



office of the premier

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Makhonjwa Building, No 7 Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Ext 2, Mbombela, 1201, Mpumalanga,  
Private Bag X 11291, Mbombela, 1200  
Tel: +27 (0) 13 766 2473 - Int: +27 13 766 2473 - Web: [www.mpumalanga.gov.za](http://www.mpumalanga.gov.za)

Lihovisi la Ndvunankhulu

I-Ofisi Lika Ndunakulu

Kantoor van die Premier

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**ADDRESS BY MEC CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION LM  
MABUZA, ON THE OCCASION OF 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF JUNE 16  
COMMEMORATION: PERDERKOP, GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT  
MUNICIPALITY**

**15 JUNE 2026**

Programme Director,

Honourable Members of the Executive Council,

Members of the Provincial Legislature,

Executive Mayors and Councillors,

Leaders of Student and Youth Organisations,

Traditional and Religious Leaders,

Distinguished Guests,

Young People of Mpumalanga,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Today, we gather to commemorate one of the most significant days in the history of our democracy, "Reset @50- The Future Calls" Youth Day. We honour the courageous young people of 16 June.

2. 1976 who stood up against oppression and injustice, demanding quality education and equal opportunities.
3. The youth of 1976 demonstrated extraordinary courage and sacrifice. They challenged an unjust system and paid the ultimate price for the freedom and democracy we enjoy today. Their struggle reminds us that young people have always been at the forefront of social change and nation-building.
4. As we commemorate this important day, we must ask ourselves a critical question: What kind of future are we creating for the young people of today? The responsibility of government, the private sector, communities and families is to ensure that the dreams of our youth are not limited by poverty, unemployment, crime, substance abuse and inequality.
5. In Mpumalanga, we are committed to empowering young people through education, skills development, sport, arts, culture and heritage programmes.
6. We recognise that the creative and cultural industries are not only platforms for self-expression but also important drivers of economic growth and job creation.
7. Through our programmes, we continue to nurture young artists, athletes, musicians, writers and cultural practitioners who are making their mark locally, nationally and internationally.
8. As the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, we believe that investing in youth development is investing in the future of our province.
9. Through libraries, community arts centres, sporting facilities and cultural programmes, we are creating opportunities for

young people to discover their talents and contribute positively to society.

10. Young people of Mpumalanga, your generation, faces challenges that are different from those faced by the youth of 1976. However, your mission remains equally important. You are called upon to be innovators, entrepreneurs, creators, leaders and active citizens.
11. The future of Mpumalanga is in the hands of its young people. We have confidence in your ability to lead, innovate and transform our province and our country for the better.
12. Let us honour the heroes of 1976 not only through words, but through action. Let us create opportunities, unlock potential and build a prosperous future for every young person in Mpumalanga.
13. Today, 32 years into our democracy, we have much to celebrate. Millions of South Africans have gained access to education, housing, healthcare, electricity, water, and social protection. These gains were not accidental. They are the result of the sacrifices made by freedom fighters and the continued commitment of a democratic government dedicated to improving the lives of all our people.
14. However, while we celebrate our achievements, we must also confront the realities facing our youth. Unemployment remains one of the greatest challenges confronting young people. Many graduates struggle to find work, while others are excluded from economic opportunities because of poverty and inequality. These challenges threaten the hopes and aspirations of a generation that deserves a brighter future.

15. As leaders, we must speak honestly. Political freedom without economic inclusion remains incomplete. The struggle of our generation is therefore to ensure that political liberation is matched by economic empowerment. We must build an economy that creates jobs, supports entrepreneurs, develops skills, and opens doors for young people regardless of their background.
16. The youth of today are not asking for handouts; they are demanding opportunities. They want quality education, meaningful employment, access to funding for businesses, digital skills, and participation in the mainstream economy. These demands are legitimate and must be met with urgency.
17. We must also reject those who seek to divide our people through misinformation, intolerance, and narrow political interests. The future of South Africa depends on unity, social cohesion, and a shared commitment to development. The youth of 1976 united around a common purpose, and we too must unite around the mission of building a prosperous, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, and inclusive society.
18. The struggle continues, not against apartheid, but against unemployment, poverty, inequality, crime, and hopelessness. Together, we can overcome these challenges and build the South Africa envisioned by those who sacrificed for our freedom.
19. Together, we can ensure that the sacrifices of the youth of 1976 were not in vain.
20. The Provincial Government is concerned about the number of young people who, after completing Matric

and the academic studies, find it difficult to participate in the economy. The Premier, Hon. Mandla Ndlovu is leading the campaign to ensure that the youth participate meaningfully in the economy, through the Premier's Youth Development Fund. Since the introduction of this flagship programme in 2021, more than 2000 jobs have been created through grant funding of Youth-led Enterprises that create opportunities.

21. Some of the beneficiaries of the Premier's Youth Development Fund joining us today, to share their experiences.
22. Some are in the mining sector, some in farming, and some are in the Transport and Logistics sector. We are proud of them.
23. Let's remember to go and register, voter register is about to close this coming weekend, asambenisonke as young people ku voter registration, if you already registered go verify your information and update it.

Siyabonga!