

REPLY TO THE DEBATE ON VOTE 6'S POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH 2020-2021 BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MR PETRUS SIMON NGOMANE, MPL, DURING THE VIRTUAL SITTING OF THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, CITY OF MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Friday, 26 June 2020

1. Honourable Speaker; Honourable Members; greetings to you all. Honourable Speaker; thank you very for this opportunity, to reply to the **Debate on the Policy and Budget Speech** of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.
2. The Plans we have presented on Tuesday, are truly intended to turn things around, and **bring hope to our people**. We are so much **committed to re-ignite our economy**, in order to continue to realise **economic transformation and job creation**, for our people.
3. I must, however, indicate that **these plans will surely be revised**, following the Supplementary Budget presented by Minister Tito Mboweni, this past Wednesday.
4. We will definitely come back to this august House, **to present our revised Annual Performance Plans**, after we have presented our **Provincial Supplementary Budget** later next month. I must add that **some of the planned activities will surely be affected**.
5. Madam Speaker; I would therefore like to express my appreciation to all the speakers, who participated constructively, in the **Debate on the Budget Vote** of our Department. This Debate was not about political point-scoring, but about **collectively paving the way towards reviving our already ailing economy**.
6. We indicated that we will **prioritise the roll-out of economic infrastructure**, like the International Fresh Produce Market, Nkomazi SEZ and Forestry

Technology Industrial Park, during this financial year, which can **contribute to economic transformation and job creation** in our Province.

7. The completion timeframes of these infrastructure projects, like the Fresh Produce Market, which had to come to a halt when the country was on lockdown Alert Levels 5 and 4, **will unfortunately be pushed a bit backwards.**
8. Your support of our Budget Vote, will thus ensure that these significant projects, and many others, become a reality.
9. We will also not renege on our **commitment to strengthen our support to our small businesses and cooperatives**, as this sector is a game-changer towards economic growth and job creation.
10. **No other economic sector employs more people than the small business or the informal sector.** We are delighted that this sector has now been allowed to open-up, so as to save jobs.
11. Like I indicated, **MEGA is ready to provide financial and non-financial support** to our small businesses and cooperatives, ranging from loans, mentoring and business support.
12. Just yesterday, we have, together with the private sector, adopted the proposed **Provincial Tourism Recovery Plan**, which will be submitted to the Executive Council for approval.
13. The Plan **suggests initiatives that should be undertaken** in our quest to re-ignite our tourism industry. What is comforting is that, **we are singing from the same hymn book**, with our private sector tourism stakeholders.

14. They have **committed to fully collaborate with us**, because they acknowledge that this is our collective responsibility; it is our elephant, and we will tackle it together.
15. As mentioned, once enacted, the proposed Provincial **Tourism Bill** will enable us to coordinate our tourism activities better than currently. The Bill will **clarify the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder**, given that the MTPA Act was solely meant to establish the Entity, and to assign specific functions to it.
16. We are thus encouraged, and appreciate your support of our Budget Vote. We will therefore, move forward with zoom and zeal, in **our quest to transform our economy for a better Mpumalanga**.
17. To the **Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee** on the **Premier's Office; Finance; Economic Development and Tourism; Honourable Latchiminarain**, thank you very much for your constructive Debate. Your words inspire us to even move at a faster pace, even during this difficult time.
18. We truly appreciate the valuable contribution, and oversight work of the your Committee, guiding the work of our Department, as we **strive to revive and transform our economy**.
19. Yes, we ready and willing to revive our economy, in order to **reduce unemployment, poverty and inequality**, as we strive for inclusive economic growth. As you indicated, we will revise our projected revenue regarding gambling and liquor licensing fees.
20. To the Leader of the Official Opposition, **Honourable Sedibe**, we may have previously not agreed all the time, but today, you showed me that **we can work together for a common course**, as we fight the common enemy known as COVID-19. You will agree with me, that this is no time to grand-stand but time to work together.

21. We will definitely **ensure that black people, equally benefit from the mining sector** in general. As you suggested, we will roll-up our sleeves and attack **with the issue of fronting head-on**, working with the Department of Energy and Mineral Resources.
22. **Honourable Grobler**, thank you for your input as well. Surely, you will agree with me that, we need to put our differences aside, for the sake of our Province. I disagree with you when you say there is no political will. Our Plans shows how we are willing to grow our economy.
23. We also do not agree with you when you say MEGA must be disbanded. MEGA has a critical role to play in assisting us to grow the economy of the Province. Things are indeed, turning around for the better at MEGA. As I indicated, projects like the Nkomazi SEZ will be pushed hard during this financial year.
24. And lastly, to **Honourable Webber**, we appreciate your wise words, and please note that we value them. We are doing something to improve our tourism industry.
25. To the Honourable Speaker and the members of the House in general, thank you very much **for supporting our Budget Vote**. We promise that we will never disappoint our people.
26. Madam Speaker; Emily Dickinson was indeed correct when she said ***Hope is the thing with feathers; as it never stops at all***. We must thus remain hopeful that, **it shall indeed come to pass**.
27. Indeed, ours is a caring government; hence we will do everything possible, to **revive and grow our economy**.
28. ***Let's grow the economy of Mpumalanga together!***

NaKhensa!