



economic development  
& tourism

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# The Road Travelled!



Edition No.1



## Special Newsletter

*The Road Travelled by the MEC since joining the Department*

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# Message from MEC Hlophe

**A**s the MEC responsible to steer economic development and tourism matters in the Province, I am legally enjoined to lead all efforts aimed at nurturing and growing the economy of the Province, so that we can create the much-needed jobs for our people. Our role, as government, is to put in place policies and strategies which will pave the way and accelerate economic growth. Consequently, growing the economy will bolster government's effort to fight the stubborn triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. However, we also rely on partnerships with the private sector, given that most jobs are created by that sector.

Working with our Public Entities; namely, Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA); Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER), and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), our Department of Economic Development and Tourism continues to carry-out its mandate. We are entrusted with the enormous responsibility of championing the growth of small businesses, incorporating SMMEs and Cooperative; we are mandated to protect consumers from unscrupulous business practices; we are mandated to

regulate both the gambling and liquor industries; and to market and promote Mpumalanga as the tourist and investor destination of choice, amongst others.

As the Department, we are surely hard at work engaging stakeholders across all economic sectors, as we believe in partnerships for economic growth and development.

We are, therefore, presenting this *Newsletter* to take stock of the work I have done since I took over the portfolio relating to economic development and tourism in October 2022. Through this publication, we are also fulfilling our constitutional mandate of regularly informing our people about what we have done, in our quest to improve their lives.

I strongly believe this publication (*The Road Travelled*) will, thus, come in handy as it provides an opportunity to reflect on the journey I have travelled thus far, in fulfilling the mandate given to me.

***Leave No One Behind, as We Grow Mpumalanga Together!***



# Hlophe Raises Awareness About The Significance Of Tourism In Job Creation

**M**EC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Ms. Nompumelelo Hlophe, says the tourism sector must be nurtured as it contributes significantly to South Africa's workforce and towards economic growth. She indicated that tourism contributes 3,7% to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), thus, adding a significant value to the economy and overall development of our country. MEC Hlophe said this when addressing the 2023 Provincial Tourism Month Awareness Day event held in KwaMhlanga in the Thembeisile Hani Local Municipality on 23 September 2023.

"We must at all times remember that tourism is our new gold mine, and we need to nurture it, if we want to continue to reap its sweet fruits", said MEC Hlophe.

September has been declared as the Tourism Month by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), to foster awareness among the international community, about the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value. In the Province, the norm is to coordinate efforts to create awareness on the less visited sites and to encourage the residents to explore their Province, thereby promoting domestic tourism.

The MEC also indicated that some tourism accommodation businesses, in the Province, were selected and funded for grading service offered by the Grading Council of South Africa.

"As part of our Legacy Programme, our Department will fund the grading project for five (5) and three (3) accommodation establishments in the Thembeisile Hani and Dr JS Moroka Local Municipalities, respectively", added the MEC.

The five (5) accommodation establishments in the Thembeisile Hani Local Municipality are: (1) Blackwood Eco Lodge, (2) Mpisana boutique Guest House, (3) Leisure Dot 45 Events Centre, (4) KwaNtokozo Guest House, and (5) Mabhuma Guest House.

Hlophe also used the event to underscore the importance of customer care, reminding everyone that excellent customer care is significant to tourism growth. She pleaded with the tourism industry players to treat tourists as if they are kings.

"Coupled with excellent customer care, is tourism safety. We, therefore, encourage all communities to work with law enforcement agencies, to promote tourism safety. Let us welcome and make all our visitors feel safe within our communities, tourism sites and tourism routes. We must show them that we care for our visitors", concluded MEC Hlophe.





# Hlophe Ha To Incub Stain

**F**inance, Economic Development and Tourism MEC, Ms. Nompumelelo Hlophe says the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, has a crucial mandate to support SMMEs and cooperatives by empowering and nurturing them. We do this, in order to contribute meaningfully towards the creation of businesses, in support of the growth of our economy. She said these during the occasion of handing-over equipment to incubatees at the Middleburg Stainless Initiative, held in Middleburg.

“When our youth are trained and skilled in stainless steel fabrication, they would utilise their acquired skills in growing our economy, and would even become entrepreneurs in the stainless steel industry”, Said MEC Hlophe.



