



MANDELA A LIVING LEGACY

[FULL STORY PAGE 02]



Keep praying
for Madiba

04



Premier undertakes
reforms

07



100 Days SOPA
promise implemented

03

Mandela a living legacy



MINUTES WELL SPENT: Fixing the road that leads to Embhuleni Hospital during Nelson Mandela Day, Premier David Mabuza demonstrated that all South Africans should work together to do good. Pictures: Elphas Mdluli.

Dudu Shaba

MPUMALANGA Premier David Mabuza officially opened the Provincial Mandela Day acknowledging the 95th birthday of the former President Nelson Mandela at the Highveld Secondary School, Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality. The National Flag was hoisted, the national anthem was sung and a biography of the former President Nelson Mandela was read to all.

Premier Mabuza, together with a learner, sliced the 1.5 metre birthday cake of the former President and shared the pieces with everyone at the school.

In his address, Premier Mabuza said that he believes that the former President Nelson Mandela will recover and urged people to keep on supporting and praying for him until he is out of

hospital.

He encouraged the learners at Highveld Secondary School to take the baton of good leadership from former president Nelson Mandela and to use it appropriately.

“It is a very special day we are celebrating in our history. A day where the former president was born, and his name is associated with freedom. As we all stand here, we are free from all the injustices of the past.

If you want to remain patriotic to your own country do not move away from the footsteps of former president Nelson Mandela and all his friends who led this country to freedom.” he said.

During the visit at school, Premier Mabuza condemned teenage pregnancy and urged young girls to look after themselves.

“Look after yourselves and make a difference in other people’s lives. As learners, you must study, that is your duty,” he said.

Premier Mabuza donated school uniforms, food parcels, and sanitary towels to needy learners at Highveld

Secondary School. He also donated blankets to the aged at St. Benedict Old Age Home and urged the caregivers to look well after the elders.

While visiting Embhuleni Hospital, Premier Mabuza spent his 67 minutes painting the passage walls, cutting grass and stamping the road. He visited the maternity ward, the children’s ward and the circumcision ward. He complemented all the males in the circumcision ward for taking a good decision and wished all the young boys to grow well.

Thousands of people, young and old attended the 95th birthday celebration at the Nhlazatje Sports Field where the biography of the former President was read again to the members of the community. Delivering a keynote address, Premier Mabuza said that former president Nelson Mandela stayed for 27 years in jail and people should also make him proud by protecting the democracy that he fought for.

“We have all met because of Mandela today and we know that we attained freedom because of him. Next year

we have elections, you started to vote because of Mandela and you should protect your democracy so that your freedom can also be protected,” he said.

Premier Mabuza urged all the churches to continue praying for former President Nelson Mandela.

“Do not be left behind, you own him, pray for him till he comes out of hospital,” he said.

Premier Mabuza donated about 50 wheelchairs to identified people with disabilities at the stadium. He thanked all donors who contributed including the SABC, Ligwalagwala FM who has made it all possible.

One of the donors, Lawrence Pillay, CEO, Active Power Projects from Benoni, said by remembering the former president, people should always do good like he did to others.

“We should not forget where we come from. If it was not him, we would not be celebrating today. As black businesses we should also be thanking former President Nelson Mandela because he set us free to run our business in a free way,” he concluded.



FULFILLING THE PROMISE: Premier David Mabuza handing over houses to the residents of Thembisile Hani Local Municipality this is in line with his vision of fast tracking service delivery in the province. Pictures: Elphas Mdluli.

100 Days SOPA promise implemented

Elphas Mdluli and
Zibonele Mncwango

MPUMALANGA Premier David Mabuza took time to tour the infrastructure development sites and handed over finished RDP houses to some families Emalahleni and Thembisile Hani Municipalities. The Premier established a Rapid Implementation Unit (RIU) in his office to constantly monitor and fast track all lacking behind infrastructural projects. Premier Mabuza is elated by the remarkable progress made by the RIU.

Since its formation from the beginning of April 2013, the RIU has managed to ensure that the human settlements and public works roads and transport departments respectively deliver houses and the public infrastructure such as schools, clinics and roads amongst others.

The premier was impressed when visiting the sites of capital projects like Witbank Hospital, Clarinet High, Mzimhlophe High, a primary school

and a Buhlebesizwe G clinic are due to be finished at about 95% complete. The contractors were optimistic and promised the Premier to hand over of the projects in few months and on record time.

During the State of the Province Address this year, Premier Mabuza announced that the RIU would ensure the delivery of 10 000 RDP outstanding from the previous financial year in 100 days. He has successfully delivered on the promise of the three months target. He urged the community members to appreciate the good work of government and ruling party.

The RIU concept was conceived as a result of the Premier visiting several sites and discovered that they were far behind schedule. He then took the decision to act decisively to rescue the situation. The Human Settlement Department shake up was as result of lack of delivery on RDP houses. The RIU establishment has produced positive results as the Premier has handed over 100 completed RDP houses in Emalahleni Municipality and 88 in Kwaggafontein, Thembisile

Hani Municipality. As part of his hand-over ceremony around Clarinet, Empumelweni Township and Moloto he also gave eight families fully furnished houses with food parcels and blankets in line with celebrating the International Mandela Day.

