

REMARKS BY THE PREMIER OF MPUMALANGA HON MANDLA NDLOVU ON THE MEETING WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA, 11 NOVEMBER 2024 AT UMP COUNCIL CHAMBERS

1. Vice-Chancellor, Professor Thoko Mayekiso; Chair of the University Council, Mr Sabelo Mahlalela, Members of the University Council, Members of the Senior Management Team of the University, Vice Chancellors, DDG Nonhle Mashinini-Nkosi, The entire Team of the OTP, Ladies and Gentlemen;
2. I am deeply grateful to meet you today on this exciting occasion. I would like to start by acknowledging the good work you are doing for the province and the country. As Mpumalanga Government we are grateful about the good work you are doing.
3. We are thrilled to enjoy whirlwind of fantastic experiences here in the province. Continue doing the good work.
4. We appreciate that you continue to do what Tata Nelson Mandela, father of our Nation, former President of the ANC, Noble Peace Prize Winner and the first President of the democratic South Africa, taught us that:
5. **‘Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that a son of a mine-worker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation.’**

6. Today we are more than fortunate as we are in that place that Tata Madiba was referring to when he spoke of institutions that produce leaders to be in the palace. If clowns are elevated to the palace, they will not become kings but the palace will become a circus.
7. One day a boy asked his grandfather why there are no longer circuses anymore in our communities, the grandfather responded and said, because all the clowns are in the national assembly.
8. Today we are more than fortunate as we are in that place that Tata Madiba was referring, when he said, it seems impossible until it is possible. We are more than convinced that the engagement today will continue laying a solid foundation for the profound words of our former President Tata Madiba.
9. The choice of Chancellors for the University Prof Mayekiso and your team is just a clear indication of visionary leadership. You started by his excellency current President of our country President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa and by then he was not the President. After his term you replaced him with the current Chief Justice Mandisa Maya and also by then she was not the Chief Justice.
10. I deliberately use the example to illustrate the important point that you understood the call that a person who occupies the office of the Chancellor must be a person who has an outstanding record in her or his profession and/or has contributed immensely to society.

11. Such a person should be of national stature and prestige whose integrity is unquestionable. The standard you set for yourselves in this university is very high. Please don't drop your own standard.
12. A Chancellor is thus a leader that reflects the university's role and value to its students, staff and wider university community. You have been excelling in your choice of Chancellors.
13. As Government of Mpumalanga we have been put on the map by the University for all the right reasons. Today we decided to shift everything aside to start a formal process that will pave the way to take Mpumalanga to the mountain top, for only intellectuals like Martin Luther King to visit, and declare, that I've been to the mountain top.
14. We want our people go to the top of Mariepskop mountain to see the beautiful flower that is only in Mariepskop and table mountain.
15. Vice-Chancellor Professor Mayekiso and the entire management of the University, we have observed how you have been able to produce students that can pass through the eye of the needle which is based on our organisation's core values, of integrity, reliable, honest, humble, respect and democratic etc.

16. It is clear to us as Mpumalanga government that we will never be the same in terms of our plans if we partner with the University. The life changing experience and the principle of excellence you are offering to students is what we are also yearning for, for the entire government.

17. The location of the university of Mpumalanga should assist the province to deal with the following normalities;

- Unemployment rate is very high at 36,2%
- Youth unemployment rate is approaching 50%
- Youth graduate unemployment rate is at 19%
- Poverty is growing, currently at 52%
- While we support Just Energy Transition, it should only be just, if its implementation does not lead to job losses.
- There is a lone voice in the wilderness here in Mpumalanga. I ignored this tiny little voice, that I think the time is now for me to listen to that voice and I would like the university to assist me.
- I said that we support just energy transition, but please assist the province to package our message on Just Energy Transition to include the research which is done at Leandra for carbon capture.
- The combination of the two should be part of the message of Just Energy Transition from Mpumalanga.
- We are warned by professors from other universities that without coal our economy is as good as dead.
- Please assist us to reposition our province.

18. We want to plead with the university to assist us in dealing with the informal trading, entrepreneurs development, skilling and reskilling of the youth to meet the demand of the economy, create jobs in agriculture, currently only 800 000 jobs are created and our target by 2030 is to have 1 million jobs.
19. As a province our target is to create 100 hundred thousand jobs annually.
20. We plan to have a Mining Indaba and a mining school. We invite you to contribute on these two important initiatives. We are also planning to have waves in Mpumalanga to diversify tourism so that people will not only come to the province to see the big five only. They must visit to see wild life, the waves and the beautiful rose. In short they will experience three province while in Mpumalanga.
21. We acknowledge that you are in the process of introducing a health faculty, the wheels of the university just like those government run slowly. We would like to request that the university to moves a bit faster and fully introduce this faculty which will assist the department of health to plan properly.
22. We are here today to sip knowledge from fountain of knowledge, the university. Maybe one day we can also be professors.
23. We are guided by the words of the former secretary of the United nation Mr Kofi Annan who once said:

24. “Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.”

25. We are today looking forward to this engagements that will take collaboration to another level and also the better understanding of the good work you are doing as our University.

26. Thank you.