# Hands-Over Equipment Initiatives At The Mpumalanga Stainless Steel Incubation Centre

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism has been an integral part of the MSI, and has been supporting it since its establishment in 1999. This we have done, and continues to do, because we want to contribute in the creation and nurturing of skills required by our economy. The stainless steel Incubation Centre was established primarily to:

- To provide support services to new, unemployed and struggling SMMEs in the steel industry, with specialisation in stainless steel;
- To improve SMMEs' efficiencies and quality of product and service offerings through joint access to technology, skills development and markets;
- To promote domestic stainless-steel beneficiation through the establishment of small and medium sized businesses; and
- To transfer knowledge in the stainless-steel manufacturing and design to historically disadvantaged individuals.

"The Department, under the caring ANC-led government, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the MSI to provide financial and non-financial support to the Incubation Centre, to ensure that the Centre achieves its set objectives. We, therefore, commit that this marriage will continue even in the future", Concluded MEC Hlophle.

“When our youth are trained and skilled in stainless steel fabrication, they would utilise their acquired skills in growing our economy, and would even become entrepreneurs in the stainless steel industry”

# Career Expo 2023

**F**inance, Economic Development and Tourism MEC, Ms. Nompumelelo Hlophe says tourism contributes significantly to the Province's gross domestic product (IGDP) and economy in general. She said this when addressing the annual Tourism Career Expo hosted by the Department in Secunda recently (07 September 2023), where she urged learners to take tourism as a career of choice.

"We are here to encourage you to choose a career in the tourism industry. We want you to understand that tourism and the associated hospitality industry, are a significant economic sector", explained Ms. Hlophe.

The Expo, which was held under the theme: "*Tourism Investments for People, Planet and Prosperity*", sought to inspire young people to take advantage of career opportunities, but was also strategically organised to encourage our learners to consider the tourism sector, as a career and profession of choice.

"As the ANC-led government, collaborating with stakeholders both in the public and private sectors, we are committed to ensure that this Career Expo, goes a long way to nurture and shape your exciting and bright future ahead of you. We will hold you by the hand, as you navigate the waters towards an exciting journey in the tourism industry", added Ms. Hlophe.

The Expo also provided an interactive platform to showcase different careers, skills development initiatives and business opportunities in the tourism sector.

Research indicates that tourism contributes 3,7% to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and thus adds a significant value to the economy and overall development of our country.





# Tourism Remains

## Mpumalanga's Gold Mine – Hlophe

**M**EC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Ms. Nompumelelo Hlophe says tourism remains Mpumalanga's gold mine which must always be nurtured through marketing campaigns and exhibitions. She said this when addressing exhibitors from Mpumalanga, during the 2023 Africa's Travel Indaba held at the Durban Exhibition Centre and the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre in Durban in May.

The Indaba, hosted annually by South African Tourism, provides a marketing and business platform to countries to market their destinations and tourism product offerings, and attracts many international countries within the SADC region and beyond.

"Tourism is our gold mine in the Province; it is the goose that lays the golden eggs for us. Tourism is also not only about travel and leisure, but about how it changes the lives of our people by creating the much-needed jobs. Therefore, this Travel Indaba gives us an opportunity to market and promote our tourism product offerings to other countries", said MEC Hlophe.

Africa's Travel Indaba is the continent's most influential travel tradeshow and the biggest trade show of its kind. The Indaba provides the African industry three (3) days to come together, and do business with the best tourism buyers from around the world. Billed as Africa's biggest travel show, the Indaba did not disappoint in bringing people from all corners of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) under one roof.

Eswatini, Zambia, Mauritius, the Seychelles, to mention but a few, all converged at the Durban Exhibition Centre and the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre, to flex their tourism muscle against the various tourist destinations.

MEC Hlophe also used the Indaba to engage his counterparts from other Provinces, to address issues of common interest in relation to tourism. She also met with tourism ministers from the Kingdom of Eswatini and the People's Republic of Mozambique, to further their cooperation agreement through the TriLand Regional Tourism Brand.

"The TriLand Regional Tourism Brand offers tourists an opportunity to experience our three (3) countries in one day. They can enjoy breakfast in the Kingdom of Eswatini, then proceed to the People's Republic of Mozambique for lunch, and finally enjoy their supper in our beautiful Province of Mpumalanga. At the same time, they will experience the Swazi culture in the Kingdom of Eswatini, enjoy swimming in the blue beaches of Mozambique, and finally experience the scenic beauty and the big 5 in our Province.