He targeted child-headed families, families headed by an elderly and a widow respectively, and families headed by disabled persons. It was in Moloto where he handed over a house to a Mhlanga family of 11 people, males and females who lived in one room.

While visiting the projects, Premier Mabuza was astonished to see a contractor having built a school in Clarinet six months before the targeted completion date. It was a realisation that it is possible to speedily deliver services to the people. He consequently committed on the spot to officially open the school at the end of August.

“Our people have waited for too long, therefore we must be quick in delivering the services as a provincial government and contractors. It cannot be us who delay development in their areas. We must do everything in our

power to attend to their needs,” said Mabuza.

The Premier had public meetings after handing over the houses and visiting the sites. He reported to the people about his disappointment about a contractor in Buhlebesizwe who cannot deliver a house out of 140, not even a single house was handed over due to delays. The contractor was encouraged to work hard or face termination of the contract by end of August if there is no performance. He said he was happy with DR Bongani Investments in Moloto delivering the RDP houses on time. The Premier gave food parcels to some families and wheelchairs to some individuals.

Premier Mabuza commended Executive Mayor NJ Mahlangu for the good leadership in Thembisile Hani Municipality, it is no longer under administration. The councilors have a positive attitude and cooperative.

The Premier is confident of all the work, the RDP houses to be completed on time as new contractors were appointed and closely monitored by the RIU.

Keep on praying for Madiba



PRAYER MEETING: Premier David Mabuza fellowships with his cabinet, various religious leaders and members of the public in a prayer service held in honour of the former national President Nelson Mandela. Pictures: Dudu Shaba.

Dudu Shaba

“LET us keep on praying for the former President Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela, during this time when he is not well. It is important for us as a province to keep on praying and also to keep on thinking where we come from and where the former first black president of South Africa led us to!”

This was said by the Mpumalanga Province Premier David Mabuza, at a prayer rally held at the Bergvlam Hoerskool Rugby Stadium, Ehlanzeni District, Nelspruit.

This rally was meant to pray for the former President Nelson Mandela who is critically ill and treated at the Mediclinic Heart Hospital in Pretoria.

More than a thousand people flocked to the Bergvlam Hoerskool Rugby Stadium, singing revolutionary songs, prayed and some wept to show their emotions, their undying support and expressed their gratitude for the former president.

All the activities followed a calling by President Jacob Zuma that all provinces should hold a provincial marathon in honor of Mandela Month.

Addressing the crowd at the stadium, the Mpumalanga Province Premier David Mabuza applauded the former president for being the first black president who has been very courageous and who stood for uniting the whole

South Africans.

Premier Mabuza expressed optimism that the former president will recover and return to his home soon.

He said that the people’s government will continue with its task of bringing to an end to any form of racism like the way that the former president did.

He told the crowd that the name of the former President is always associated with people, irrespective of race and denomination. He added that the name of the former President was also associated with the African National Congress, and his other comrades such as Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo.

Reverend Thabang Morare, African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), described the former President as a God sent Prophet, who was chosen to free the South African people from oppression.

“The calling of former President Mandela from God was for freedom, he is like the prophet Hezekiah who was called by God to free the Israelites from Babylon. We are able to walk freely every corner of South Africa and express ourselves freely today because of his sacrifices,” he said.

“Our Pride and dignity was eroded, but because of the vision of the former President Nelson Mandela, we are what we are today.” Kgosi Mathibela Mokoena, Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, Mpumalanga Province said.



Mpumalanga Provincial Aids Council resuscitated



ADDRESSING THE MPAC SITING: Premier David Mabuza chairs his first sitting at the Mpumalanga Provincial Aids Council. Picture: Dudu Shaba.

Dudu Shaba

HIV and Aids has had a devastating effect in South Africa, and in the African continent at large. Everyday, a high percentage of people are continuing to be infected with the virus, challenges associated with HIV and Aids, such as socio-economic conditions and other factors worsen the situation and continue to increase the spread of virus.

In an effort to curb and zero base the spread of HIV and Aids in the Mpumalanga Province, the Mpumalanga Provincial Aids Council (MPAC) was formed in 2007 and resolved to work on projects and services that will tackle the spread and increase of HIV and Aids. The council faced some challenges in its milestones, but the structure is finally revived again, anticipating in taking its resolutions forward.

The Mpumalanga Provincial Aids Council (MPAC)

At the launch of MPAC in 2007, the former Premier Thabang Makwetla said that the number of new infections needed to be reduced by 50%, and also that the impact of HIV and Aids on individuals, families and communities needed to be prioritised.

Though this commitment was made, it never worked out as planned. MPAC meetings were not properly coordinated and it became a daunting task to convene council meetings.

Civil Organizations and society called

upon the election of a new leader that will give direction to MPAC at the South African National Aids Council (SANAC) plenary meeting in Secunda. Mpumalanga Premier, David Mabuza, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi and the Deputy President of South Africa Kgalema Motlante held a brief meeting with the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) members. Premier Mabuza conceded that the MPAC was dysfunctional and personally committed himself to oversee the functionality of the MPAC.

"I am accepting the commitment, and I want to agree with you that our council has not been visible enough. I am personally taking over the leadership of the council so that together we strengthen our efforts of dealing with the scourge.

MPAC was well attended and represented by almost all stakeholders at the Ngwenyama Lodge, where Premier Mabuza chaired the council for the first time.

