

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
TOURISM, MR SIKHUMBUZO ERIC KHOLWANE, MPL DURING THE LAUNCH OF
THE MPUMALANGA EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS SURVEY (MEBS) IN
EMALAHLENI**

THURSDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2019

- **Programme Director;**
- **The Executive Mayor of eMalahleni Local Municipality, Councilor Linah Malatjie;**
- **The Executive Mayor of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, Councilor Tsietsi Tolo;**
- **The Municipal Managers of eMalahleni and Steve Tshwete Local Municipalities;**
- **Secretary of the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NAFCOC): Nkangala; Mr Sydney Mamonyane**
- **CEO of the Middelburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Ms Anna-Marth Ott**
- **Chairperson of the Greater Emalahleni Informal Traders Association; Mr Victor Madela**
- **Nkangala Regional Chairperson of the Youth Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Khutso Masemola**
- **Representatives of Statistics South Africa; and various economic sectors**
- **Distinguished guests;**
- **Members of the media;**
- **Ladies and gentlemen;**

Good Morning / San'bonani!

Programme Director;

1. Next week I will be **tabling the provincial budget for the 2019/20 financial year** at the provincial legislature.
2. I will attempt to contextualize the economic environment in which we will be **tabling the fifth budget of the fifth administration** that was installed in 2014.
3. While there is a temptation for me to delve too deep into the economic indicators, I will however for the purposes of this event, **set the scene by highlighting a few aspects relevant to this important project** that we are launching today.

Programme Director;

4. South Africa is a **small open economy and we are impacted by events in the global economy.**
5. There are expectations that South Africa's export growth forecast will slow, constrained by World growth.
6. The **real GDP growth is however expected to rise** to 1.5 per cent in 2019, and then strengthen moderately to 2.1 per cent in 2021.
7. Mpumalanga, as a part of the South African economy, is therefore affected by the global economic discourse.
8. Like the South African economy, the **Province has had its fair share of challenges**, including those affecting the mining, manufacturing and energy sectors of our economy.

9. This has put a heavy burden on our ability to **lift the people of Mpumalanga out of poverty, inequality and unemployment.**
10. It is therefore important that proper interventions be implemented to **move towards a more positive growth.**
11. But these interventions must be informed by accurate and detailed data from the ground.
12. This is where the **MPUMALANGA EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS SURVEY (MEBS) comes in.**

Programme Director,

13. Emanating from the desire to ensure that the Province and other stakeholders work with a common purpose for the development of the province and facing a need to strengthen its capacity to carry out its mandate, in 2010, the provincial government initiated a discussion which culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mpumalanga Provincial Government and Statistics South Africa.
14. The adoption of the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path (MEGDP) in 2011 further gave impetus to this initiative, by explicitly asserting that **information intelligence** and **performance monitoring** is a key component of the programme of taking forward the Province's economic growth and development agenda.
15. Informed by this policy injunction, in 2015, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT) further entered into a specific agreement with Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) to carry out the Mpumalanga Employment and Business survey.

16. The objectives of this agreement were to:
- *Establish a credible output based system that will give a detailed account of businesses and employment within the province;*
 - *Build economic and business intelligence capacity in the provincial government to track employment activity*
 - *Build a foundation for scientific based turnaround strategy development;*
17. Our journey to fulfilling these objectives was put into motion in 2016 as we carried out the **first of its kind** detailed survey on businesses in and around the former Mbombela Local Municipality. (Prior to amalgamating with the former Umjindi Local Municipality).
18. This was a first in a number of aspects in that
- 18.1 *Firstly, it was the first time that a Province together with Statistics South Africa, had undertaken such a **detailed accounting of employment and businesses at the scale of a full municipality.***
- It is important to note that information from over ten thousand, two hundred (10 200) businesses was collected during this inaugural phase of the Mpumalanga Employment and Business Survey.*
- 18.2 *Secondly, it was the first time that **electronic aided data capturing by means of tablets,** was implemented on such a large scale in Mpumalanga.*
19. This was a **positive leap forward into the age of the fourth industrial revolution.**

20. This move propelled us away from paper based data capturing, which further required the transfer of this information by typing it into a database.
21. We have **learnt some valuable lessons during the first phase of this exercise**, which we will use to improve the implementation of this second phase of the survey in the Steve Tshwete and Emalahleni Local Municipalities.