"Mpumalanga continues to be the preferred destination for tourists from the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Republic of Mozambique, who even come to our Province for shopping and medical consultations. It is thus necessary that we must harness this relationship and strengthen the Brand for the benefit of all our people", concluded Hlophe.







# Business Stakeholder Engagement 2023

**F**inance, Economic Development and Tourism MEC, Ms. Nompumelelo Hlophe says small businesses are the backbone of Mpumalanga's economy, as they employ the majority of the workforce. She said this recently (17 November 2023) in Mashishing, when she donated car wash equipment and products to ten (10) youth-owned businesses.

"There is much information to confirm that small business and cooperatives are, in fact, the backbone of our economy. These businesses, which are often overlooked, contribute more than the so called big businesses, towards economic growth.

"Small businesses employ quite a number of people; more than what big businesses employ. It is estimated that this informal sector employs up to 60% of our country's workforce, explained MEC Hlophe".

The donation was to fulfil the ongoing mandate of the Department to support SMMEs and cooperatives, so that they can contribute to the economy of the Province, and create jobs for the unemployed youth within their communities. During the event, the MEC further stressed that "small businesses, like spaza shops, hair salons and car washes, are in fact, big businesses. It is, thus, crucial that they must be supported and nurtured at all times".

The event was a continuation of the empowerment roadshow, which has happened for many years now. On November, 3, 2023, the MEC also donated tools of trade such as grinders, welding machines, drill machines, to ten (10) youth-owned businesses currently under incubation at the Mpumalanga Stainless Initiative in Middelburg, in the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.

"No one can disagree with me, when I say the ANC-led is caring; it is a government which cares for the youth; It is a government which believes in youth entrepreneurship and business growth in general. We do this because we acknowledge that the youth are the future of this Province, and the country in general. Let us, therefore, work together, in our quest to nurture, empower and build a remarkable cadre of youth entrepreneurs", concluded the MEC.

Accompanied by the Executive Mayor of Thaba Chweu Local Municipality, Councillor Mogotle Nkadimeng and other Councillors, MEC Hlophe also engaged with local business people to address and respond to their concerns.

# Imbokodo Hlophe

## Gives Marching Orders To the dedt Family

“

Our Department, working with its Entities, was mandated to focus on specific areas; most significantly, our focus area was on creating decent jobs for our people, so that we can grow our economy...

”

**M**EC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Ms. Nompumelelo Hlophe says despite that much has been done to improve the quality of life for all people since 1994, more still needs to be done to dismantle the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. The MEC said this during the two-day Departmental Strategic Planning session held at Khayalami Hotel in Mbombela, from 05-06 October 2023.

The strategic planning retreat was used as platform to review the collective work of the Department and its implementing agents, its Public Entities, in its quest to fulfil the mandate since the sixth Administration took over in 2019, and to also plan for the road ahead.

“Our Department, in collaboration with its implementing agents; our Public Entities, has the constitutional mandate to steer economic activities in the Province, so as to grow and develop the economy of our Province. I, therefore, fully trust that all of you, ably led by the acting HOD, are fully behind me as I strive to fulfil the mandate delegated to me by the Premier and the governing ANC.

“Our Department, working with its Entities, was mandated to focus on specific areas; most significantly, our focus area was on creating decent jobs for our people, so that we can grow our economy. In this regard, I expect to receive a consolidated and detailed report on the number of jobs we have created and facilitated since 2019, when the current Administration took over”, alluded MEC Hlophe.

The MEC also used the strategic planning session, to instruct the Department to develop and submit a detailed fast-tracking plan, to ensure that all the resolutions and plans of the two-day retreat are implemented without delay.

“I believe you will surely agree that you all have the responsibility to assist the governing African National Congress, to bring about socio-economic freedom now. This task talks to all of us, at all levels of responsibility. This is the task that must be approached with the greatest vigour and determination, for we are serving the people that are desperate for our services. We dare not falter and fail our people”, concluded MEC Hlophe.



# Hlophe Ann Mpumalanga B-BB



**F**inance, Economic Development and Tourism MEC, Ms Nompumelelo Hlophe says the establishment of the B-BBEE Advisory Council is a clear indication of government's unwavering commitment towards economic transformation, which will ultimately arrest the undesirable gap between the rich and the poor. The MEC said this when announcing the members of the new Advisory Council at The Nutting House, just outside Mbombela on 29 June 2023.