Premier Mabuza appreciated all the members of the MPAC for their good response.

"I am grateful that our executive mayors did their best, we are probably surviving because of their efforts. We are going to stretch our ways by picking up the necessary momentum and fly with this battle. We must spend a lot of energy in an effort to save our people," said Premier Mabuza.

Way forward

Thulani Mdakane, DDG-Macro

Policy and Planning, Office of the Premier stated that the Mpumalanga Provincial Government recommends institutional coordination in order to enhance inclusive and broad-based participation, and contribution of all sectors of society to the implementation of the Provincial Strategic Plan. Other recommendations at the council were such as the continual enhancing of the capacity of the MPAC, DACs, LACs and WACs, and also enhancing the participation of traditional leaders and the mainstreaming of the HIV and Aids programmes in the work of all government structures.

Commenting at the council, Licky Thusi, a member of GRIP, an organisation that focuses on empowering vulnerable and abused women, said that government should introduce more programmes that would empower unemployed women so that they are able to stand on their own and face poverty related challenges.

"Vulnerable women find themselves going back to abusive relationships because they do not have strong backup systems. Employment opportunities should be considered rather than grants, so that they are able to make a living for themselves," she said.

The chairperson of the council, Premier Mabuza called upon for commitment from all members of the council and collective leadership to ensure that the MPAC is taken to the next level.

"I am going to try my best to ensure that we move with speed in trying to close gaps created. The mountain we must climb is too huge, but it needs all of us to be strong," Premier Mabuza concluded.

HIV AND SYPHILIS PREVALENCE

Dr Ngomane, Department of Health, presented a research paper at the council. She stated that research revealed the following latest results on Antenatal Sentinel HIV and Syphilis Prevalence

- That the Mpumalanga HIV prevalence increased from 35.1 % in 2010 to 36.7 in 2011, second to KwaZulu Natal.
- That Gert Sibande showed an increase from 38.8% in 2010 to 46.1 in 2011, Ehlanzeni decreased from 37.7% in 2010 to 35.8 in 2011. Nkangala showed an increase from 27.2% in 2010 to 29.6 in 2011.

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT PRIORITY

According to Dr Ngomane, following are the Mpumalanga Government Priorities on HIV and Aids.

- To increase HIV awareness throughout all the sectors especially in the youth.
- To strengthen all the structures of the AIDS councils.
- To mitigate stigma, discrimination and related behaviors.

HIV AND AIDS DRIVERS

According to Thulani Mdakane, DDG, Macro Policy and Planning, Office of the Premier, following are the HIV and AIDS drivers.

- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Poor parent-child relationship
- Early sexual debut
- An impact of migrant laborers
- Multiple concurrent partners
- Transactional sex at trucking hubs and stops



JOINING HANDS: Premier David Mabuza joining hands with traditional leaders in Middleburg to symbolise solidarity in fighting the scourge of HIV and Aids.

Picture: Dudu Shaba.

Premier joins hands with traditional leaders in fighting HIV and Aids

Dudu Shaba

JOINING hands to fight the spread of HIV and Aids was a strong position taken by the Mpumalanga Provincial Government Premier, David Mabuza together with the Mpumalanga Traditional leaders at a consultative meeting held in Middleburg this month.

Premier Mabuza told the traditional leaders that it was high time that all leaders in the Mpumalanga Province collaborate and come up with good strategies that will lead towards zero basing the spread of HIV and Aids. He highlighted that the prevalence of the HIV and Aids in the Gert Sibande District was at the forefront and had a cumbersome effect in the Province.

Premier Mabuza suggested to the

traditional leaders that they should get tested and set a good example to the public they are accountable to.

“We should be at the forefront to go and test for HIV and Aids. People will follow us because we will be leading by example and those who need medical help will be able to get assistance before it's too late. Let us not be shy about a disease that has come to attack us, instead, let us be strong enough to stand together in order to fight it back,” Premier Mabuza said.

Another way of fighting the pandemic, Premier Mabuza said that it was through male circumcision. He said that male circumcision should be encouraged in the province, as it reduces chances of being infected with Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV and Aids.

He said that this can be done in

conjunction with the Department of Health, though he does not discourage circumcision through different forms of cultures, he recommended that circumcision at initiation schools should be done in a correct way that will not hamper another person's life.

“A circumcised male stands a chance of 60% for not being infected with STD's and the HIV virus. It's a study that has been conducted and proven,” Premier Mabuza said.

Addressing the Traditional Leaders, Thulani Mdakane (DDG-Macro Policy and Planning), said that the drivers for the spread of HIV and Aids were socio-economic drivers, poor parenting, alcohol abuse, truck drivers who resort to transactional sex, multiple relationships and other drivers that could lead towards the spread of HIV and Aids.

“We aim to zero base the spread of HIV and Aids and TB infections and we also want to make sure that we fight discrimination against those people who are infected with HIV and Aids. Traditional leaders should play a central leadership role in communities to drive campaigns against the spread of HIV and Aids,” Mdakane said.

Kgoshi Mathupha, Chairperson, House of Traditional Leaders, commented that traditional leaders were very grateful to have a caliber of a leader that is committed to fighting HIV and Aids for the first time in the Mpumalanga Province.

