

**PREMIER MP NDLOVU'S DEBATE ON PRESIDENT
RAMAPHOSA'S SONA, PARLIAMENT CAPE TOWN, 11
FEBRUARY 2025 AT 14H00**

1. Madam Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Thoko Didiza, Chairperson of the NCOP Hon. Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane. It is an honour for me to participate in this very important SONA debate.
2. Greetings to the President, his Excellency Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, Deputy President Hon. Mashatile, Ministers, Premiers, Deputy Ministers, representatives of SALGA, and all members of both the National Assembly and the NCOP.
3. I speak on behalf of the approximately 4 million children who are raised by their grandparents in South Africa, most of them qualify for child support grants of which Mpumalanga has 1 million, 210 thousand.
4. These children receive free basic health-care, they are enrolled in 1 487 no fee schools.
5. One million learners in Mpumalanga benefit from the national school nutrition program.

6. 73 723 learners are ferried to 353 schools daily through, the **scholar transport program**.
7. It does not end there Madam Speaker, this government then pays their tertiary education through NSFAS.
8. We thank you, honorable President and your government for coming up with all these initiatives that aim to better the lives of our children in South Africa.
9. You promised to enact the Bela Act, Expropriation Act and NHI and you have done it. We have no doubt that the Basic Income Grant will be implemented.
10. Madam Speaker, we concur with his excellency President, Ramaphosa's most urgent task, to grow our economy so that we can create jobs, reduce poverty and improve the lives of all South Africans.
11. In Mpumalanga we have since funded 238 youth owned enterprises at the tune of R258 million through the Premier's Youth Development Fund. An initiative aimed at empowering the youth, women and disabled people.

12. The Province plans to launch the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market by April 2025.
13. We are engaging with international partners, including Oman and China, to build trading relations and explore markets for agricultural products.
14. On operationalisation, 156 jobs will be created on the market floor, a total of 150 000 subsistence farmers and small scale farmers will have access to trade their products.
15. We are also expecting to create an additional 105 000 jobs at a farm level.
16. A total of 1 600 SMMEs, four per ward, will be supported to start their own businesses that will trade their products with the market.

ON TOURISM

17. We aim to increase the tourism industry's contribution to our GDP from 5,8% to 8%.
18. The province plans to increase public and private infrastructure investments, through key tourism infrastructure programmes like the development of a cable car in Mariepskop Mountain, Hazyview waves, the Barberton Makhonjwa World Heritage site, and many others.

19. The introduction of these new products in the market will increase our market value from 21,6% to over 25% and become the lead province on international arrivals.

ON MINING

20. 23, 2% of Mpumalanga's GDP comes from mining, in the main coal mining.
21. Mpumalanga depends heavily on coal as a source of economic value, employment and energy.
22. Coal is critical in our strategy to drive both economic growth and development in our province, and to achieve our economic growth target of 3%, as announced by the President in his SONA.
23. We support Just Energy Transition and there are several projects that are implemented in the province, like the Seriti investment on Mbila Emoyeni Wind Farm energy which will create 600 new permanent jobs.
24. We also support a research on carbon capture which is being explored in its viability towards mitigating carbon emissions in the region.
25. We invite mining companies that stand to benefit from this research to assist in funding this initiative in the spirit of DDM.

26. In Mpumalanga **Kubhunya Lithuli**, Madam Speaker, infrastructure development is linked to human development and job creation.

ON HEALTH PROJECTS

- We have a date with the president to come and open the state of the art Middelburg Hospital with 220 beds.
- We are constructing Mapulaneng Hospital with 350 beds and
- Rob Ferreira Radiation Oncology center which will enable the province to completely treat cancer patients than relying on Gauteng.
- The province is making strides towards the successful implementation of the NHI.
- 287 out of 292 clinics have achieved ideal clinic status, meeting National Health care standard.
- 160 clinics meet all required health regulations and are fully certified by the office of health Standards and compliance.

ON EDUCATION

27. Madam Speaker and Chairperson, we are the 3rd best province in the country whose learners have entered Grade 10 and completed Grade 12 in record time.
28. We have now completed the building of seven boarding schools which enrolled 6 438 learners from farm schools in our three District Municipalities.
29. We have finalised the planning of the school for the deaf, and the building will commence in the next financial year 2025/26.

ON ROADS

30. Our goal is to have at least 75% of our road network attaining a minimum classification of '**good**' by 2031.
31. Two teams per district were established for the ***Kubhunya Lithuli*** programme of pothole patching, regravelling and cleaning of drainage structures.

32. In the past we used to only see ring roads in urban provinces, but today we can proudly say in Mpumalanga, we have over six ring roads with an additional one to be implemented in Matsulu, in the next financial year. We will also construct a bridge over a railway line in **Emalahleni**.

33. 87% of the population now has access to reliable clean water.

34. Major water projects are implemented to address water shortages:

- The construction of the Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme
- Rust de Winter Bulk Water supply scheme, here the feasibility study is completed.
- Amsterdam Bulk Water Supply Scheme
- The proposed construction of the Mbombela Dam at mountain view is at an advanced stage.

CONCLUSION

35. Former President Thabo Mbeki once said: *“Gloom and despondency have never defeated adversity. Trying times need courage and resilience. Our strength as a people is not tested during the best of times.”*
36. We support you, Mr. President, and appreciate your commitment to our nation.
37. We have confidence in your leadership, President CR, particularly when you stated that, “South Africa is committed to ending poverty, malnutrition, and hunger in line with our National Development Plan (NDP).”
38. Under your guidance, we believe that our generation can be the one to eradicate poverty.
39. President you are a trusted and a reliable ally, that, one can go into war with, as a former member of this house, Dr Ndlozi finally agrees, with the view that the ANC deploys competent leaders with integrity like you, My President.
40. It is good that a scholar can confirm that you do have the best interest of all South Africans.
41. I thank you.