"I am greatly honoured to be meeting with the newly established Mpumalanga B-BBEE Advisory Council. The members of the Advisory Council will agree with me that economic transformation is a collective effort, and government cannot do it alone, without you as partners. I also strongly believe that this newly constituted Provincial B-BBEE Advisory Council will adequately advise and support the Province in the implementation of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE). The Provincial Council will further link with various Sector Councils to ensure that economic transformation across all sectors is achieved", said MEC Hlophe.

The Council was established to advise and support the Province to implement the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Policy. The B-BBEE Advisory Council comprise representatives from the private sector, business, organised labour and community representatives.

"As the main protagonist of economic growth in the Province, it was important for the Department to establish the Advisory Council, in order to reaffirm government's commitment to create decent employment and promote sustainable development", added the MEC.

The Mpumalanga B-BBEE Advisory Council is mandated to:

- Advise government on black economic empowerment;
- Make informed inputs to policy and legislation that will create an enabling environment for transformation to happen in the Province;
- Review progress in achieving black economic empowerment;
- Advise and make inputs on the development, amendment or replacement of the strategy for broad-based black economic empowerment;

# Announces New EE Advisory Council



- Advise on implementation of transformation charters;
- Facilitate partnership between organs of state and the private sector that will advance the objectives of economic transformation; and
- Provide insight on economic transformation matters.

The new members of the Mpumalanga B-BBEE Advisory Council are as follows:

- Ms Millicent Molebogeng Matlala
- Ms Thembeke Valencia Mnisi-Singwane
- Mr Solomon Mahlangu
- Ms Vusumuzi Mxolisi Nsibande
- Mr Breaks Miyelani Mkhabela
- Ms Anna-Marth Ott
- Mr Sekgapinye David Pule
- Mr Thanduxolo Buntu Matshaya
- Mr Thabani Martin Shale
- Ms Nomalungelo Metisoe Mnisi
- Ms Almeri Du Toit
- Mr Sunday Zamisa Mathebula
- Mr Edward Patrick Letsimo
- Mr Thembelani Hadebe
- Ms Nomusa Martha Makhanya
- Ms Sarah Lindiwe Mahlangu

The Council's ex-officio members are as follows:

- Mr Muzi Maziya
- Mr Zweli Mncube
- Mr Isaac Mahlangu (CEO:MEGA)
- Mr Vusi Mtsweni (CEO:MER)
- Mr Mduduzi Vilakazi (CEO:MTPA)
- Mr Sabelo Mabuyakhulu (Acting CEO:Nkomazi SEZ) – get the name from Mr Ndima
- Ms Immy Serakalala
- Representative from the Department of Trade and Industry (the dtic)

"I look forward to your valuable insight and inputs, as we work together towards transforming the economy of our beautiful province, Mpumalanga", concluded MEC Hlophe.