“As we hold our hands together today, this marks a new beginning in our province and everyone will be an ambassador to protect our children and even other generations to come against the pandemic of HIV and Aids,” he concluded.

Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) in Mpumalanga

THE department of health in Mpumalanga is targeting 60 000 males for the Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) programme for and already 49 609 males have been

circumcised in the province. The sexually transmitted infections seminar held at Ingwenyama lodge was told.

Addressing the seminar, Dr. Lesego Mawela from the Foundation for Professional Development said: “MMC is the removal of the male foreskin by an appropriately trained health worker in aseptic conditions.

“In South Africa 32 - 45 % of men report being circumcised either medically or traditionally with circumcision rates being the highest in the Western Cape with 67.5 % and the lowest being KwaZulu-Natal at 26.8 % and Gauteng at 25.2 %.”

He said all 28 public hospitals in the province are MMC sites. Recent records show that only 12 health care

facilities are high volume sites in the province, which has second highest HIV prevalence in the country after KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

“The Mpumalanga province has 36.7% HIV positive people with KZN having 37.4%, but health workers are cautioning that the gap is closing,” warned Mawela.

A district spread of HIV prevalence according to a 2011 statistic revealed that Gert Sibande has the highest HIV prevalence in the province at 46.1% followed by Ehlanzeni with 35.8 % and Nkangala with 29.6%.

The 12 high volume sites in the province are Mmamethlake, KwaMhlanga, Witbank and Middelburg hospitals all in Nkangala district. The Kwaggafontein community health centre is the only CHC in the province, which is counted amongst high MMC volume sites.

Gert Sibande district has only two high volumes sites, which are Embhuleni and Piet Retief hospitals.

Ehlanzeni district has five sites, which are Tintswalo, Mapulneng, Themba, Tonga and Barberton hospitals.

The MMC when performed by a well-trained professional is safe and can reduce the risk of acquiring HIV infection by approximately 60%. Hence the World Health Organisation is now recognising MMC as an additional and important strategy in the fight against HIV infection in men.

MMC has also been found to reduce STI's like herpes, chancroid, syphilis and HPV.

The 60 000 men targeted in the province includes men who are HIV positive as they risk to be re-infected if exposed to unsafe sex.

Before an HIV positive men can be circumcised he is referred to a health facility for a CD4 blood test to make sure that his CD4 count is not less than 350 cells. If found to be less than 350 cells he is referred for treatment, and circumcision will only be done if

the CD4 count is above 200.

MMC is a very simple and straightforward procedure, which takes between 15 and 30 minutes. The time taken to carry out the procedure is dependent on age, condition of the foreskin, method of pain relief and experience of the health worker carrying out the procedure.

There are three main myths for MMC, which need to be dispelled. Some people believe that MMC is performed only in winter, the procedure can be done anytime of the year.

There is also the wrong belief that it is difficult for a grown man to be circumcised.

Some people believe that once they are circumcised they are protected from being infected with HIV - that is a myth, consistent condom use, avoiding multiple sexual partners or delayed sexual debut and abstinence is strongly encourage even after circumcision.



REAPING THE REWARDS: Premier David Mabuza and MEC of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration Violet Sewela visiting Kotokwane Fresh Produce, a cotton and maize meal farming project in Marapyane. Picture: Dudu Shaba.

Premier undertakes reforms

Dudu Shaba and Elphas Mdluli

The Mpumalanga Premier, David Mabuza, has visited projects at Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality and announced new efforts that will positively impact on resource deprived communities in the area.

He was accompanied by Members of the Executive Councils (MEC's), Councillors and officials to the Redutsi (Former Toitskraal) pump station, farming areas at Marapyane and to the J.S Moroka Sport ground, as part of his monthly Public Participation Programme (PPP) and Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) initiative.

According to the Premier, this initiative enables continuous feedback to communities, enhances participatory democracy and provides members of the public with an opportunity to hold public representatives accountable on service delivery matters.

VISIT TO REDUTSI PUMP STATION

Councillors of Redutsi, have been trying to revamp the Redutsi pump station, which has been causing toilet blockages and frustrating members of the community.

According to a Redutsi Ward 2 Councillor, Simon Maganedisa, they

could not go ahead in revamping the pump station because they had to get permission from the Department of Public Works for them to do that. They requested permission from the Premier to go ahead with the revamping project.

"The pump station has not been complying with the set standards of the Water Services Act 108 of 1997," he said.

Premier Mabuza requested the ward councillors to write him a requisition letter and committed himself that he would resolve the matter with the Department of Public Works. He told them that he had approved their requisition in principle and that they should start working on the project for the sake of people.

FARMING PROJECTS

Paying a visit to the farming areas at Marapyane, Premier Mabuza committed himself to fund some of the agricultural projects and identified areas needing intervention and support.

He visited the Semakaleng Agricultural Co-operatives at Marapyane, a co-operative farming with sunflower and maize meal, the Lekgwarapa Livestock Project Co-operative, and the Kotokwane Fresh Produce, a cotton and maize meal project.

All the leaders of the co-operatives told the Premier about their success stories, progress made in their projects after they were assisted by government and also highlighted all the areas where they needed assistance.

Premier Mabuza committed himself to continue assisting the farmers in their areas of lack.

The MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration, Violet Sewela who accompanied the Premier, said that her department will work hand in hand with the Premier, in order to ensure that all the farming projects are assisted and seen to be successful.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Speaking at the J.S Moroka sport grounds, Premier Mabuza outlined that government will continue to close the gaps caused by the apartheid regime in the resource deprived communities.

"We have built clinics and schools in this area, by the end of this year, I promise to have built 1000 houses at Thembisile, because this area has been left behind for a very long time," he said.

He committed himself that he will bring water to Moretele through the Rust de Venter Dam and to build flushing toilets. Other areas that the Premier committed himself to

take responsibility for were to widen the Moloto Road, to tackle problems of sanitation and electricity in the municipality area.

There were allegations from some senior citizens, that some of the councillors were swearing at them when they go to consult with them for help. Premier Mabuza called on all the councillors and reprimanded them.

"From today, I do not want to hear any complaint from people that they are being sworn at by councillors, especially the elders. I do not think that they are telling lies because they are elder people. I urge members of the public encountering problems with councillors to phone my office or the office of their Mayors," he said.

The Premier also condemned criminals who are breaking into state property and stealing from schools and clinics.

"Parents, let us teach our children to respect our property because this is meant for all of us. Why should we hire security guards to look after our clinics whereas we could be using that money for something better?" he asked.

Members of the community that needed assistance were advised and attended to by the officials at J.S Moroka and referred for further attention if there was any need.

www.mpumalanga.gov/otp

Sanitary Towels Dignity Campaign boosts confidence for young girls



GIVING THE GIFT OF DIGNITY: Girls at Ekwazini High School in Middleburg pose happily with Lindi Ntuli-Tloubatla from the Office of the Premier and Jabulile Mkhwanazi from NYDA after receiving sanitary towels. *Picture: Dudu Shaba*

Dudu Shaba

WHILE the donation of sanitary pads to these young girls has put a smile on their faces, it will also restore their dignity, empower them to stay at school, boost their self-esteem and improve their performance at school.

Though never realized by many people, some of these girls are faced with cumbersome challenges every month when they have to receive their monthly menstrual periods.

One of these challenges are being that they prefer to stay at home until they finish their periods rather than being traumatized and embarrassed

at school due to lack of sanitary towels.

The Office of the Status of Women, Office of the Premier, embarked on a Sanitary Towels Dignity Campaign and donated more than 2000 sanitary towels to resource deprived girls at Mhluzi Primary School and Ekwazini High School in Middleburg.

People who were involved in the campaign included the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Nedbank and the departments across the provincial government.

Lindiwe Ntuli-Tloubatla, Deputy Director, Office on the Status of Women said that the issue of lack of sanitary towels has negative effects on the education of children.

“What we have also learned is that

the causes of absenteeism of girls at schools are not only because of pregnancy but also because of lack of sanitary towels when they are menstruating,” she said.

Meanwhile Jabulile Mkhwanazi, Branch Manager, NYDA, Witbank, said that it was also important to restore the dignity of learners through giving them good career guidance at an early stage.

“NYDA is committed to give career guidance, counseling and also in assisting grade 9-10 learners to be linked with good business opportunities,” she said.

Theresa Fourie, Key Account Relationship Manager, Nedbank, said that Nedbank will donate school

uniform for children at these two schools.

“We have already confirmed that we will donate school uniforms to thirty boys and girls to Mhluzi Primary School and Ekwazini High School. These challenges are temporary, light is coming to them,” she said.

School Principals of Ekwazini High School Themba Mthombeni and Noah Nhlengetwa Mhluzi Primary School Principal welcomed the initiative of the Office of the Premier and other stakeholders who contributed.

“Whether you are from a resource improvised community, all you need to do is to set goals for yourselves and be a dreamer, the sky is the limit,” Ntuli-Tloubatla concluded.

45 Scholar buses help learners arrive on time



ALWAYS PUNCTUAL: Cyril Clarke learners who will benefit from the scholar transport buses.

Picture: Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport

THE MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport in Mpumalanga, Dikeledi Mahlangu, has officially launched the scholar transport buses at AJ Swannepoel stadium at Ermelo in the Msukaligwa Local Municipality.

The MEC was accompanied by the Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District Municipality Mishack Nhlathathi, Executive Mayor of Msukaligwa Local Municipality, Siphon Bongwe and the Department of Education District Head in Gert Sibande, Nokuthula Mthethwa.

The launch was attended by more than 1500 learners and parents from schools in the districts that will be benefitting from the scholar transport buses. According to MEC Mahlangu, the buses will go a long way in ensuring that the children travel

to school safely and arrive on time, thereby also improving their participation at school. She urged all the parents to play a role in monitoring the buses by checking if they deliver the children at school on time.

“It is also your responsibility as parents to ensure that your children arrive at the bus stop on time. Bus drivers cannot wait for children coming late to the bus stop and compromise the early arrival of other learners to school,” MEC Mahlangu said.

All the buses are fitted with safety belts and range between 65 and 75 seaters each. After 5 years, the buses will be handed over to government. More buses will also be rolled out to other areas in the Gert Sibande District and Bohlabela Local Municipality.

Executive Mayor Nhlathathi was overwhelmed that the

launch took place in his District municipality.

“I thank the Department for piloting the project in this area and I believe it will go a long way in helping a large number of children to get to school safely” said Nhlathathi.

