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## MEDIA STATEMENT

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**Date: Thursday, 20 March 2025**

Attention: Journalists, News Editors and Executive Producers

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM CONDEMNS THE  
BLOCKADE OF SOME PROVINCIAL TOURISM ATTRACTIONS BY STRIKING MTPA  
STAFF MEMBERS AND APOLOGISE TO AFFECTED TOURISTS**

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**Mbombela** – The Department of Economic Development and Tourism (*the dedt*) in Mpumalanga has expressed its dismay, and further condemns the blockade of some Provincial tourism attractions, by some striking employees of the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), which has led to these attractions being inaccessible to tourists.

“We condemn in the strongest possible terms, the illegal and unacceptable action of striking MTPA employees, who decided to block entrances at our tourism sites. Their action paints our Province negatively to the outside world, as domestic and even international tourists were blocked from entering our tourism sites. We are also informed that some tourists were even trapped inside one of our nature reserves, when striking MTPA employees barricaded entrances and refused them a passage of exit. We were also told that some ten buses full of tourists were even refused entry, and that was a huge loss to our tourism industry and the economy”, explained the MEC of Economic Development and Tourism, Ms. Makhosazane Masilela.

The MTPA is a Public Entity of *the dedt* which has been mandated to grow and promote tourism in Mpumalanga. The tourism attractions affected by the illegal strike are Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, incorporating God’s Window, Burke’s Luck Potholes and the Drie Rondawels, the Manyeleti and Loskop Dam Nature Reserves.

“I do not think this is the appropriate way for staff members to express their disagreement with the management of the Entity; there are appropriate platforms to engage on their grievances, rather than sabotaging the industry which pays their salaries. We are looking forward to welcome tourists over this coming long weekend, and such unwarranted actions cannot be acceptable.

“We extend our sincere apology to all tourists who experienced such bad behaviour, when they visited our tourism attractions. We are busy resolving the matter; the Head of Department, Ms. Immy Serakalala, has engaged the police, so as to guarantee the safety of our tourists who felt threatened by the actions of the striking employees”, added MEC Masilela.

Ms. Serakalala has requested the police to ensure that no one blockades the entrances of the affected tourism attractions, thereby ensuring easy access by tourists. Meanwhile the management of the MTPA has approached the Labour Court, on an urgent basis, to interdict the striking employees.

“We urge tourists who intend to visit our Province over the long weekend, to continue with their planned visits, as we will ensure that they are safe during their stay. The striking employees must remember that tourism is the goose that lays the golden egg for us; we depend on tourism for jobs and to grow our economy, so it cannot be our own employees, who would trample over the same goose we, including them, depend on. We won’t allow them to kill or even injure this valuable goose”, concluded the MEC.

**-ENDS-**

***Issued by the Communication Directorate, Department of Economic Development and Tourism***

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***Notes to Editors:***

*The Department of Economic Development and Tourism, under the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, is mandated to stimulate economic growth and development in the Province, so as to create sustainable and decent employment, economic transformation and to alleviate poverty. The Department has three (3) Public Entities; namely, Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA), Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), and Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER), to which it has delegated some of its constitutionally-mandated functions. These functions relate to: trade and investment promotion; funding of SMMEs; tourism growth and development; tourism marketing; regulation of the gambling and liquor industries, including collection of gambling levies and liquor license fees, amongst others.*

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***P.S: Mpumalanga will host the G20 Tourism Ministers’ Meeting in September 2025***

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