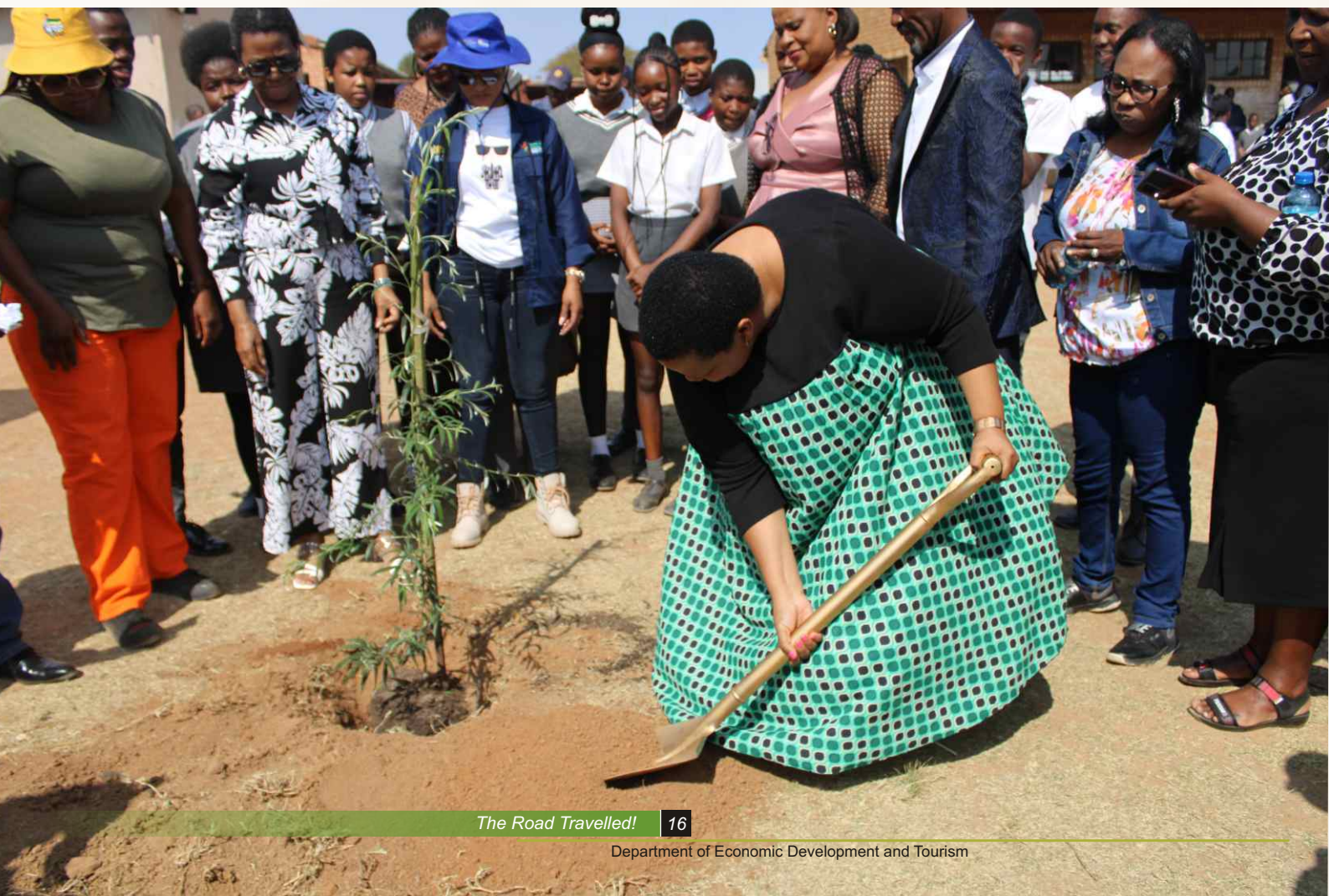
# Hlophe A Sprin

**F**inance, Economic Development and Tourism, MEC Ms. Nompumelelo Hlophe spent the first day of spring with the learners of Zakheni Secondary School in KwaMhlanga, in the Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, on 01 September this year, where she encouraged the learners to consider tourism as a career of choice. She told the learners that tourism is a crucial industry given its ability to create massive jobs and contribute to the country's economy. The MEC visited the school as part of the Spring Day 2023 Tourism Activation campaign.

“My children, I urge you to consider taking tourism as a career of choice. Tourism is a diverse industry with vast career

opportunities which you can choose from. This industry employs a lot of people in our country, and thus contributes immensely to our country's workforce. I assure you that you will not regret if you decide to choose tourism as your career”, explained MEC Hlophe.

The Month of September has been earmarked to promote domestic tourism, as well as to celebrate World tourism Day annually, on September 27. The objective of the Tourism Month is to also create awareness on the enormous contribution that the tourism industry adds to the Provincial and national economies, including its significant contribution to job creation. During the Spring Day Activation at the school, the MEC also



# activates g Day

planted a tree, which she said symbolises the tenacity and resilience of the tourism industry even in difficult economic periods.

“The norm is that during the Tourism Month, we coordinate efforts to create awareness and to promote the less visited sites; we further encourage our people to explore their Province, thereby promoting domestic tourism. As the saying goes, charity begins at home, it should thus begin with us – the people of Mpumalanga – to travel and explore our Province”, concluded a jovial MEC Hlophe.





# Hlophe Pays Homage

## To Female Employees For Their Continued Commitment To Service Delivery

**A**s part of celebrating women's month, Imbokodo the MEC, Ms. Nompumelelo Hlophe, hosted the dedicated female employees to a glamorous gala dinner at Khayalami Hotel in Mbombela.

Annually, during the month of August, we celebrate and pay homage to the revolutionary and gallant women, who on 09 August 1956, took to the street and embarked on a historic national march to the doorstep of the barbaric apartheid regime, in protest of the unjust pass laws. The apartheid system was in fact, designed to control women even further, and to reduce them to become passive beings, at the mercy of men; it was designed to be purely a patriarchal system wherein women had not say.