Nokuthula Mthethwa, Head, Department of Education, Gert Sibande District thanked the Department for the job well done. “It is very good to see that many learners will now go to school and arrive on time. We believe that the level of attendance will also improve,” she said.

One of the beneficiaries, a learner from Ithafa Comprehensive School, Sibusiso Nhlebeza also commented.

“What I like about the buses is that they look comfortable and I will now enjoy my trip to school. I cannot wait to get on the buses to feel the comfort,” he concluded.

MoU benefits development of Maths, Science and Technology



BRIDGING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: Premier David Mabuza signing an MoU with BHP Billiton Energy Witbank. Picture: Elphas Mdluli.

Jeffrey Makhumba
and Elphas Mdluli

THE Mpumalanga Provincial Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with BHP Billiton Energy, a coal company situated in Witbank. The MoU is mainly aimed at bringing infrastructure and resources that will help to bring skills development in the Mpumalanga province.

The MoU was signed by Premier David Mabuza and BHP Billiton and it entailed the donating of a multi-

million rand building in Witbank for the establishment of a Mathematics, Science and Technology Skills hub, a first of its kind in the Province.

This partnership is envisaged to influence the entire skills development value chain in Mpumalanga, starting from school level right up to the workplace. The Academy for Maths, Science and Technology and Skills Hub will improve the performance of both educators and learners in the fields of Mathematics, Science and Technology and thus providing enhanced opportunities of creating a highly skilled labour force.

The Maths, Science and Technology Academy is also set to be used as a hub to link 100 provincial schools to the

activities of the Mpumalanga Maths, Science and Technology Academy.

This initiative is set to be rolled out in January 2014 and the MEC for Education, Reginah Mhaule highlighted that she intends to amend the curriculum streams of the 100 schools targeted for this programme, so that they could focus mainly on promoting the intake of Maths, Science and Technology.

Schools targeted for this programme include all the Dinaledi Schools within the Mpumalanga province and this exercise is in keeping with government's quest to improve the number of learners taking and passing Mathematics, Science and Technology.

"We are on course with soliciting the

involvement of the business community and parastatals to come on board and fast-track our efforts to bridge the digital divide in our schools.

This is intended to benefit our young people in the class room environment from the world of technology. The Department will in this financial year connect 100 public ordinary schools that include the 46 Dinaledi Schools to the MST Academy utilizing video and smart technologies," said MEC Mhaule.

This technological milestone is set to put the province at par with schools in the first world countries and will thus facilitate increase in the rolling out of scarce mathematics, science and technology careers.

EPWP changes lives of the disabled

THE South African Active Disabled People's Association (SAADPA), a project established in 2003 under the government's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), in Thulamahashe, Bushbuckridge, has created over 506 jobs for disabled people.

In this project, the members of the association are engaged in doing beadwork, pottery, sewing, weaving, carpentry, wooding, curving as well

as farming. Some of the hand-made products from the project are exported to markets in the United States.

John Nxumalo, Chairperson, SAADPA, who is also disabled, said that the project had proven that people living with disability can contribute positively towards the economy.

"People with disability are often neglected and often abused by some of their family members, hence we established the project in a bid to address the plight of the disabled in

our community," said Nxumalo.

The project has won numerous awards, such as the EPWP Kamoso Awards, the Premier's Awards, as well as the Community Builder of the Year Awards.

"I am very much optimistic that SAADPA will grow and become independent thus creating more jobs for people in the village," said Nxumalo.

One of the project workers, Nora Gumede, said that the stipend that

she received monthly has given her hope.

"We are getting a monthly stipend as part of EPWP which has changed my life completely, because nobody wanted to employ us. I can now buy food and clothes for my kids and siblings," Gumede said.

Provincial Public Works, Roads and Transport Department in the province have reported a total of 49 014 job opportunities created under the EPWP for the 2012/2013 financial year.

A declaration signed to intensify NSDS goals



Intensifying the training sector: MEC of Education Regina Mhaule signing a declaration with SETA members. Picture: Dudu Shaba.

Dudu Shaba

THE leadership of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA), National Skills Authority (NSA) and the National Skills Fund (NSF) in Mpumalanga signed a declaration at the Mpumalanga Consultative Workshop, Ngwenyama Lodge, committing themselves to revert and to report directly to the Mpumalanga Premier David Mabuza on the achievements and progress made in complying with the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) goals.

Bhabhali Nhlapho, NSA, Labour Deputy Chair said the consultative workshop was aimed at having a deeper insight on the challenges facing Mpumalanga regions with respect to post-school education and training, updating the regions on the skills conference and monitoring progress on

implementing the NSDS goals.

Addressing the workshop participants, Premier Mabuza noted that SETAs are extremely critical to the development of human capital in South Africa, particularly in the area of skills.

Premier Mabuza said this country has a very low skills base, a situation which is not the creation of the democratic government but a legacy of the past political regime.

“The post 1994 era saw the democratic government embarking on an array of policies, strategies and programmes to address, among other things, the challenges of the requisite skills required by our economy.

One hopes and trusts that all of us who are involved in this area of work are, and will continue to put our joined efforts towards translating these resolutions into reality,” he said.

According to the Premier, the figures of the 2011 Census are showing that the population of Mpumalanga is sitting

at approximately 4 million which represents a population increase of 20% between 2001 and 2011, the third largest increase of the nine provinces.