MPUMALANGA EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS SURVEY (MEBS) 2019

Programme Director;

22. Preparations for the MEBS 2019, to be carried out here in EMalahleni and Steve Tshwete are at an advanced stage.
23. As we sit here, at least one hundred and nine (109) young women and men drawn from these two municipalities, have **undergone intensive training over the past two weeks**, to take part as in the fieldwork activities.
24. After taking them through the competency testing and screening exercises, **eighty (80) of these young people will be appointed** (sixty (60) fieldworkers and twenty (20) fieldwork supervisors).
25. With this legion of competent fieldworkers, we are also making **a little but vital contribution to skills development, for future research activities** which may be undertaken within the two municipalities.
26. At this moment, let me **declare that the Mpumalanga Employment and Business Survey will kick off from Monday, the 4th of March 2019,**

27. **Fieldworkers will be visiting all business establishments**, in the Steve Tshwete and eMalahleni local municipalities to conduct interviews covering a number of areas which affect and impact them.
28. Some of these areas to covered in the survey include:
- 28.1 Business ownership and management and particulars of the business;
 - 28.2 Issues relating to employment and skills;
 - 28.3 State of enabling support and infrastructure including water, sanitation, electricity, communication technology, buildings etc.)
 - 28.4 Business Assistance, Registration and Affiliation and
 - 28.5 Information on crime committed against business.
29. **The survey will run until the end of April 2019** after which the processing of information collected will be carried out and concluded with a report which will be availed to stakeholders.
30. **I know some may question the relevance and need of this survey**, let me make this analogy of a patient/doctor consultation.
31. A patient went to consult a doctor one day, and upon arrival in the consultation room,

The patient said, ***“Doctor, I am not feeling well”***.

The doctor asked; ***“What is it that you feel”***

The patient responded; ***“I feel pain”***

The doctor then said to the patient; ***“Here is a bottle of painkillers (pills), take two every day until the pain goes away”***

32. One may be justified to question the credentials of this doctor and the probability of successfully curing the patient's ailment.
33. It turned out this **patient was experiencing early symptoms of appendicitis** and surely the remedy prescribed in this case did not achieve the intended aim.

Programme Director

34. As we seek to address the ailments that afflict our economy, and chart a growth path toward progress in growth, investment and better work opportunities, it will therefore be crucial that very detailed and accurate information is gathered during the **MEBS 2019**.
35. This will assist in making a far better diagnosis of the underlying challenges we face in our economy both at a grass roots level as well as at a macro level.
36. The business sector is a major player in **shaping the transformation of our economy and the creation of jobs**.
37. However many enterprises from the large corporates through to SMMEs and co-operatives down to the informal sector, face many challenges **such as finance, infrastructure, skills, crime and the investment climate**.
38. It is for this reason that I call upon the business community in eMalahleni and Steve Tshwete local municipalities and indeed all stakeholders to **work together with us as we undertake this important business and employment survey**.
39. I want to urge all those interviewed, to please **provide as much accurate information as possible**.
40. It is only when we are armed with as much detailed information as possible, that a more **suitable diagnosis can be made, that better decisions can be taken**

and that we can put in place better mechanisms to grow our economy in an inclusive manner for the good of all or citizens.

41. It is only through collaboration and working together that we can collect data necessary not only to **monitor employment levels** but to plan better for the creation of a conducive environment for business to thrive, attract further investment to grow our economy and to create the much needed jobs.
42. As the founder of the Ford Motor Company, Henry Ford, once said and I quote: ***“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success”***.
43. Once more, let me use this opportunity to request the **business community to open their doors for our credible fieldworkers**.
44. They are sent by me, in the spirit of **ThumaMina**, so please welcome them but only those that have valid identifications.
45. Let us all support and participate in this important Mpumalanga Employment and Business survey which will give us the most **realistic picture of where we are and how we can change the socio-economic profile** of Emalahleni and Steve Tshwete Local Municipalities.
46. I sincerely hope and believe that our collective effort will produce the desired results.
47. I thank you.