



MPUMALANGA 2008 PGDS SUMMIT DECLARATION

4-5 September 2008, Emnotweni Arena, Nelspruit

We, the delegates to this 2nd Provincial Growth and Development Summit, representing all stakeholders from business, organized labour, civil society and government, assembled here at Emnotweni Arena in Nelspruit for two days of vibrant debate about the future of our province, acknowledge that this Summit represents a decisive moment in Mpumalanga's socio-economic development.

We acknowledge that some progress has been made in addressing poverty through the rolling out of social grants, and the provision of essential services, including health, education, water, sanitation and electricity, over the past 3 years since the first PGDS Summit convened in February 2005 in Badplaas.

We recognise that our commonly shared enemy is poverty, which is a persistent reminder to us all that the apartheid legacy continues to weigh heavily on our Province, where the majority of the poor are found in the former Bantustan regions, informal settlements and historically black townships. This poor constituency constitute 61.6% of households that live below the unofficial poverty line of R800 per month.

We agree that unemployment lies at the heart of poverty, and that this poverty is characterised by poor households which largely depend on remittances, social grants and income derived from subsistence self-employment.

We concur that the current economic growth trajectory in Mpumalanga over the past 3 years has not been sufficiently shared, in that there has been only a marginal reduction of unemployment and poverty, whilst inequality has grown between and within racial groups in the Province. Shared and inclusive economic growth should therefore constitute the overarching developmental priority of all stakeholders in Mpumalanga. Deliberate steps are therefore required to build inclusivity into our growth trajectory.

This will include labour market policies that facilitate the school-to-work transition, alongside a joined-up human resource development strategy, that involves the entire education pipeline, from early childhood development all the way through to higher education and on-the-job training. Particular attention should be paid to the quality of rural education, but also to access to quality higher education and labour-market related skills development opportunities within the province.

The Summit notes that human capital is crucial to organising and gearing natural and productive forces towards a higher development trajectory. The establishment of a university within the Province as well as improved coordination of training initiatives by all social partners will accelerate the development and retention of skills in the Province.

The Summit further recognises that we need to give equal attention to the development of both big business and small business as complimentary conditions for job creation and shared economic growth, and stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit among our people, especially youth, women and people with disabilities.

We similarly must pay attention to labour-intensive sectors such as the agricultural sector, SMME development and down stream beneficiation of capital intensive industries as means to increase employment. The creation of decent jobs accompanied by acceleration of skills development to enhance productivity of our workers, should remain a priority.

The Summit notes that Mpumalanga remains a place of outstanding natural beauty with a rich cultural heritage and potential for development to the benefit of all. The Summit acknowledges the challenge in balancing the extraction of the Province's mineral resources with the preservation of the Province's pristine environment for the utilization and benefit of our community and future generations. We commit to make environmentally sustainable development a non-negotiable aspect of our growth and development trajectory, so that we protect our wetlands, natural vegetation and biodiversity for future generations.

The Summit further commits to develop an integrated land use framework that balances the need for socio-economic development, sustainable human settlement, preservation of our pristine environment, promotion of cultural and heritage resources, as well as energy and water conservation. These sustainable human settlements should be closer to areas of economic activities to reduce the cost of living and access to decent services and facilities. Equal attention should be paid to improving the living conditions in both rural areas and farms.

We commit to the acceleration of collective investment in social infrastructure, to improving access to housing along with basic services such as water, decent sanitation and electricity, advancing access to comprehensive health care, and to addressing high rates of crime in our communities in the Province.

The Summit notes that all of the above would not be achieved unless underpinned by a framework of good governance by all partners that is developmental, ethical and results-oriented.

After a rigorous assessment of the progress made to date, the Summit endorses this Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, which is grounded on the following four pillars, viz: poverty alleviation, employment, growth and environmental sustainability. It must be supported by adequate human and financial resources from all partners in order to achieve the desired developmental outcomes.

Our development trajectory should be premised on the following principles: Economic and environmental sustainability; Preservation and conservation of natural resources and energy for future generations; Social cohesion aimed at ending disparities based on class, race, disability and gender; Holistic human development that addresses the skills base, health, culture and heritage of society, as well as collective responsibility that places participation of communities in their own development in the centre.

Taking the summit resolutions further, we commit to building the necessary institutional capacity to enable the implementation of the PGDS, which will include, among others, the establishment of a dedicated Provincial Development Council.

**Our work is far from complete.
We are only at the beginning of a long journey.**