He stated that 69,4% of this population is a youth cohort between the ages of zero to thirty four years, and the majority are Blacks. Of this 4 million people, he says that only 4,2 % have completed primary school, 29% completed matric and 9,7% with higher education.

He added that people with no matric but having certificates or diplomas is 37,4%, those with Matric and certificates is 22,8%, Matric with diplomas is 8% and those who have completed their degrees is only 2,6%.

“This was a serious impediment to the growth and development of the province as well as for the country,” he commented.

As part of dealing with this challenge, Premier Mabuza said that the provincial government has already entered into an agreement with the mining houses and signed a Memorandum of Understandings with other manufacturing companies that have their operations in the province.

“Together as Partners, we will be establishing a Maths, Science and Technology Academy and a Skills Development Hub to enhance the capacity of both educators and learners in these learning areas, including training young people on artisan and technical skills, paying more attention on the ‘Out-of- School Youth’,” he said.

“Premier Mabuza recommended that his expectations were for him to oversee a comprehensive plan that will be responding to the Provincial human resource development strategy, and also, a plan that will be placing more emphasis on the projects that are already existing in this regard.

Commenting at the workshop, Sakhele Ngwamba, member of the human resource development strategy steering committee, said, when developing plans, it should be considered that career guidance must be conducted in a balanced way which will benefit and inform young people to be able to make sound career path decisions.

“This means that career guidance should be in line with the economic skills demands. We are suggesting this because we are trying to transform the traditional method of conducting career guidance which has in a larger extent contributed towards the increment of unemployed graduates,” he said.

Davis Moropane, Chief Executive Officer, Empowerment Through Training, also commented.

“We also need to start training the youth to form and own their own enterprises at an early level, so they are ready to enter big business markets and be competitive early.”

Other recommendations from the workshop commissions were to incorporate gender disability issues and youth equity, that the new Mpumalanga university help to increase higher education qualifications, that FET colleges should continue to be effective and skilling the country, incorporating the co-operatives and focusing on creating SMME focus.

Nhlapho said that SETAs are determined to increase the required skills to drive the economy to embetter the levels of the Growth Development Plan outputs.

“We have to relate to the newly signed Youth Accord that states that the road to employment for young people should be through learning programmes and not incentives or any other form,” he concluded.

Groundbreaking projects propels Secunda’s artisans industry

Elphas Mdluli

MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Yvonne Phosa, has applauded two big companies resident in the province, Hydra-Arc (HA) which specializes in welding, and the country’s integrated mining, gas, oil and chemicals’ company, Sasol, for their groundbreaking project which has great economic spinoffs for local people.

The MEC’s remarks follows a successful completion of a development project embarked upon by a Secunda based welding company, HA, which fabricated and delivered a six high pressure vessel to Sasol ahead of time.

Escorted by heavy security personnel to Sasol’s site, the vessels, which are 60m long with a total height of 9m, were branded with South African flags and those of the two companies and its welding consumables utilized were locally supplied.

“The completion of the project marks a milestone for the company. We are humbled by the trust that was placed by Sasol,” said the company’s Executive Chairman Jose Maciel.

According to HA, they had obtained 3 200 tons of specialized carbon steel material which is produced specifically for the construction of the vessels. As a result 800 jobs were created for community members some of whom are deaf artisans.

Maciel explained that it was their largest project and his company was now ranked amongst the best in the world in respect of size and the quality of the vessels.

“As a company, we have a responsibility to our nation to ensure job creation, local employment opportunities and to instill national pride in all that we do.

It is not only what the country can do for its people, but also what people can do for the country. We salute the customers, suppliers, bankers and our own people that believed in us and put their trust in us, without them, this would not have been possible,” said Maciel.

According to Maciel, his company is intending to create a further 450 new jobs over the next three years.

He also announced their plan to establish the largest artisan academy in the country with the hope that when fully operational, the new academy would accommodate at least 1 000



Propelling artisan training: MEC of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism Yvonne Phosa, Chairman of Hydra-Arc Jose Maciel and Executive Mayor of Govan Mbeki Cllr Lindi Masina during the site visit. Picture: Elphas Mdluli.

artisan trainees each year.

“In this way, we aim to directly address the critical skills shortage in our industry and I appeal to all South African companies and our political leadership to actively support this initiative,” said Maciel.

Phosa who attended the event on behalf of the Premier of the province, David Mabuza, congratulated

the company on its mammoth project and its efforts towards job creation.

“Sasol has given the proudly South African campaign a big boost. As government, we recognize that the private sector is one of the crucial partners for attaining the government’s vision for 2030. We have every intention of tapping into your knowledge base and expertise,” she concluded.

Mpumalanga Provincial Government considers to partner with Samsung

THE Mpumalanga Premier David Mabuza has considered partnering with Samsung in a move to improve and bring development in all sectors of the provincial government in the Mpumalanga Province.

This consideration took place during the Premier's visit to South Korea, Seoul. The Premier was accompanied by MEC for Education Regina Mhaule, Community Safety, Security and Liason MEC Vusi Shongwe and the Provincial Director –General Dr Nonhlanhla Mkhize.