The gesture by the MEC was to honor and appreciate the dedicated female employees, for their enormous contribution and dedication in shaping the economy of the Province.

"Today, we are gathered here to celebrate the role that you, as women in the Department, play in ensuring that we realise our legislative mandate. My mandate is to oversee the work of the Department in nurturing and growing the economy of the Province, whilst we create the much-needed jobs for our people. As women are the bedrock of our society, I strongly believe that they must even benefit more than men. Women are the ones keeping the fire burning in our homes, and if we empower them more, our communities and particularly children, would never go to bed hungry. As the saying goes, "If you empower a man, you empower an individual, but if you empower a woman, you empower the nation", said MEC Hlophe.

What became the 'menu' for the day from all speakers, was the continuous positive talk about gender equality, self-care, and mental health of women. Mental health has become a trend and speakers encouraged women not to keep quiet about the subject matter.

Ms. Forgive Mokoena, encapsulated the session by saying, "As women, we have proven that we are capable, just as men, in all aspects of work. However, we are still fighting prejudice, discrimination, and inequality in the workplace. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that women are treated respectfully and fairly in the workplace. The statistics in the Department does not make for good reading. Currently, we are seating 32% women occupying Senior Management positions. At middle management, we are seating at 42%. In order to change this, we need bold actions from our leaders".

MEC Hlophe concluded the night by saying "the ANC-led government remains committed to the agenda of women empowerment at a grand scale. We reaffirm our commitment to work with other strategic partners, in pursuing the noble agenda of empowering women in the workplace and economic landscape. Equally, women have a responsibility to take advantage of government interventions and programmes, aimed at inculcating the spirit of women leadership and entrepreneurship".



# MEC Hlophe Tables

## The 2023-2024 Policy And Budget

**M**pumalanga MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Ms. Nompumelelo Hlophe, tabled the Policy and Budget of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (Vote 6), incorporating its four (4) public entities, for the 2023-2024 financial year, to the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature later this week. The four (4) public entities are: MEGA (Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency), MTPA (Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency), MER (Mpumalanga Economic Regulator) and Nkomazi SEZ.

In her speech, the MEC provided a detailed account of the achievements of the Department and its four (4) implementing agents, during the financial year ended 31 March 2023. She further provided details of the work planned, with concomitant funds, for the financial year commenced 01 April 2023.

MEC Hlophe's Policy and Budget speech focused on the following key strategic issues envisaged to improve the socio economic standing of the people of Mpumalanga:

- Strengthening support to grow small business sector;
- Growing the economy through re-industrialisation and localization;
- Strengthening the potential of new economies for faster economic recovery and growth;
- Re-igniting tourism; and
- Strengthening governance in the Department and its Public Entities.

"Madam Speaker, when my predecessor stood before this august House last year, we committed to strengthen our support to SMMEs and cooperatives, and to even foster partnership with the private sector so that we can collectively make a huge impact in the growth of these businesses. In this regard, our Department was able

to forge such partnership with the private sector, and will continue to do so even in the current financial year, to enable our SMMEs and Cooperatives to participate in the private sector value chain in construction, mining, agriculture and tourism, among others", said MEC Hlophe.

**Total Allocation R 1 billion, 470 million, 405 thousand**

**Programme 1: Administration** received an amount of **121 million, 952 thousand rands**.

**Programme 2: integrated Economic Development** received **579 million, 619 thousand rands**. Included in this amount, is **262 million, and 4-thousand rands** to fund the requirements of MEGA; and **252 million, 93 thousand rands** to fund the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market (MIFPM).

**Programme 3: Trade and Sector Development** received an amount of **87 million, 58 thousand rands**. Included in this amount, **52 million, 350 thousand rands** for the Nkomazi SEZ.

**Programme 4: Business Regulation and Governance** received **136 million, 734 thousand rands**, which includes **112 million, 45 thousand rands** to fund the requirements of the Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER).

**Programme 5: Economic Planning** received **21 million, 927 thousand rands**.

**Programme 6: Tourism** is allocated **523 million, 115 thousand rands**, which includes **514 million, 314 thousand rands** to fund the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA).





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MPUMALANGA PROVINCE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# Vision

An inclusive, globally competitive economy

# Mission

Drive economic growth that creates  
decent employment and  
promotes sustainable development



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