **Revenue collection:** I implore **MEGA and MTPA to improve their revenue collection**. The Executives responsible for this area of work **must enhance their revenue collection strategies**.

12.5. **Re-investment of the revenue collected:** Both MEGA and the MTPA must re-invest the revenue collected **to improve and refurbish assets like industrial parks and nature reserves**, respectively. At our industrial parks in Kanyamazane and Kabokweni, for example, there are no functional and usable toilets, and no running water, in some cases.

Once improved, assets like industrial parks would be attractive to those requiring operational space, and this will even increase our revenue collection.

Again, **improved nature reserves would improve visitor experience** which would in turn attract more tourists to these parks and attractions. We need people to stay much longer in our tourism attractions, so that they can leave more money in our economy.

- 12.6. **Filling of vacant posts in the Boards:** I commit that we will soon **fill all vacant posts in the Boards**. We are currently hard at work with the recruitment process, in this regard.

I must also add that we have decided to from now on, **we will start such recruitment drives well in advance**, so that there is even proper hand-over to allow for smooth transition, in case of board members not returning to office.

- 12.7. **Continuing engagement with Boards:** In addition, I commit to **continue to engage the chairpersons of our Boards** regularly, so that we can collectively iron out issues, if any, that have the potential to hinder the work of our Entities

- 12.8. **HOD and CEOs relations:** On the same breadth, I implore the **CEOs to work closely with the Head of Department**, as he/she is what I could term, the **Accounting Officer-in-Chief** of *the dedt* family under Vote 6.

Strengthening the working relations would mean *the dedt* family would be better placed to deliver its collective mandate successfully as planned.

12.9. **Festive Season Campaigns: MTPA and MER must start to implement their respective Festive Season Campaigns.** We need more people to visit our Province this coming festive season, so that we can generate more revenue.

MER must **heighten their campaign on the dangers of irresponsible liquor drinking**, in line with the resolutions of the recent Liquor Indaba.

12.10. **Open Door Policy:** I must also indicate that the **Office of the MEC is always open for discussions and engagement.** I am available, in case you require to engage, more especially if the engagement would improve our collective operations.

12.11. **Joint Calendar of Events:** I request that the Entities and the Department must **compile a joint Calendar of Events**, so that I can be able to support all activities. If we plan separately, there are possibilities that our events could clash.

A joint Calendar of Events would also allow us to know what each other is doing, so that we could support each other as members of one family. This **Calendar should be coordinated from the Office of the HOD.**

12.12. **Takealot Township Economy Initiative Launch:** This coming Friday, I will officially launch the Takealot Township Economy Initiative at Kroomdraai Camp in Songimvelo Nature Reserve.

The Initiative aims to strengthen support to SMMEs especially in township and rural areas. I hope the acting HOD has invited you, and we will be glad to see you at the launch.

12.13. **MTEC Hearings:** As you are aware, we will appear before the Provincial Treasury for the MTEC Hearings on Thursday. It is very important that we must talk in voice at that engagement; hence it is crucial that we must engage each other prior to such engagement.

I applaud the acting HOD, for having made sure that we have our in-house engagement before we appear for the MTEC Hearings. Such prior engagements allow us to iron out issues on our own, before we meet outside people.

I recommend that we should continue with such engagements in future. This should not only be for preparations for MTEC Hearings, but even for preparations for appearances at the Legislature and so forth.

12.14. **Joint Marketing and Branding Initiatives:** I really appreciate the collective efforts we are making, in **repositioning our Entities as agencies of the Department.** Through such collective initiatives, our people are beginning to understand that we are one family.

Our people are now beginning to appreciate and understand that **MTPA, MER and MEGA are part of the bigger *the dedt* family.**

I must indicate and appreciate that MTPA and MER are doing very well, in this regard. However, MEGA is still lagging behind – I implore the CEO to improve on this area.

13. Acting HOD and CEOs, I have said a mouthful, and I hope I did not touch a raw nerve, but was merely doing what any mother would do to harness unity in the family. Post this meeting, I trust that any silo workings that existed before would cease immediately.
14. I will ***Leave No One Behind***, so that ***We can Grow Mpumalanga*** together!

Ngiyabonga!