Samsung is one of the world's leading electronics companies in Korea, specializing in digital appliances and media, semiconductors, memory, and system integration. Today Samsung's innovative and top quality products and processes are world recognized.

Premier Mabuza explained that this consideration would benefit the province in Education, Health, Safety, e-government and on Information Communication and Technology

sectors.

"As a provincial government, we will have to make a decision as to what we specifically want to partner on with Samsung. We have to partner on matters that will bring effective service delivery and solutions to the conditions in the Mpumalanga Province," he said.

The places visited by the delegation included the Samsung-supported Hyowon Elementary School in Seoul, where they gained knowledge on the utilization of technology for higher education grades, other places visited by the delegation were Samsung Digital City, Seol Emergency Operations Centre, Korean Education and Research Information Services and Samsung Medical Centres.

According to the Premier, though the province considers improving the conditions in the province, the education and health sectors will be given priority. He said that the province's public health has a "package of challenges" which needs

urgent solutions.

"We want to spend our energies in trying to fix problems on our health and education systems. We are quite happy about the products Samsung has presented to us and we are convinced about the quality of the services. We definitely want the company to have its presence in Mpumalanga," said Mabuza.

The Premier further requested Samsung to consider starting a science and technology Academy Mpumalanga since the province is regarded as a gateway to Mozambique, Swaziland and the rest of other nearest provinces in the country.

Samsung has more than 22 000 employees at its headquarters and is also involved in the construction, engineering, food processing, ICT, security and retail sectors.

"Indeed we would want to establish a working relationship with them, with the hope that things will get better in our province," he concluded.



PUTTING FAMILY FIRST: MEC for Health and Social Development Candith Mashego-Dlamini handing groceries and other amenities to families during International Family Day. Picture: Health and Social Development.

International Family Day celebrated

THE Department of Social Development celebrated the International Family Day under the theme, "Advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity within families and the communities".

This International Family Day event was celebrated at Marapyane and joined together with the opening of Marapyane Department of Social Development Offices, which was officially opened by the MEC for

Health and Social Development, Ms KC Mashego-Dlamini.

One of the activities during the celebration marked the visiting of a needy household. The Motaung family is a child headed family, both parents in the family have passed on and the children are now headed by a 24 year old male with three younger siblings.

MEC Mashego-Dlamini handed over two double beds, four blankets, a three piece kitchen unit, a stove and some groceries. The family

was overwhelmed about what the Department of Social Welfare has done to them and appreciated all their efforts.

MEC Mashego-Dlamini encouraged families, especially parents, to take responsibility of their lives and to take control of their children and giving them proper guidance.

"If you feel that you have failed as a parent do not be afraid to ask for guidance," Mashego-Dlamini concluded.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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A strategic centre of excellence for good governance and improved service delivery.

Mission

Provide strategic leadership through effective coordination of government programmes, integrated planning, monitoring and evaluation, and institutional development

Values

- **Honesty**
- **Openness**
- **Consultation**
- **Integrity**
- **Teamwork**
- **Work ethics and**
- **Respect**

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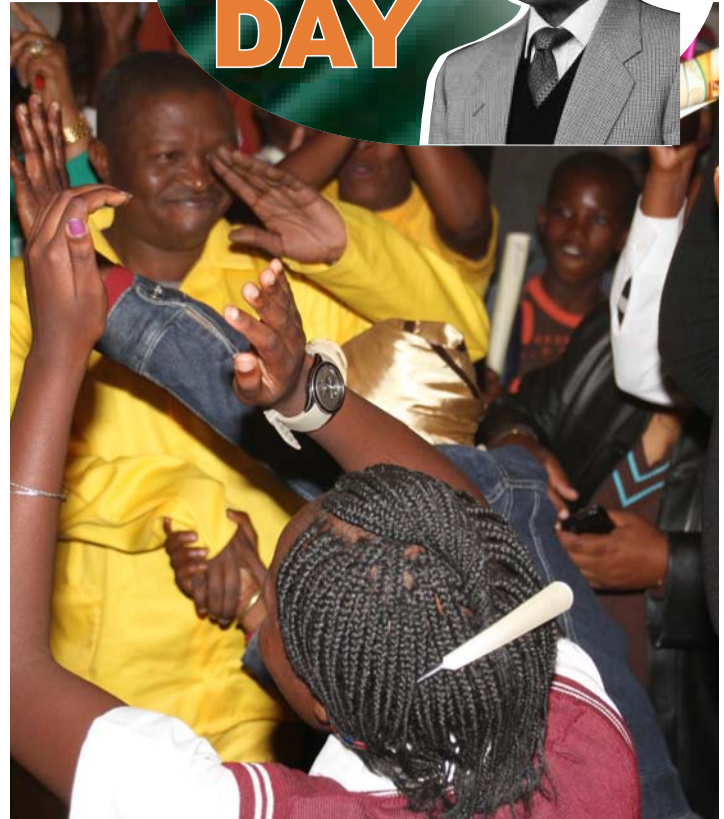
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Celebrating Nelson Mandela Day

Premier David Mabuza celebrated Nelson Mandela day by dedicating his 67 Minutes to the community of Chief Albert Luthuli through various activities which included painting the walls at eMbuleni hospital and handing blankets to the elders, cutting grass and fixing the road at eMbuleni hospital. Pictures: Elphas Mdluli.

